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THE POETRY OF THE KING JAMES VERSION OF THE BIBLE

IN THE COLLEGE LITERATURE CLASS

Edward L. Greenwood

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THE POETRY OF THE KING JAMES VERSION OF THE BIBLE

IN THE COLLEGE LITERATURE CLASS

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ABSTRACT

THE POETRY OF THE KING JAMES VERSION OF THE BIBLE
IN THE COLLEGE LITERATURE CLASS

by Edward L. Greenwood

Except for the King James Version, no other English
translation of the Bible has had such an extensive impact
upon literature; therefore, this study approaches the King
James Version from a literary perspective in order to exhibit
its excellence as a work of art and to encourage greater
utilization of it in the college literature class. The main
emphasis of the study is upon the structure and imagery of
biblical poetry, particularly the Psalms. By treating the
problem of biblical poetry, the study provides a basis upon
which an instructor of a college literature class may gain a
greater degree of competency in recognizing as well as
communicating the literary values and influences of the King
James Version.

Following the introductory chapter, which includes a
brief history of the treatment of the Bible from a literary
perspective, chapter two gives a summary of the variety of
literary genres that are contained in the Bible. It views
the narrative genre as the inclusive form that embraces the

whole Bible, and then treats the chronicle, prophecy, biography, epistle, parable, drama, and poetry. Significant to the chapter is its emphasis upon interdependence of the genres that are frequently studied in a segmented manner.

Chapter three demonstrates various structural features that are basic to Hebrew poetry and that are discernible in the translated form of the King James Version. The author presents David as the chief poet of the Psalms and as one who was thoroughly competent in Hebrew prosody even before he became king. The range of structural variations used by David and other contributors to the Psalms is shown by examples based on the critical observations of Bishop Robert Lowth in Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews, of George B. Gray in The Forms of Hebrew Poetry, and of Richard G. Moulton in The Literary Study of the Bible.

By presenting a comparative study of the shepherd-sheep image in Psalm twenty-three and Milton's "Lycidas," the next chapter first suggests certain benefits that a literature class may gain through a careful study of imagery. The chapter also suggests that nature and sociocultural images are the two broad categories of biblical imagery. The influence of these images, as they are rendered in the King James Version, upon the works of later writers is important to the study.

The final chapter seeks to answer why valuable instructional time in literature classes should be spent on the King James Version to emphasize the principle of biblical interdependence, to analyze the structure of its poetry, and to examine the kinds of imagery found in its poetry. The first part of the answer is that the King James Version serves as a major link between an ancient civilization and the modern English-speaking civilization. The second part of the answer rests upon four concluding values that are derived from a knowledge of Hebrew poetry. The first value is a proficiency that students gain by associating English literary allusions to appropriate biblical contexts, thereby gaining a better understanding of the significance of the allusions; the second value is an increased esthetic appreciation of the King James Version; the third value is an insight into the traditions and heritage of a minority people, the Jews. The last value relates to the advantages that an instructor gains by using the King James Version.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Western civilization presently reflects the influence of Christianity. The externalities that appear in such forms as religious holidays during which the majority of commercial and industrial activities cease, magnificent churches, which beckon vast numbers of people regularly for worship, and a national motto, "In God We Trust," which is imprinted on the currency, reveal the pervasiveness of that ancient influence.

In both England and the United States, the functional or spiritual level of Christianity during the modern era has been greatly enhanced by the King James Version of the Bible. The religious identity of the KJV is undoubtedly the chief reason why it has had inestimable numbers of interested readers in these countries who have constantly sought to enter into the experience of the teachings of the KJV at the functional level. Its literary identity, however, is another reason for its immense popularity, but this identity has generally been repressed.

During the Renaissance the Bible was so widely read that historians of the period commonly report that churches and clergymen were not alone in regarding its possession of

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great personal value. Most of the educated gentlemen owned
a Bible, and after the publication of the KJV in 1611 many
of them had opportunity to own two Bibles. For those who
were not fortunate enough to own a Bible or to be able to
read, the churches provided reading rooms to which people
went for group or private reading sessions.

The literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth
centuries abounds with biblical references inserted by knowl-
edgeable writers, most of whom knew the original languages
of the Bible, Hebrew and Greek. A study of these languages
was considered essential to the university curriculum, and
a man was not considered educated unless he had command of
them.

According to Isaac Walton, John Donne sought "the
attainment of a greater perfection in the learned languages,
Greek and Hebrew"[1] after the king desired him to enter the
clergy. John Milton stated that he "entered upon an
assiduous course of study in my youth, beginning with the
books of the Old and New Testament in their original lan-
guages."[2] These men highly valued knowledge of the

[1]Isaac Walton, The Lives of Dr. John Donne; Sir Henry
Wotton; Mr. Richard Hooker; Mr. George Herbert; and
Dr. Robert Sanderson (n.d.; rpt. York, England: Wilson,
Spence, and Mawman, 1796), p. 54.

[2]John Milton, "The Christian Doctrine," The Works of
John Milton, ed. Frank Allen Patterson, XIV (New York:
Columbia University Press, 1933), 5.

Scriptures and found in them an appropriate reference and source for much of their writing; however, neither they, nor their contemporaries, nor their immediate successors gave serious attention to the literary character of the Bible.

Bishop Robert Lowth in his _Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews_ was the first scholar in England to make a study of the Bible from a literary perspective. These lectures first appeared in Latin in 1753, and, as the title suggests, the emphasis is upon the poetry of the Bible.

Though Lowth submitted the Bible to literary scrutiny and established an excellent foundation upon which further investigation could be established, critics during the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries were generally content to let the biblical scholars handle the Bible within the framework of biblical scholarship rather than within the framework of literary scholarship.

The current of biblical scholarship flowed strongly in the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, not only in England but on the Continent as well. Most of the studies were done from a textual and historical per-spective to determine the accuracy of ancient manuscripts, sources, and dates. The names of Lachmann, Tischendorf, Graf, and Wellhausen are commonly associated with

Continental scholarship; those of Tregelles, Alford,
Scrivener, Westcott, and Hort with English scholarship.
The stance of these scholars, which is generally referred
to as Higher Criticism, continued to promote the notion
that the Bible should be kept within a religious framework.

Richard G. Moulton's Literary Study of the Bible,
published in 1896, is a major contribution toward viewing
the Bible from a literary perspective. Broader in scope
than Bishop Lowth's work, the volume is subtitled An
Account of the Leading Forms of Literature Represented in
the Sacred Writings. Fully aware of the biblical scholars
of his day, Moulton emphasized the scope of his work and
clearly distinguished between the purposes of his study
and of theirs:

> The term 'literary study of the Bible' describes
> a wide field of which the present work attempts to
> cover only a limited part. In particular, the term
> will include the most prominent of all types of
> Bible study, that which is now universally called
> the 'Higher Criticism.' There is no longer any need
> to speak of the splendid processes of modern Biblical
> Criticism, nor of the magnitude even of its undis-
> puted results. I mention the Higher Criticism only to
> say that its province is distinct from that which I
> lay down for myself in this book. The Higher Criti-
> cism is mainly an historical analysis; I confine myself
> to literary investigation. By the literary treatment
> I understand the discussion of what we have in the
> books of Scripture; the historical analysis goes
> behind this to the further question how these books
> have reached their present form.[3]

[3]Richard G. Moulton, The Literary Study of the Bible
(Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., 1896), p. iv.

Because the Bible had always been traditionally the claim of the ecclesiastical domain, the literary domain during the last three and one-half centuries since the publication of the KJV in 1611 gave quiet assent to the view that it is an acceptable practice to use the Bible _in_ literature rather than investigate it _as_ literature. This attitude resulted in an astounding utilization which permeates much of English and American literature.

Even though it is generally accepted that the KJV has been more widely circulated among the reading public since its publication than any other writing, that it has been alluded to by writers more than any other writing, and that it has been more widely quoted than any other writing, the KJV in comparison has relatively little written about its literary greatness, and little is done in higher education to broaden students' interest in the KJV as a work of art. Libraries in colleges and universities, both large and small, are mute testimonies of this ironic circumstance because they contain large numbers of volumes attesting the merits of the works of Shakespeare, Milton, and the long succession of literary greats, yet few volumes are shelved that expose the merits of the KJV.

Instructors of literature usually have some knowledge and appreciation of the literary merit of the KJV as well as the influential role that it has had in relation to

other great literary works. The degree of appreciation
that the instructor has of the KJV is very likely a partial
result of an undergraduate course labeled The Bible as
Literature. Such a course commonly utilizes other versions
as well as the KJV and focuses on selected passages that
exemplify a variety of literary genres[4] leaving the student
with little in-depth exposure to significant literary
elements that combine to make the text a work of art.
In-depth exposure would require, for example, a study of
characterization, structural and stylistic techniques,
thematic simplicity and/or complexity of stories and
biographies; a study of social mores, politics, (national
and international), and economics which formulate the
network of historical and prophetical writings; and a study
of the structure, imagery, theme, devices, and tone which
are basic to poetry.

    The study of biblical genres is vital to a student's
understanding of the nature of the total production and

    [4]The following volumes lend themselves to this type
of classroom approach:

Abbott, Walter M., et al., eds. The Bible Reader. New
    York: Bruce, 1969.

Bates, Ernest S., ed. The Bible Designed to be Read as
    Literature. 2 vols. London: The Folio Society,
    1957.

Capps, Alton C., ed. The Bible as Literature. New York:
    McGraw-Hill, 1971.

must be maintained as an essential part of any course dealing with the Bible as literature; however, such an approach frequently results in barrenness when it fails to evoke a significant esthetic response from the student and fails to give him the adequate tools with which he may work toward bridging the gap between the unfamiliar and familiar works of art.

The instructor is not only limited by inadequate preparation to generate this kind of experience for the student, but he is often hampered by the random, unstructured information about the Bible that he has learned from sources outside the classroom. This information is usually permeated with strong religious overtones to such an extent that he finds it difficult, in his attempt to be academically honest, to delete religious indoctrination from the primary goal of literary instruction.

Because the United States is committed to the principle of the separation of church and state, the teaching of the Bible in public educational institutions became a very sensitive area, particularly in the twentieth century, and instructors became hesitant about teaching the Bible. Just as in England, the Bible was typically identified with the church; therefore, the study of the Bible as literature has fared poorly in this country from the Colonial Period until as recently as 1963. Since 1963 there has been a remarkable

increase of literary interest in the Bible due to the
decision of the Supreme Court in the case of Abington v.
Schempp, which specifically states:

> It certainly may be said that the Bible is worthy
> of study for its literary and historic qualities.
> Nothing we have said here indicates that such study of
> the Bible or of religion, when presented objectively
> as part of a secular program of education, may not be
> effected consistent with the First Amendment.[5]

Giving impetus to much of the current interest in the
study of the Bible as literature is the Indiana University
Curriculum Study Center which concentrates on secondary
education. Wright State University and Religious Heritage
of America, Inc., cooperate in a joint program called
Public Education Religious Studies Center (PERSC) which
concentrates mainly upon the primary and secondary educa-
tional levels. According to its statement of purpose,
PERSC only becomes involved with higher education "where
applicable in relevant areas."[6]

Preceding this present upsurge of interest in the
Bible, as well as running concurrently with it, has been
an impressive number of new versions of the Bible. This
period of new Bible publications is framed by the Revised
Standard Version of the New Testament (1946) and of the
Old Testament (1952) and by the recent Living Bible (1971).

[5]Abington v. Schempp, 374 U.S. 225 (1963).

[6]"PERSC" (Dayton, Ohio: Religious Heritage of Ameri-
ca, Inc. and Wright State University, n.d.).

Courses in the Bible as literature tend to utilize these more recent versions, justifying their use by arguing that the language is updated and the paragraph format is more conventional, both of which make biblical study easier for the student to grasp. Excluding G. B. Harrison's The Bible for Students of Literature and Art (1964) which uses The Reader's Bible for all of its biblical selections, the general pattern followed by compilers of Bible readers for classroom use is to select passages from the more recent versions. The Reader's Bible is a relatively recent publication which preceded the Revised Standard Version of the Old Testament by one year, but it is not a new translation or version; it is the KJV put into the modern paragraph form. Even though Harrison prefers the paragraph format of the KJV, it is significant that the current interest in biblical study from a literary perspective makes minimal use of the King James Version.

Such a situation is ironic in that the translation which undoubtedly has had the most influence on English and American literature is the one to which students in general are least exposed. To make more use of the King James Version would be a logical approach to rectify this situation. The student would then become familiar with its structural and esthetic quality and at the same time become more conscious of its value in literature.

The instructor is the key figure to help achieve these objectives; therefore, the purpose of this study is to present an analysis of the structure and imagery of biblical poetry as it is rendered in the King James Version in order to exhibit the version's excellence as a work of art and to encourage greater utilization of it in the college literature classroom. By treating the problem of biblical poetry it is my desire to provoke the instructor of English and American literature to teach biblical poetry with a greater awareness of its artistic quality, enabling him to achieve a greater degree of competency in recognizing as well as communicating the literary values and influences of the KJV.

Four chapters constitute the study. The first chapter is a summary of literary genres contained in the KJV. A knowledge of the variety of genres is essential to an appreciation of the literary merit of the KJV because the relationships of the genres are often inextricably intertwined so that, for example, the study of poetry at certain points is also a study of biography or of prophecy. The second chapter deals with the structure of Old Testament poetry. The esthetics of the KJV are enhanced by its remarkable purity of form, and this is shown by a number of examples which reveal the high level of sophistication achieved by the ancient Hebrew writers. Chapter three presents the imagery of the Old Testament poetry. In

relation to this, certain sociological and historical matters are included; otherwise the imagery cannot be fully appreciated since it is cast into the mold of another society and age. The last chapter emphasizes the relevancy and values of a knowledge of Hebrew poetry to the student and to the teacher of English and American literature.

Several key terms need defining because they are basic to the study. They fall into two categories, the first of which is familiar to the student of poetry and the second of which may be unfamiliar to him. The first group is: (1) "Structure"--the interrelation of parts that form a poem. It may involve both the appearance and syntax of the work; (2) "Imagery"--a verbal presentation of sense perception and the use of figures of speech; and (3) "Esthetic"--a concept of beauty in art that elicits a pleasurable response from the observer.

The second group of terms is related more specifically to Hebrew poetry; therefore, the terms are not as familiar: (1) "Parallelism"--a structure in which one verse, or line, corresponds with another so that two lines may express a similar idea by a variation in wording, or the second line is an amplification of the thought expressed in the first line, or the first line is repeated in the second line except the last term of the second line differs from the last term

of the first line; (2) "Triplet"--a parallel form of three lines rather than two; (3) "Strophe"--a structure that disregards parallelisms; (4) "Envelope figure"--any number of parallelisms that are enclosed by a similar opening and closing statement; and (5) "Pendulum figure"--a back and forth movement between two separate ideas or parts of the same subject.

The KJV is considered as a primary source to which other materials will be related as secondary, and any biblical quotations are from the KJV unless otherwise indicated. In cases where a clearer understanding can be achieved by using the original language, the Masoretic text is used.

CHAPTER II

SUMMARY OF BIBLICAL LITERARY GENRES

The label "The Book of Books" that is often used to
identify the Bible suggests the level of transcendence over
other writings to which the Bible has risen. Basic to the
thought is the religious quality of the book which has
made it sacred to millions of readers for centuries. Its
claim to be the sacred writings has had a profound influ-
ence upon its gaining this position, and it was to this
sacred aspect that scholars were invariably attracted so
that their energies were expended upon its theology,
authority, and validity. The position of pre-eminence,
however, could hardly have been achieved without an
astoundingly complex literary heterogeneity which moves
from the simple narrative genre to the dignified poetic
genre that gives it a "polygenre" composition. Undeniably,
the literary quality of the Bible has made an important
contribution towards its acceptance as "The Book of Books,"
even though this aspect of its study was neglected until
recent years.

The position of the Bible is also heightened because
its Judeo-Christian development spans civilizations in
different eras of human experience occupying a time period

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of up to fifteen hundred years, making it impossible for
one writer to be the author. Because approximately
thirty-five writers contributed to the completed manuscript
and because each one of them wrote in the form and style
that was natural to him, the "polygenre" structure is not
unexpected and becomes an important consideration for any
serious student of the Bible.

The numerous translations of the Bible have generally
maintained the "polygenre" distinctness simply because the
process of translation would, in most cases, naturally lend
itself to such form, but compliance to form does not pro-
vide an acceptable criterion for literary merit. It is here
that a basic value of the King James Version is most obvious;
it has certain advantages over other translations that are
significant in producing a balance between the need for
accuracy of translation and appropriateness of literary
technique which do not violate the esthetic sensibility in
relation to any particular genre.

The first advantage of the KJV is that the King of
England supported it and used his influence to organize
the project. Even though the idea of a new translation
". . . seems to have been introduced incidentally rather
than by any prearranged plan,"[1] King James favored such

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[1]Charles C. Butterworth, _The Literary Lineage of the
King James Bible_ (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania
Press, 1941), p. 206.

action. By using his authoritative position, the king was able to pool available scholarly resources and to organize the project. The resulting assembly of translators numbered fifty-four, but of that number forty-seven actually contributed to the translation. Thus the version was a cooperative concern of many who held differing views, a cross section of English scholarship regarding the Scriptures. This arrangement was an advantage that earlier translations did not have because the burden of those translations generally had fallen upon individual translators.

Because the king actively promoted the translation, the KJV is commonly referred to as the Authorized Version; however, there is no evidence that the work was officially authorized by either the king or parliament. Charles Butterworth indicates that the king's involvement was founded on personal interest:

> But the King, apparently, was greatly attracted to the idea of a new version. We are told in the preface to the King James Bible, that--". . . his Maiestie [did] beginne to bethinke himselfe of the good that might ensue by a new translation, and presently gaue order for this Translation which is now presented vnto thee."[2]

Concerning the matter of authorization, H. S. Miller says:

> The original title page [of the KJV], in the midst of much engraving, said, "The Holy Bible, Containing

[2]Ibid.

the Old Testament and the New, Newly translated out
of the original Tongues, with the former Translations
diligently compared and revised by His Majestie's
special Commandment. Appointed to be read in
Churches, Imprinted at London by Robert Barker, Printer
to the King's most excellent Majestie. Anno Dom.
1611." It is well known as the "Authorized Version"
(A.V.), and this may be considered correct, although
there is no record that the version was ever authorized
by parliament, convocation, privy council, or king.[3]

The quotations refer to the king's "order" and "command-ment" which might be construed as authorization except for the fact that without authorization the king was not able to provide any financial assistance for the project, nor did he approve it upon its completion. Any legislative action granting authorization for the project would have provided for its financing through government funding, but the king had to rely on other sources because ". . . he laid on Bancroft [Bishop of London] the duty of appealing to the bishops and the clergy to see that the expenses of these men [the translators] might be provided for while they were engaged in the work of translation."[4]

The second advantage that the KJV has relates to its being a product of a corporate effort that was looked upon as a national project since no particular institution or individual was responsible for it. In effect, the

[3]H. S. Miller, General Biblical Introduction, 4th ed. (Houghton, N. Y.: The Word-Bearer Press, 1947), p. 365.

[4]Butterworth, p. 207.

translators became a representative group of the nation,
and their purpose was to produce an accurate translation
for general use rather than to promote certain theological
biases supported by some. Even though its immediate recep-
tion was not impressive, the translation's national identity
became more of an advantage in later centuries. This fact
is evident when the Rheims-Douay translations of 1582 and
1610 are brought into this frame of reference.

Both the Rheims New Testament (1582) and the Douay
Old Testament (1610) were translations from Jerome's Latin
Vulgate (fourth century), which had been accepted by the
Council of Trent in 1546 as the standard Bible of the Roman
Catholic Church. The English renderings were maintained as
literally as possible from the Latin so that the resulting
diction and construction were highly Latinized. The phras-
ing and expression of the KJV, in contrast, were common to
the nation, and it exerted its nationalistic influence upon
later revisions of the Douay Bible: "The phraseology of
the Authorized Version had become so well established as a
standard for translation of the Scriptures into English,
that the wording of the original Douay version was consider-
ably altered to bring it into accordance with this stan-
dard. . . ."[5]

[5]Ibid., p. 205.

Indeed, there was considerable alteration made which has filtered through the centuries to the New American Catholic Edition bearing the imprimatur of Francis Cardinal Spellman, January 18, 1952. The preface to this edition indicates that the 1750 Challoner version is sourced in the Vulgate just as is the Rheims-Douay, and when it is read in the light of Butterworth's comment it becomes evident that a strong national Anglicizing is the result so that, in part, the preface states:

> Hence it is that Catholic versions of the Scriptures in modern tongues are commonly taken from the Vulgate, and must be so if destined to any public use. . . . The same was true, in fact, of the first complete English Bible produced for Catholics after the invention of printing. Though intended quite as much for private as for public reading, it was taken direct from the Latin of the Vulgate. This was known as the Rheims-Douay Version, edited entire in 1610. It was succeeded in 1750 by the version of Bishop Challoner, which also went back to the same source. Although published as a revision of the Rheims-Douay, this version was really "little short of a new translation," as Cardinal Wiseman has publicly affirmed.
>
> Most modern Catholics have never seen a copy of the Rheims-Douay Version. It is chiefly Challoner's revision that is still the model for our familiar Catholic Bibles in English. Such is the case with the issue herewith presented to American readers.[6]

The nationalizing effect of the KJV is most obvious when these versions are compared, as in the case of verse

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[6]The Holy Bible: New American Catholic Edition (New York: Benziger Brothers, Inc., 1950), p. vii.

five of Psalm 23:

> KJV: "Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup
> runneth over."

> Rheims-Douay: "Thou has fatted my head with oyle:
> and my chalice inebriating how goodlie is it!"

> New American: "Thou anointest my head with oil;
> my cup brims over."

The inverted word order "how goodlie is it!" and the
transliteration "inebriating" of the Rheims-Douay combine
to enforce the Latin character of the text, but the flow
and diction of the New American Catholic Edition, which
closely follows Challoner's version, show the influence of
the KJV by reading in a manner characteristic of the
English speaking nation.

The first two advantages that the King James Version
has, however, are not as great as the third advantage.
One of the factors that has brought the KJV to prominence
in the literature of Western civilization is the advantage
of the very era in which it was written.

Of a certainty, the fifty-four scholars originally
summoned by King James to do the translating were influ-
enced to some degree by the host of significant contributors
to Renaissance literature that was permeating their society.
In their normal scholarly pursuits they would have read
writers who were then establishing the vigorous quality of
writing that was so characteristic of the period, and in

their translations they would have either unconsciously or
with conscious design utilized those qualities in their own
work.

Along with the many literary forms that were being
used during the Renaissance, the age also produced a pro-
liferation of Bible translations that span the period from
the time of William Tyndale's first translation of the New
Testament from the Greek in 1525 to the Rheims-Douay
version in 1610. These translations in varying degrees
influenced the literary character of the KJV. The most
important was Tyndale's work because his was the first
translation produced by Renaissance scholarship that went
back to the original languages of the Bible rather than the
Latin Vulgate as did earlier translators. Hyder Rollins
and Herschel Baker express the value of Tyndale's work in
relation to the KJV this way:

> Even though he never achieved his dream of
> translating the whole Bible, Tyndale has been
> credited with doing more toward shaping the King
> James Version of 1611 than any other man. Working
> directly from the Hebrew and the Greek--although he
> also consulted Erasmus' Latin and Luther's German
> versions--he sought to render the Scripture in
> faithful and idiomatic English.[7]

As he sought to achieve his goal for a translation
"in faithful and idiomatic English," Tyndale benefitted from

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[7]Hyder E. Rollins and Herschel Baker, eds., The
Renaissance in England (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath and
Company, 1954), p. 131.

the fresh humanistic and theological scholarship of Erasmus
and Luther. This combination of a desire for a translation
in the idiom of the people and a willingness to turn to
contemporary scholarship established a foundation for many
succeeding translations.

Tyndale's own statements concerning his work demon-
strate the priorities upon the language that he deemed
necessary. In his preface to The Newe Testament (1534),
he expressed very clearly that he had faults, some of
which he had already corrected and others which he thought
would later be found:

> If anye man fynde fautes ether with the translacion
> or ought besyde . . . to the same it shall be law
> full to translate it themselves and to put what they
> lust therto. If I shall perceave ether by my selfe
> or by the informacion of other, that ought be
> escaped me, or myght be more playnlye translated, I
> will shortlye after, cause it to be mended.[8]

This statement of his desire to "cause it to be mended"
comes in the first two paragraphs of the article; later
he speaks of the possible spiritual benefit to the reader
of the translation. Even though accuracy of translation
may have been of primary importance to Tyndale, he was
also very careful to achieve propriety of expression be-
cause in the colophon, "To the Reader," in his 1525 edition

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[8]William Tyndale, "W. T. Vnto the Reader" in The New
Testament: Translated by William Tyndale, ed. N. Hardy
Willis (1534; rpt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,
1938), p. 3.

he said: ". . . and to seke in certayne places more proper englysshe. . . ."[9]

Hereby was a basic principle established that was an important guide for the translators of the KJV to prompt them not to abide by the literalness of expression as in the case of the Rheims-Douay, but to seek variants that would be accurate in meaning and rich in tone, and fall into the rhythmic cadence of the passage, and yet be distinctly English.

What the early Renaissance did for Tyndale was compounded over the next several decades as the Renaissance progressed, so that the pyramid effect upon the KJV translators was inescapable. Very little has been recorded about the literary dimension of the KJV in relation to the attitudes of the translators and the rules that governed their manner of expression, but Butterworth's comment helps bring the matter into sharper focus:

> Two of the rules laid down for their [the translators] guidance had to do with the sort of language they should use, but the import of these rules was doctrinal rather than literary and was directed against what were regarded as faults in the earlier versions. They read:
> 3. The old Eclesiastical Words to be kept, viz., the Word Church not to be translated Congregation &c.
> 4. When a Word hath divers Significations, that to be kept which hath been most commonly used by the most of the Ancient Fathers, being agreeable to the

[9]Ibid., p. 612.

> Propriety of the Place and the Analogy of the
> Faith. . . .
>   Though the translators may have been influenced
> by doctrinal motives in their choice of words, yet
> their decision not to be tied to an identity of words
> was not without its literary effect. Indeed, . . .
> we may fairly catch the feelings of liberation that
> characterized so much of the literary renascence
> through which England has been passing.[10]

This freedom provided for a vigorous, fresh means by

which nuances of sense could be blended together with

sounds and cadences as in John 1:12:

> But as many as received him, to them gave he
> power to become the sons of God, even to them that
> believe on his name.

The word "power" is _exousia_ in the Greek and can also be

correctly translated as "authority"; however, to use

"authority" in the statement interrupts the smooth cadence

that has been established in the context generally and more

particularly in the isolated statement by the predominant

use of one and two syllable words. "Power" can be pro-

nounced as one syllable so that the rhythm need not be

altered; thus the poetic quality becomes clearly evident

as in this scansion:

> But as many as received
> him, to them gave he power
> to become the sons of God,
> even to them that believe on his name.

[10]Butterworth, pp. 218-219.

The notion of "sons of God" is made distinct by its variant rhythm followed by a strong caesura which sets off the last section of the statement. This last part maintains a triple metrical flow established in the first part except that the stress is reversed, thus heightening the effect.

In contrast to this verse is the prose passage from I Corinthians 15:24:

> Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

It is in such a statement as this that the freedom of the translators' diction becomes a very important factor.

The word translated "authority" in this passage is the same Greek word, _exousia_, that in the previous text was translated "power," and the word translated "power" comes from _dunamis_. For obvious reasons the translators could not render the expression "and all power and power," so they exercised the principle of liberty by using "authority," which signifies a right position. Distinct from this meaning is "power," which signifies might or strength. The combination of the two words in the translation gives a very satisfactory rendering of the meaning of the original. The rhythm of this prose statement is not as significant a factor as it was in the former passage, which is much more rhythmical and graceful.

This liberty in translation in no case indicates any abuse. Instead, it appears to be an added feature regarding the literary sensitivity of the translators so that the rendering would be expressive, fresh, and appropriate. An example of this literary character is found in Isaiah 35:10 and 51:11, both of which are identical in the Hebrew:

> And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come from Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away (Isa. 35:10).

> Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away (Isa. 51:11).

By handling the technicalities of translation in a more relaxed, yet accurate, manner, the translators were at liberty to let the literary form emerge in a natural, artistic expression that is similar to the original. The dominant overriding form is the narrative. Moving from Genesis to Revelation, the story reveals an immutable God of love and justice who relates to man on both a national level and an individual level, and it satisfies the Aristotelian critical criterion by maintaining a ". . . proper structure of the Plot. . . . A whole is that which has a beginning, a middle, and an end."[11]

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[11]Aristotle, The Poetics of Aristotle, trans. S. H. Butcher, 4th ed. (London: MacMillan and Co. Limited, 1925), p. 31.

The plot structure shows how God in His relationship
to man moves from the creation to the consummation, from
the design of man to the destiny of man, and from an earthly,
ephemeral garden to an ethereal, eternal glory. God is the
protagonist as He, by providential prerogative, seeks to
resolve the major conflict of the narrative, the problem of
good and evil.

The basic assumptions about the protagonist invest in
Him the capability of fulfilling such a larger-than-life
role. It is said of Him that He is ". . . from everlasting
to everlasting" (Psalm 90:2). It is also said of Him that
"He ruleth by his power for ever" (Psalm 66:7), and "The
LORD reigneth" (Psalm 97:1; 99:1). These statements assume
the eternality and sovereign power of God by which He is
enabled to fulfill His role, thus meeting the demands of
the critic for credibility.

The protagonist is introduced to the reader in the
first statement of the narration: "In the beginning God
created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). The events
that are subsequent to this introduction permit the reader
to see the protagonist in His role as the creator who did
only that which was good, even to creating man in His own
image (Genesis 1:26, 27). The plot is established and the

conflict emerges with the introduction of the antagonist in
the third chapter, verse 1:

> Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast
> of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said
> unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of
> every tree of the garden?

The antagonist is seen only as a deceptive destroyer from
his first entrance into the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:1-13),
where he instigated the fall of man, to his last appearance
as he deceives "the nations which are in the four quarters
of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to
battle" (Revelation 20:8) in a final effort to defeat God.
In contrast, the protagonist is seen as the creator at the
beginning and is then progressively revealed as the posses-
sor of perfect attributes, such as omnipotence, omniscience,
omnipresence, holiness, righteousness, love, and justice.
Their conflict is developed to its climax with the cruci-
fixion and resurrection of Christ, who is God incarnate. It
is that event which determines victory for God and utter
defeat for Satan, thus resolving the conflict.

The entire narrative is framed by remarkable struc-
tural similarities at the beginning and the end, with the
end in reverse order. Just as the first two chapters
deal with a good, new creation, the last two chapters deal
with another good, new creation. The key figure in both
instances is the protagonist, and in juxtaposition to Him

in the neighboring chapters is the antagonist. Just as the
third chapter at the beginning exhibits a deceiver bent
toward evil, the third chapter from the end exhibits the
same deceiver still bent toward evil, and in both cases a
judgment is declared upon him:

> And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because
> thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle,
> and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly
> shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days
> of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and
> the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall
> bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel
> (Genesis 3:14,15).

> And the devil that deceived them was cast into
> the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the
> false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night
> for ever and ever (Revelation 20:10).

Because the narrative is framed in this manner, there
is a sense of unity that is produced which becomes an
important factor in relation to the literary form. Northrop
Frye states that the Bible needs to be critically approached
as ". . . a single archetypal structure extending from
creation to apocalypse."[12] If the Bible is approached on
this basis, there is no logical way for the critic to
segment the work by extracting and isolating different
literary forms. This is not to say that the Bible cannot be
approached according to its different sections or genres

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[12]Northrop Frye, _Anatomy of Criticism_ (Princeton, N. J.:
Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 315.

just as a Shakespearean drama may be studied in respect to its different scenes or acts. The key to such a study is that a Shakespearean drama is first assumed to be a unified body of literature that is comprised of a series of scenes and acts which are all related. To recognize these relationships as interdependent is to strengthen the fact of the drama's unity. On the other hand, for the critic to segment a Shakespearean drama would be disastrous because the various sections would become isolated and lose the delicate perspective of meaningful relationships which, when they are fully developed, comprise the whole.

This same principle is valid when considering the Bible. It must be first assumed that the Bible is unified. There is the ever present tendency, because of the variety of literary forms comprising the whole, to treat the individual genre in an isolated manner rather than to show how it makes a necessary contribution to the whole or how one form relates to another. All of the parts are actually interdependent so that they form a strong unity whose design and texture are richly esthetic.

The assumption of unity need not rely upon the structure of the total narrative only, for other significant factors are involved. A check of the authors of the various books reveals that they were all Jews, except Luke, who wrote the Gospel of Luke and the Acts. The

nationalistic spirit of the writers unifies the text as each
of the writers shows how the Jew, either nationally or
individually, related to God and to other men. Their
nationalistic identity was important to them as in the case
of the Apostle Paul when he was defending himself in the
Roman court before Agrippa:

> My manner of life from my youth, which was at the
> first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, known to all
> the Jews;
> Which knew me from the beginning, if they would
> testify, that after the straitest sect of our religion
> I lived a Pharisee.
> And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the
> promise made of God unto our fathers:
> Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly
> serving God day and night, hope to come (Acts 26:4-7).

This statement bears both his individual nationalistic
identity as well as the national identity of the "twelve
tribes," who for centuries had been anticipating the ful-
filling of "the promise made of God unto our fathers."
Writer after writer positions himself similarly in respect
to this nationalistic outlook. Even Luke expressed the
same outlook by referring to the Jews who were waiting at
Jerusalem "for the promise of the Father" (Acts 1:4).

Another important factor that supports the unity of
the Bible is the remarkable interlacing of allusions in a
seemingly inexhaustible network of references to historical
events, to religious practices, and to persons. In his
first epistle to the Corinthians (10:1), Paul alludes to

the Israelites' experiences of following a cloud and passing through the Red Sea as they fled from enslavement in Egypt. The record of this event is given in Exodus 13:21-14:31. The religious properties and practices described in detail throughout large sections of Exodus and Leviticus are alluded to in Hebrews 9:1-10, and the Old Testament prophet, Jonah, along with King Solomon, are alluded to in Matthew 12:38-42. These examples only indicate the range of allusions contained in the Bible and are not intended to reflect any careful selection from which meaningful relationships can be developed. However, if a classification and analysis of numerous allusions were made, the richness of the literary character would readily surface. For this reason Leland Ryken states: "No other anthology of literature possesses the unified texture of allusions that biblical literature displays."[13]

Now that the narrative has been established as the basic literary genre of the Bible by exhibiting its capability of meeting the critical requisites of plot, character portrayal, and unity, consideration will be given to the variety of genres contained therein so that the multiplicity of literary forms may be seen as interdependent

[13]Leland Ryken, The Literature of the Bible (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974), p. 16.

parts of the whole. The genres that will be considered in addition to the narrative are chronicle, biography, prophecy, epistle, parable, drama, and poetry.

The scriptural narrative is divided into two main divisions which are popularly called the Old Testament and the New Testament. This designation is not accurate because a testament indicates a will. A more precise term is "covenant," which signifies an agreement. The KJV translators used the word "Testament" for the division titles, but they chose to use either "covenant" or "testament" in the text of the New Testament. The Greek diatheke appears fourteen times as "testament" only in the singular and twenty times as "covenant" in the singular plus three times in plural form, which once again displays the translators' freedom of word choice; however, out of the two hundred ninety-one times that the Hebrew bereeth appears in the Old Testament, the translators consistently translated the word "covenant." This word is important to the structure of the Bible because it is by means of a series of covenants that God can relate meaningfully to His creation.

The covenants are historically based, primarily in relation to the Jewish nation; therefore, the chronicle is a significant genre that in the Old Testament occupies the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy; and twelve books commonly designated as the

historical books: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, First and Second Samuel, First and Second Kings, First and Second Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. The historical books of the New Testament are Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts.

Within the framework of the chronicle genre is a mixture of legal, biographical, and national writings that are strongly fused. The Pentateuch is undoubtedly the most outstanding example of this phenomenon. The initial covenant that God made with Abraham is the historical, legal record of the establishment of the Jewish nation:

> Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

> And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing (Genesis 12:1,2).

The document clearly established Abraham as the father of the nation, and generations of Jews have adhered to its historicity as well as to the legal rights to land provided that nation under the covenant:

> And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land. . . (Genesis 12:7).
> For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever (Genesis 13:15).
> In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates (Genesis 15:18).

Because Abraham is thus considered the founder of the nation, it may rightly be expected that a great deal of

biographical material concerning him would be included in the pages of the nation's history. Subsequent events in his life are all recorded in Genesis. The remaining books of the Pentateuch have much to say about the nation's founder, as do most of the other Old Testament historical documents. Every one of the New Testament historical books also gives some biographical information concerning Abraham.

With the establishment of the Jewish nation there needed to be laws established, both religious and civil, for the governance of an organized society. The development of the legal system is recorded in the Pentateuch. The key figure of the legal system is Moses, who even as Abraham, has been revered by generations of Jews as a great national hero who delivered them from political and spiritual bondage under Egyptian domination that had spanned four centuries. The major historical events of this deliverance are narrated primarily in Exodus and Numbers, and the legal documentations are given in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. The other Old Testament historical books contain frequent references to Moses, and as it is with Abraham, all the New Testament historical books provide some information concerning Moses to corroborate the historical authenticity.

The chronicle as a genre should be viewed in a position that is second only to the all-inclusive narrative, and both of them along with the other genres yet to be discussed should be given the privilege of certain basic assumptions that were embraced by the various writers. The first of these assumptions relates to the matter of historicity. The writers, without exception, wrote with an authentic tone that exhibited their conviction that they were writing a factual, not a fictional, record: "One result of this historical emphasis is that a usual staple of literature, fiction, is nearly absent from biblical literature. Another result is that the freedom of biblical writers to invent details in a story was eliminated. Biblical writers resist the tendency found elsewhere in ancient literature to embellish their stories with imagined details."[14]

Another assumption of the writers was that their responsibility, as it related to the subject matter, was to present the material honestly so that the circumstance or the character involved would not necessarily be cast into a favorable position: "Their [Hebrews'] national story is unique; it is the story of the interaction of divine

[14]Ryken, pp. 19-20.

Law with historical experience in all its variety."[15] By
making this statement Robert Jacobs not only recognizes
the uniqueness of Hebraic history, but he also implies that
such a story will record the variables of real experien-
ces that may or may not be commendable to the nation.

Prophecy as a biblical genre occupies a large part
of the Bible. It is commonly accepted that the Old Testa-
ment contains seventeen prophetic books, five of which are
major: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel,
and twelve of which are minor: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Oba-
diah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai,
Zechariah, and Malachi. This designation, however, can
be more accurately distinguished if Lamentations in the
prophetic group stems from its ancient Hebrew association,
as indicated by Miller, who states that at one time the
Lamentations was considered a unit with Jeremiah, but
in the more modern divisions of the Old Testament it has
been maintained in the position following Jeremiah be-
cause it is supplemental to the prophecy.[16] The designa-
tion of some prophetic books as major and some as minor
must not be construed to reflect different levels of
quality in regard to style, content, or importance. The

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[15]Robert G. Jacobs, The Literature of the Bible
(Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Company Publishers, 1970),
p. ix.

[16]Miller, p. 8.

distinction is based solely upon the length of the works; the lengthier prophecies are major, the shorter ones minor.

The New Testament contains only one prophetic book, Revelation, although, as in the case of other genres as well, some prophetic statements are contained in other books in both the Old and New Testaments. For example, in the first epistle to the Thessalonians, the Apostle Paul wrote concerning the prophecy of the second advent of Christ.

The concept of the prophetic books needs clarification because the contemporary meaning of prophecy is understood as being predictive. This was not the primary sense of the Hebrew language because the word <u>nawbaw</u> means to speak forth in an abundance of words very arduously just as a spring bubbles forth with a lively flow of water. The prophet, then, is simply a spokesman for God who has a message of monition and instruction that was assumed to be inspired of God. At times, the instructional aspect would be predictive, and it is to this element of the prophetic books that biblical scholars have resorted in their search to gain knowledge about the mysteries of the future.

To the student of literature, however, the prophetic genre bears the intrigue of a refinement of delicately framed prose utterances that take on all of the character- istics of poetry. The very character of the prophets'

messages, particularly predictive portions, demands the sensitivity of poetic expression that has a satisfying esthetic dimension for the reader because the ideas appeal strongly to human experience.

The book of Isaiah illustrates the poetic quality of prophecy very well. In the second section of the prophecy, Isaiah speaks of an anticipated time during which the Hebrew nation would be free from tyrannical captivity, such as they were experiencing under Babylonia. That time would come when the Messiah would appear first in suffering (Chapter fifty-three) and then in supremacy (Chapters sixty-one and sixty-two). National morale was low, and Isaiah desired to turn them from their immediate distresses with his message of heavenly promise:

> But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint (Isaiah 40:31).

The poetry of this verse is outstanding because it is experiential. The diction is natural so that the listener is not distracted by affectation. The tone is reassuring and uplifting, and in the latter part the tension is perfectly balanced. The thought is enhanced by the ambiguity of the word "wait," which may be interpreted in terms of enduring patiently over a period of time or in terms of service as a servant ministering in loyal obedience to his

master. To figuratively "mount up with wings as eagles" is an image that is exhilarating to the listener as he imagines himself soaring in surging strength into the realm of the sun to enjoy the freedom and security of open heaven by being unshackled from terrestrial oppression. In the light of this ancient poetry it is no wonder that centuries later Milton reflected its thought when he concluded his sonnet upon his blindness with "they also serve who only stand and wait."

The prophetic genre displays a high degree of the interdependence of the literature of the Bible. The poetic form incorporated into prophecy is an example of this interdependence. Biography is a genre similarly incorporated into prophecy as in the book of Hosea, which records the unhappy circumstances of Hosea's marriage to Gomer. In his personal experience, his wife was unfaithful to him, and after a time of separation he brought her back to himself again. This biographical account was used by Hosea as an analogy of the spiritual adultery being committed by the apostate ten northern tribes who had seceded from the kingdom and rejected the worship of God. Hosea prophesied to these tribes by appealing to them to return to God even as Gomer had returned to him:

O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.

> Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say
> unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us gra-
> ciously: so will we render the calves of our lips
> (Hosea 14:1,2).

The epistles form another important genre contained

in the Bible. The most obvious and well-known are those

which are found in the New Testament, but there are

references to such correspondence in the Old Testament as

well. The book of Esther refers to a postal system by

which letters were delivered to all the provinces under

King Ahasuerus:

> And he wrote in the king Ahasuerus' name, and
> sealed it with the king's ring, and sent letters by
> posts on horseback, and riders on mules, camels, and
> young dromedaries (Esther 8:10).

> So the posts that rode upon mules and camels
> went out, being hastened and pressed on by the king's
> commandment (Esther 8:14).

Not only do such references to epistles occur in the Old

Testament, but some letters are recorded in Ezra 4:11-16;

5:6-17; and 7:11-26, which tell about adversaries to the

Jews just returning to Jerusalem after the Babylonian cap-

tivity. The adversaries wrote to Artaxerxes, king of

Persia, and to his successor, Darius, urging them not to

permit the Jews to rebuild their temple and city, Jeru-

salem, on the grounds that it would result in their not

paying "toll, tribute, and custom, and so thou shalt en-

damage the revenue of the kings" (Ezra 4:13). Artaxerxes

responded with a letter to Ezra, which was his official

decree, that all the Israelites who wanted to re-establish Jerusalem could do so unmolested.

The prophecy of Jeremiah contains an epistle in chapter twenty-nine that differs from those referred to in Esther and those contained in Ezra. Jeremiah's epistle was not written as an official correspondence as were the others; therefore, it has a more intimate tone of concern that comes from a person who feels a strong responsibility toward those to whom he is writing. The spirit of the letter is one of loving advice, much akin to that same spirit found in the later New Testament epistles.

These letters of the New Testament occupy about one-half of its pages, and, according to Dwight Pratt's observation, distinguish the New Testament from any other sacred writing:

> The fact that the NT is so largely composed of letters distinguishes it, most uniquely, from all the sacred writings of the world. The Scriptures of other oriental religions--the Vedas, the Zend Avesta, the Tripitaka, the Koran, the writings of Confucius-- lack the direct and personal address altogether.[17]

As in the Old Testament, some letters are contained within books identified with other genres. The historical book of Acts contains at least two letters--Acts 15:23-29; Acts 23:25-30--besides making reference to others. Also,

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[17]Dwight M. Pratt, "Epistle," _The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia_, ed. James Orr, II (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957), 966.

the prophetic book of Revelation contains letters in chapters 2:1-3:22 that are addressed to seven different churches.

Outstanding, however, are the twenty-one epistles that are presented in their entirety as individual books of the Bible. Fourteen of them are credited to the Apostle Paul, except for the authorship of the last one listed which is debatable, and are called the Pauline Epistles: Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I and II Thessalonians, I and II Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and Hebrews. The remaining seven epistles are called the General Epistles: James, I and II Peter, I, II, and III John, and Jude.

An epistle generally may fall on a rhetorical continuum anywhere between formal and informal, designed for either a public or a private reading. The Pauline and General Epistles were designed more for public reading, and for this reason they tended to be more formal in content. They are didactic because they present the doctrine of the Christian Church; they are hortative because they encourage a particular way of life; they are persuasive because they are logical; and they are pragmatic because they are experiential.

Structurally, the epistles typically contain the salutation which identifies the writer as well as giving a

greeting to the recipient who is also named. Jacobs states
that such a salutation was a standard opening for Greek
letters and that the close included a greeting to other
acquaintances; thus he concludes: "Paul's letters do not
deviate significantly from the form of the familiar
letters of his century; their only differences are that
they are most often addressed to a group and that their
subject is formal. 'Epistle' is an apt designation of an
essay cast into the form of a familiar letter."[18]

The literary character of the epistles does not rest
upon the content or the form, but, as Ryken contends, upon
"the stylistic richness that confronts the reader every-
where."[19] Since this study is based upon the King James
Version, the examples for the Revised Standard Version
that Ryken uses[20] to illustrate Pauline "stylistic rich-
ness" will serve only as a pattern for the following
references, except for one difference in that a literal
rendering from the Greek follows each of the KJV render-
ings:

8 We are troubled on every side,
                    yet not distressed;
9 We are perplexed,
                    but not in despair;

[18]Jacobs, p. 420.

[19]Ryken, p. 320.

[20]Ibid., pp. 320-327.

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                persecuted,
                            but not forsaken;
                cast down,
                            but not destroyed;
                                    (II Corinthians 4:8,9).

    [We]
    in every (way)
                oppressed,
                            but not straightened;
                perplexed,
                            but not utterly at a loss;
                persecuted,
                            but not forsaken;
                cast down,
                            but not destroyed;²¹
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18 Therefore as by the offence of one
        <u>judgment</u> <u>came</u>
                    upon all men to condemnation;
    even so by the righteousness of one
        <u>the</u> <u>free</u> <u>gift</u> <u>came</u>
                    upon all men unto justification
                    of life.

19 For as by one man's disobedience
        many were made sinners,
        so by the obedience of one
        should many be made righteous.

20 Moreover the law entered,
        that the offence might abound.
    But where sin abounded,
        grace did much more abound:

21 That as sin hath reigned
                        unto death,
    Even so might grace reign
                        through righteousness
                        unto eternal life
                        by Jesus Christ our Lord
                            (Romans 5:18-21).

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²¹George Ricker Berry, trans., The Interlinear
Literal Translation of the Greek New Testament (Grand
Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1961), p. 474.
Berry's text is not given in the above form; I have altered
the format to provide a better visual comparison between
the structure of KJV and the original.

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so then as by one offence
       towards all men to condemnation
so also by one accomplished righteousness
       towards all men to justification of life.
For as by the disobedience of one man
       sinners were constituted the many,
so also by the obedience of the one
       righteous shall be constituted the many.
But law came in by the bye,
       that might abound the offence;
but where abounded sin,
       overabounded grace,
that as reigned sin
                 in death
so also grace might reign
                 through righteousness
                 to life eternal
                 through Jesus Christ our Lord.[22]
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These two comparisons are sufficient to illustrate two features that mark the greatness of the epistles in general as they appear in the KJV. First, the grand rhetorical control that the Apostle Paul exhibited in the framing of his sentences indicates that he was knowledgeable of classical rhetoric with its parallelisms, antitheses, figures of speech, and perfect balance. Second, as if governed by the dictates of the very essence of great literature, the translators of the KJV carefully preserved the stylistic beauty and force of the epistles by means of accurate renderings and structural fidelity.

The parable is another genre that occupies an impressive position in the roster of genres that comprise the Bible, even though it differs significantly in regard

[22]Ibid., p. 413.

to its implementation and relationship to the other genres. All other genres that are referred to in this study at one time or another constitute an entire book, but in no book does the parable appear as the dominant genre. This literary form simply makes its unique contribution within the framework of the dominant genre, thus providing variation, contextual coloring, and didactic emphasis and amplification. The parable also differs from other genres because it is the only form that is pure fiction, thus relying upon its imaginative intrigue to produce a desired result.

An ancient fictional narrative that biblical scholarship generally classifies as a parable is the story that Jotham told the Shechemites about the trees (Judges 9:7-21). In substance it is a parable because it is didactic, but in form it is fable because it personifies the trees whose dialogue conveys the plot. A similar form is used in II Kings 14:9, 10 and II Chronicles 25:18, 19, both of which record the same story about the thistle that desired the daughter of the cedar of Lebanon be given to his son in marriage. Other parables are contained in the Old Testament, but the story of the trees and of the thistle are the only two that conform to the fable technique.

The most common of the parables are those found in the New Testament, particularly from the teaching of Christ. These stories are contained in the Gospels, and they provide

insights into the imaginative powers of Christ, who uti-
lized their realistic and simplistic qualities to communi-
cate concepts that were usually foreign and unacceptable
to the people and thereby often misconstrued. They deal
with such concepts as the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 13),
joy as it relates to spiritual repentance (Luke 15),
service for God in stewardship (Luke 16), and importunity
in prayer (Luke 18).

From a literary perspective the parable is allegori-
cal because it presents abstractions in concrete terms by
which the listener or reader may bridge the intellectual
gap between the unknown and the known and between what is
conceptual and what is experiental. A learning situation
is created so that in every case a didactic, moralistic
result is achieved.

For example, the theme of the parable of the good
Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37) deals with prejudice and was used
by Christ to teach a self-righteous young lawyer who be-
lieved that he had kept all of God's law. By means of the
parable Christ was able to place the lawyer in a position
whereby he could recognize that his prejudice actually
contributed to his violating God's law and thereby dis-
qualified him from his aspiration to gain eternal life.
Rather than present a case in court before a judge, the
lawyer was placed in the role of judge to decide for himself

which man--the priest, the Levite, or the Samaritan--was a real neighbor. With the evidence before him, the lawyer had no alternative than to name the Samaritan as being an unprejudiced neighbor who had a sincere concern for a man of another nationality.

This parable exhibits the allegorical property of bridging the intellectual gap between the conceptual abstraction and the experiential concretion. Prejudice in the case of the lawyer was a concept of sociological significance that he apparently felt was far removed from him; however, the realistic presentation of the story about a fellow countryman falling prey to robbers on a specific road was within the framework of familiar experiences known to Palestinians. This realism brought the concept to a common meeting point with experience.

Because a parable strongly relies upon its imaginative appeal, it was a popular form of storytelling. Christ used it as a major instrument for His teaching: "But without a parable spake he not unto them" (Mark 4:34). Circumstances of life that were common to the people were given an imaginative embellishment that provided an attractive coloring to what might have been otherwise mundane, and Christ had the creative powers to construct such embellishments so that ethical principles could be easily deduced.

The last two genres included in this summary are
drama and poetry. There are five books so classified:
Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon.
Of these five books, Job undoubtedly has the strongest
dramatic qualities, even though it was not designed for
the stage. Drama was not a part of the Hebrew culture,
but poetry was solidly entrenched; therefore, it was only
natural that the writer ignore the conventions that are
now normally expected with drama that is intended for the
stage. Critics such as Buckner Trawick and Ryken admit
that Job is not to be construed as pure drama: "Although
the book does not fit precisely into any literary category,
it comes closest to being a drama;"[23] and "Since much of
the story consists of dialogue, there can be no doubt that
it has a strong dramatic element, but it is not a drama."[24]
Because of its antiquity, Jacobs suggests that "the Book
of Job is written in a genre closer to Egyptian literature
than to any book included in the Old Testament. . . .
When he [the Job poet] composed his dramatization of a
crucial Jewish problem he turned to Egyptian literary
models."[25]

[23]Buckner B. Trawick, The Bible as Literature (New
York: Barnes and Noble, 1963), p. 274.

[24]Ryken, p. 109.

[25]Jacobs, p. 258.

These views concerning Job point to at least two facts. The first is that the book is unique to the canon of Scripture because it displays lyric poetry, wisdom literature, and dramatic quality at once. The second fact is that poetry is the medium used for the dramatic presentation of the content, a fact which strongly supports the position that the biblical genres must be considered as interdependent forms and not isolated entities.

A further exposition of this remarkable integration of genres is presented by Moulton in his chapter titled "Dramatic Lyrics and Lyrics of Meditation":

> Again, we saw it as a distinction of Hebrew literature that it has no completely separate drama, but that dramatic form appears as a considerable modifying force in other departments of its poetry. We are now to see how this dramatic form invades the department of lyric poetry, until it is possible for even so short a lyric as a psalm to be in essence a complete drama.[26]

Evidently, the drama of daily living received high priority in the poet's view because he not only dealt with the universal theme of suffering in Job, but he also structured the narrative so that the movement displays the theme primarily by means of dialogue. The four visitors, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, and Elihu, who came to Job exhibited their level of thinking by means of their long discourses. The dramatic movement moves slowly just as the

[26]Moulton, p. 174.

contemporary life of that early era, but as the visitors
speak, their thoughts converge slowly into a conclusion that
illuminates the theme.

Structurally, Job is not a tragedy, even though the
tragic element may appear very strong in terms of a charac-
ter of high position brought to a low position. Tragedy,
according to Aristotelian doctrine, depicts hamartia,
which characteristically was found in characters of high
social position. Because the character was thus weakened,
he would subsequently be overcome by it and be brought low.
This was not the case with Job. Hamartia did not determine
his fall because he was introduced as a character who was
"perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed
evil" (Job 1:1). The force that brought about Job's fall
was external to him, whereas hamartia is an internal force
that results in external consequences.

Job is actually a comedy because it meets the basic
criterion for comedy--a good or happy ending. The apparent
disproportion of the drama tends to take the reader into
what appears to be tragedy as the four friends of Job re-
hearse the reason for his suffering so much. The dialogues
are lengthy and occupy a greater part of the drama from
chapter four through verse six of chapter forty-two. The
tragic brilliance of all the chapters has a tendency to
linger with the reader who has become engrossed with the

tragic element to the point where he is unable to refocus his sensibilities quickly enough upon the last eleven verses of the book, which abruptly change the whole direction of the drama into a comic ending. When seen from a structural perspective, the sudden comic movement can be considered anemic and insipid, but thematically viewed it is as a diamond resting upon the jeweler's black velvet demonstration cloth. The last few verses provide a resolution for the philosophic problem in which the characters were embroiled throughout their lengthy dialogue.

To refer to the theme of Job is to refer to one of the requirements for drama that Aristotle listed in his Poetics as "thought." Poetics lists five other essentials for drama: plot, character, diction, song, and spectacle.[27] Trawick shows how all of these elements are employed in Job, except for song which is omitted. He also claims that even though the spectacle involves scenery, this requirement was met by the three distinct places where the action was conducted, particularly when the drama was not intended for the stage.[28]

The dramatic narrative form of Job is one of several types of poetry that are used in the Bible. It differs

[27]Poetics, p. 25.

[28]Trawick, pp. 274-277.

sharply from the lyric poetry which predominates in the
Psalms. Since lyric poetry has but one speaker who
expresses his observations and feelings about man and the
universe, the poetry of Job with its portrayal of man's
interaction in a given situation is obviously distinct from
the poetry of the Psalms.

The dramatic narrative also differs from the wisdom
poetry used in Proverbs. This latter form is largely
axiomatic and didactic in order to provide a practical con-
sideration of the great issues of life as they relate to
God:

> To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the
>   words of understanding;
> To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and
>   judgment and equity;
> To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man
>   knowledge and discretion. . . .
> The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge:
>   but fools despise wisdom and instruction
>   (Proverbs 1:2-4, 7).

Ferdinand Schenck adequately describes the role of wisdom
literature in the Bible by stating, "The wisdom literature
of the Bible is the result of reflection upon the practical
side of life; it describes the proper conduct of man in a
universe governed by the righteous God. . . . The Book of
Proverbs is the philosophy of the Bible applied to the con-
duct of life and cast in the form of poetry."[29]

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[29]Ferdinand S. Schenck, The Oratory and Poetry of the
Bible (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1915), p. 230.

As in the case with the other genres included in the Bible, poetry incorporates biographical and historical references so that there is much information that can be drawn from it. There is a tendency, however, to overlook the important fact that the prose books do include poetry, and such inclusions add a tonal, lyrical effect, the quality of which heightens the themes of the book to a loftier position. This effect is epic in its spirit, which reflects the tremendous national pride of the Hebrews.

An example of an early poem that exhibits the spirit of an epic is the song recorded in Exodus 15 that Moses sang upon the remarkable deliverance of the Israelites out of their bondage in Egypt. Prior to the song is a detailed description of the adventure in nonimaginative prose:

> And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them (Exodus 14:28).

This style of writing is reportorial, adhering to the facts of the episode. The contrast which is achieved in the poetry of the song provides a fresh, literary description of the same episode:

> Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea; his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea.
> The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone (Exodus 15:4, 5).

The first account is described sequentially in terms of the action involved, but the second does much more with the event so that the resulting effect is a communication of the dramatic spirit, which brings the reader into the experience rather than simply telling him about it. The portrayal of a whole army with all its equipment being lifted up and hurled as if by one mighty, big hand into the waters of the sea is a description that excites the imagination not only in regard to the dimension of the feat from a numerical viewpoint but from a viewpoint of demonstrable power as well. The imagery of casting an army into the sea is full of power because it is a situation in which power overcomes power: the first and supreme power is supernatural; the second is natural power inherent in the sea; the third power is human, which is particularly symbolized by the chariots. Biblical scholars generally agree that chariots were the ultimate means by which successful warfare could be achieved in that era; therefore, the chariots of Egypt epitomized the greatness of human power. Tension thus becomes an important element in the poetic narrative when the various kinds of power emerge from within such a limited passage.

Another device that is utilized in the segment of the poem and not in the prose account is the simile: "They sank into the bottom as a stone." The figure of speech

reveals the decisive results of the struggle so that any
reader can readily conclude that there was no possibility
for human power to resurface and subsequently pose a threat
against superhuman power in this situation. The expression
indicates finality, and it is obvious that the poet took
great delight in this exhibition of supernatural power
when he stated: "Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious
in power" (Exodus 15:6).

The KJV translators maintained an alliterative sound
in verse four in two pairs of instances that are outstanding
because in one pair, "chariot" and "chosen," the allitera-
tion is present in the original, merkabah and mibchar. In
the other pair translated "cast" and "captains," the
original words, yara and shalosh are not alliterative, but
they are rhythmically parallel due to the similarities of
syllabic and accentual structure. It appears logical that
the translators, because they could not duplicate the
rhythmic structure of the original wording, used allitera-
tion to compensate for what otherwise would have been lost.
This astute choice of words displays the literary acumen
of the translators. It is one of the numerous examples of
the beautiful enmeshment of biblical scholarship and the
literary art form of the KJV.

The question concerning the conscious effort of the
translators to produce such carefully phrased expressions in

this passage or others is a persistent one that can never be fully and satisfactorily answered. There is no doubt of their awareness of this passage being classified as poetry because the transitional statement in verse one, "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord. . .," provided the identifying label that distinguishes the material which follows from that which has gone before in the preceding chapter. To be alerted to the form is to be made conscious of the form, but the degree to which the form had influence upon the translators' diction must remain conjectural except for one important factor. The translators were scholars who were products of the contemporary educational institutions and who remained within the framework of the educational system during their productive, working years. This fact is substantial evidence that such scholars would be more inclined toward conscious deliberation concerning poetic expression than with other genres because the poetry to which they had been exposed was abundantly enriched with Renaissance vitality and freshness. For this reason the KJV is an invaluable tool for the college literature class.

The Exodus passage of poetry is one of the earliest recorded and serves as a marker for the beginning of the very long history of biblical poetry which reached its zenith in the era of King David. As Duncan Macdonald

points out, the Psalms and David become synonymous with established Judaistic thought, "For later Judaism 'David' meant the Psalter."[30] The period of time that elapsed from the early poem to the compilation of the Psalms was about five hundred years. This time span gave opportunity for the normal process of development and maturation of the genre to take place. David had the benefit of poetic tradition common to the nation so that his poetry as well as the poetry of his contemporaries exhibited the sub-tleties, refinements, complexities, and sophistication of great art. The early poetry is rich in metaphor, but its narrative tendency lacks the lustre of the brilliantly contrived structure and expression found in the Psalms; therefore, the Psalms must become a major emphasis in the study of poetry as a genre of biblical literature.

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[30]Duncan Black Macdonald, The Hebrew Literary Genius (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1933), p. 40.

CHAPTER III

STRUCTURE OF OLD TESTAMENT POETRY

The dating of ancient writings where there are no
adequate frames of reference is a common problem among
scholars, and this is certainly true of the biblical
writings. Bible scholars hold widely divergent views
concerning the dating of the different books of the Bible,
and of course, this has influenced the views concerning
the dating of the poetic books.

Higher Criticism, which deals with biblical textual
sources and dates, adheres to a later dating which has
directly influenced, for example, the literary approach of
Julius A. Bewer in his The Literature of the Old Testament.
He states that the Psalter was completed as late as the
third century B.C.,[1] and his date is founded upon "The
decisive breakthrough [that] was made by Julius Wellhausen
in his Geschichte Israels,"[2] which was published in 1878.
His reference to Wellhausen recognizes the late dating of
biblical writings that Wellhausen promulgated. Likewise,

[1]Julius A. Bewer, The Literature of the Old Testament,
3rd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), p. 460.

[2]Ibid., p. xiii.

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Margaret B. Crook reflects a similar influence in <u>The Bible</u> <u>and Its Literary Associations</u> where she states concerning the Psalms: "In all probability the collection remained open until the middle of the second century B.C."[3]

This approach to the dating of the Psalms permits the following conclusion, which to many conservative theologians is unacceptable, or at least debatable: "The collections we now have in our Psalter date from the period of the second temple. But a number of psalms are older, though it is uncertain whether any go back as far as David. . . ."[4]

Conservative biblical scholars adhere to the traditional view of the earlier dating of the Psalms and thus would tend to identify David with the Psalms. One of the main reasons for this position is stated by Ryken:

> Biblical literature is firmly embedded in historical reality. It constantly claims to be history and has repeatedly been authenticated as history by modern archeology. The history of biblical literature is not simply factual but is, as Roland Frye has well stated, "always kept within a framework of interpretive significance." One result of this historical emphasis is that a usual staple of literature, fiction, is nearly absent from biblical literature. Another result is that the freedom of biblical writers to invent details in a story is almost eliminated.[5]

[3]Margaret B. Crook, <u>The Bible and Its Literary Associations</u> (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1937), p. 69.

[4]Bewer, p. 360.

[5]Ryken, p. 19.

Whether or not David should be identified with the Psalms as a major contributor becomes an important question because it involves the subsequent literary problems of interpretation as they relate, for example, to biography. In the view of the literary critic the problem of dating should be left more appropriately in the hands of biblical scholars, except for the insistent related problem of authorship which forces the critic to take a position himself. This study supports the conservative position that David wrote many of the Psalms. This position rests largely on two main arguments, which will be presented briefly and will be shown as important to the structure of Hebrew poetry.

The first argument is from external sources. The foregoing chapter concluded with the evidence that Judaism quite naturally identified the Psalter with David. Not only did Judaism in general support the Davidic authorship, but Josephus, a Jewish historian of the first century A.D., also has provided a rather remarkable reference to the matter. After giving his account of the last several wars that the Israelites had with the Philistines during the time when David was king, Josephus states:

> And now David being freed from wars and dangers, and enjoying for the future a profound peace, composed songs and hymns to God of several sorts of metre; some of those which he made were <u>trimeters</u>, and some were <u>pentameters</u>. He also made instruments of music, and

taught the Levites to sing hymns to God, both on that called the sabbath day, and on other festivals.[6]

Josephus continued to explain the construction of the variety of musical instruments that David made, such as the "viol" that required a bow to draw over the strings, a "psaltery" that was plucked by the fingers, and the "cymbals" that were made of brass.[7]

The attempt that Josephus made to identify the poetry of David by using Greco-Roman classical terminology may be viewed in several ways. The first is that he used this terminology because it was what his readers would readily comprehend even though the terms may not have been precise when applied within the Hebraic poetic framework. The second view is that Josephus may not have defined the terms in the same sense as they are in our modern literary era. Josephus' translator, William Whiston, implies that this is the case when he refers to Josephus' comment on Moses' writing in hexameter verse.[8] A final view is that since Josephus was a historian and not a literary authority, he used the terms in relative ignorance or indifference to their inappropriateness when applied to Hebrew poetry.

[6] Flavius Josephus, "Antiquities of the Jews" in The Life and Works of Flavius Josephus, trans. William Whiston (Philadelphia: Universal Book and Bible House, n.d.), p. 230.

[7] Ibid.

[8] See Whiston's annotation to "Antiquities. . .," Bk. II, Ch. xvi, Sec. 4.

Whichever view is taken concerning Josephus' use of his contemporary terminology, the obvious facts remain, however, that Josephus identified David with the writing of the Psalms and that he was conscious of a definite uniqueness to the Psalms that made them different from the other biblical writings. His awareness of poetic structuring at least elicited from him a comment toward identifying and classifying a literary genre. His statements are modest, yet they have a definite tone as being spoken by an authority. The significance of his statements on Hebrew poetic structure becomes more striking by the fact that, according to G. B. Gray, up to his time there was evidently no writing extant, except for Philo, on Hebrew poetry in any of the Jewish writings before him or for some centuries after him:

> So far as I am aware, there is no discussion of metre, or parallelism, or in general of the formal elements of Hebrew poetry, in the Rabbinical writings, that is to say in Jewish literature written in Hebrew or Aramaic until after the gradual permeation of Jewish by Arabic scholarship from the seventh or eighth century A.D. onwards.[9]

Gray states that Philo's contributing comments on Hebrew poetry are "slight and indirect;"[10] therefore,

[9]George Buchanon Gray, _The Forms of Hebrew Poetry_ (1915; rpt. New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1972), p. 10.

[10]Ibid.

Josephus must be recognized as a chief figure external to the biblical text regarding poetic identities relative to Davidic authorship of many Psalms and to their structure.

The other argument that supports the Davidic authorship of many of the Psalms is from internal evidence. The historical record of the time of King Saul, who preceded David to the throne, provides three specific references to David's artistic capabilities.

When David was yet in his father's house, his reputation as a musician was already established and had reached the court of King Saul who, at the time, had a need for a musician. After a suggestion had been made to Saul ". . . to seek out a man, who is a cunning player on an harp . . ." (I Samuel 16:16), a servant told the king about David, and Saul sent for him. Concerning his arrival in Saul's court, the record states that "David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well . . ." (I Samuel 16:23). In this case it is evident that David was already a sufficiently competent performer because the word translated "cunning" is yadah, meaning "to know," "to have a knowledge, understanding," which conveys the sense of comprehension and of perception; thus David comprehended or was fully knowledgeable of his art as a musician. Because he had in-depth knowledge of his art, David, then, not only was a proficient performer upon instruments and

knew the nature of his music, but he also knew the very essence of lyrical verse, an intrinsic element of the music. Such knowledge can not be construed as superfluous; rather, it is something that required the depth gained by the process of development as a musician.

Associated with development is the fact that David maintained his proficiency while in the employment of the king. To be a court musician would necessitate freshness, quality, ease, and preciseness in performance. David is shown to have been that kind of performer because it is stated: "And David played with his hands, as at other times" (I Samuel 18:10). The focus is upon David's performance, which he was able to sustain on a level that was at least equal to any of his prior performances. Anyone who has a minimal appreciation of the performing arts can readily conclude that David, just as any performer, was diligent in cultivating his artistry by regular and systematic rehearsals so that his performances would not depreciate. Indeed, it would not be inappropriate to conclude that such an endeavor by the performer would have been accompanied by a strong motivation to increase the level of excellence that was already there.

There is strong evidence that David was also given formal instruction in poetry in the school of the prophets, under Samuel's general supervision, at Naioth in Ramah

(I Samuel 19:19,20). Biblical scholarship generally accepts that Naioth was a place where prophets dwelt together. The cenobium was a place of instruction for aspiring prophets. Franz Delitzsch asserts that it was under such instruction that David's poetic talent was cultivated to such a degree that eventually "In David the sacred lyric attained its full maturity."[11]

The third reference to David's artistry in the historical record is an actual inclusion of one of his songs which he wrote to lament the death of Saul, the king, and Jonathan, his friend, the king's son. It is recorded in II Samuel chapter one, verses nineteen through twenty-seven. The elegaic tone is unmistakable throughout, especially in the threefold repetition of "How are the mighty fallen" (II Samuel 1:19, 25, 27) and the frequency of words related to death, such as "slain," "the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away," "in their death they are not divided," "weep over Saul," "O Jonathan, thou was slain," "I am distressed," and "the weapons of war perished" (II Samuel 1:19, 21, 23-27).

This inclusion of the poem in the historical record is strong internal evidence for the Davidic authorship of

[11]Franz Delitzsch, Biblical Commentary on the Psalms, trans. Francis Bolton, I (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1873), 8.

many Psalms. Since David had not yet occupied the throne, although he had already been anointed as king, at the time of Saul and Jonathan's death, the elegy was written in the earlier part of his career. An analysis of the poem reveals David's competency in using such poetical structural devices as unity, syntactical rhythm, thought patterns, and tension. It is also evident that he was competent in the use of such conventional devices as metaphor, apostrophe, and imagery. The following examples illustrate these various devices:

1. A strong sense of unity is achieved by the repetition of the theme "How are the mighty fallen," which occurs three times in verses nineteen, twenty-five, and twenty-seven. Its first and last positions, in the beginning verse of the song and in the last verse, embrace the whole so that the reader is conscious of structural unity.

2. Syntactical rhythm is achieved by the repetition of similar sentence structures. Verse twenty-two reads:

From the blood	of the slain
from the fat	of the mighty
the bow of Jonathan	turned not back
and	
the sword of Saul	returned not empty.

This combination of phrases and clauses is per-
fectly structured and results in a smooth rhyth-
mic pulsation that enhances the concrete battle
imagery.

3. The thought patterns of the poem keep the reader
   in close contact with the narrator. This tech-
   nique gives a movement to the poem which involves
   a deep emotional outburst that seems to swing
   from one thought to another as the narrator con-
   templates the tragedy of death. This movement
   can be identified by observing to whom the
   narrator speaks.

   After stating his theme, the narrator
speaks to a generalized audience in verse twenty
to tell them that he does not want the Philistine
enemies to know about the fall of the national
leaders of Israel:

       Tell it not in Gath

       Publish it not in the streets of

             Askelon. . . .

He then shifts his thought in verse twenty-one
to the place where the heroes died. He makes the
shift by speaking to the mountains and by
pronouncing a curse upon them as if they were to

be blamed for the tragedy:

> Ye mountains of Gilboa
>
> let there be no dew, neither let there
>
> > be rain. . . .

In the next two verses he becomes expositional
as his thinking takes him into a reflection upon
the great warriors:

> From the blood of the slain. . .
>
> Saul and Jonathan were lovely and
>
> > pleasant. . . .

From that thought he turns in verse twenty-four
to speak to the daughters of Israel to remind
them of the material benefits they enjoyed under
Saul's reign:

> Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,
>
> who clothed you in scarlet. . . .

Finally, after restating his theme in verse
twenty-five, his thought shifts to his slain
friend, Jonathan, to whom he speaks concerning
their friendship:

> I am distressed for thee. . .
>
> thy love to me was wonderful. . . .

The poem then ends, as it begins with the state-
ment of the theme.

4. Tension is another device that influences struc-
   tural strength by alerting the reader to several
   contrasts. It is stated twice in verses nine-
   teen and twenty-five that the warriors were
   slain in the high places, and then reference is
   made to their fall. The high places are obvious
   references to heights of the mountains of Gilboa.
   These men of high position as national leaders
   are brought low in death upon the high mountains,
   thus developing a sense of contrast. Another
   tension-producing contrast is in verse twenty-
   three, which contrasts life and death aspects of
   the two men. The appeal in verse twenty-four
   that the narrator makes to the daughters of
   Israel to weep for Saul involves tension that can
   only be appreciated if the reader knows the
   history of prior events. Saul was a hero-king
   who "fought against all his enemies on every
   side" and "there was sore war against the Philis-
   tines all the days of Saul" (I Samuel 14:47, 52).
   When Saul returned from battle "the women came
   out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing,
   to meet King Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and
   with instruments of musick" (I Samuel 18:6).
   On such occasions, a spirit of festivity

prevailed, and Saul would bestow on the women
the spoils of war, the scarlet material and gold
to which the narrator refers in verse twenty-
four. The narrator, in contrast to their rejoic-
ing in festivities, now calls on the women to
weep. There is no singing, dancing, or exhila-
rating music to celebrate victory; there is only
despondent weeping to contemplate defeat.

5. The poet exhibits command of the use of metaphor
as a poetic device. He starts and ends the poem
with imaginative metaphors:

> The beauty of Israel is slain. . .

> The weapons of war perished!

Beauty is not naturally associated with death on
the battlefield, but in this case Saul and
Jonathan are identified as "beauty" because they
were the glory of Israel. The people were proud
of their heroes and elevated them with a respect
that resulted in their viewing them as beautiful.
The second metaphor identifies Saul and Jonathan
as weapons of war. Indeed, verse twenty-two
associates the bow with Jonathan and the sword
with Saul, making the metaphor immediately under-
standable.

    6. An apostrophe is used in the poem in verse twenty-one when the narrator addresses the mountains and curses them because his own spirit is languishing in grief.

    7. Imagery as a device abounds in relation to the battlefield in verse twenty-one, to animals in verse twenty-three, to comradeship in verses twenty-three and twenty-six, and to clothing and spoils of war in verse twenty-four.

This list is impressive evidence that David was an accomplished artist even before the writing of the Psalms.

On the basis of both the external and internal historic evidence that has been offered to support the Davidic authorship of many of the Psalms, attention can now be given to matters pertaining particularly and peculiarly to the structure of the Psalms with a sense that the Psalter was produced by writers who were capable of producing the best that a civilization had to offer. Writers such as Asaph and the sons of Korah, who also contributed to the Psalter, rank with David as the major poets of their era because the quality of their poetry is equal to David's.

Because the Bible has been historically treated as a book of theology and not as a book of literature, an analytical approach to its poetry was delayed until the middle of

the eighteenth century when Bishop Robert Lowth, who occupied the chair of Poetry at Oxford University, presented a series of lectures upon the subject. His was a rather daring attempt to display the Bible as literature in a milieu that recognized the Bible's theological value almost exclusively. Gray, in the early part of this century, saw Lowth's motivation for delivering the lectures as marking:

> . . . the transition from the then prevailing dogmatic treatment of the Old Testament to that treatment of it which rests on the recognition that, whatever else it may be, and however sharply distinguished in its worth and peculiarities from other literature, the Old Testament is primarily literature, demanding the same critical examination and appreciation, alike of form and substance, as other literature.[12]

Recognizing that Hebrew poetry has little in common with the mechanical structuring of poetry produced by artists of the Western world in the modern era, Lowth was forced to produce an analytical system that was foreign, and still is, to those persons who have been trained according to the conventions of Western poetry. His approach to the problem of structure has remained foundational, although later critics, particularly George B. Gray, who was Professor of Hebrew and Exegesis of the Old Testament at Oxford, have sought to amplify and clarify Lowth's work. Gray's The Forms of Hebrew Poetry augments Lowth's lectures by

[12]Gray, p. 5.

attempting to provide a more careful distinction of termi-
nology than that which Lowth used. Moulton's _The Literary
Study of the Bible_, which preceded Gray's work by almost
twenty years, complies generally with Lowth's observations
except that he avoids Lowth's threefold classification of
biblical poetry and adheres to the generalized term "paral-
lelism." He identifies various parallel forms progressively
by the conventional stanzaic terminology from the simple
couplet through the strophe.

Because literary scholars admittedly base their ap-
proach to biblical poetry upon Lowth and then proceed to
develop certain variations from it, the instructor in the
college literature class, if he intends to teach material
related to biblical poetry, needs to be acquainted with the
several critical approaches that Lowth propounded. There-
fore, the main tenets of Lowth's critical approach will be
presented prior to a fuller treatment of the subject.

Lowth reasoned that ". . . very early use of sacred
music in the public worship of the Hebrews, contributed not
a little to the peculiar character of their poetry."[13]
He explains this by suggesting that two choirs alternately
sang or chanted the hymns as in the very early experience

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[13]Robert Lowth, _Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the
Hebrews_, trans. G. Gregory, II (1787; rpt. New York: Gar-
land Publishing House, 1971), 24.

of Moses of whom it is said, "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord." It is then said that Miriam, Aaron's sister, responded, "And Miriam answered them" (Exodus 15:1, 21). Lowth also gave other supporting Scriptures that attest to the antiphonal performance of several choirs by referring to Ezra and the prophecy of Isaiah.[14] The variety of examples that he used represents a good, historical cross-section of the manner by which the music of the people was rendered, at least upon occasion if not as a usual practice. Lowth considered the practice, however, to be common and a key factor to understanding why the poetry makes constant use of parallel structures:

> Now if this were the ancient and primitive mode of chanting their hymns, as indeed appears highly probable, the proximate cause will be easily explained, why poems of this kind are disposed in equal stanzas, indeed in equal distichs, for the most part; and why these distichs should in some measure consist of versicles or parallelism corresponding to each other. And this mode of composition being admirably adapted to the musical modulation of that kind of people, which was most in use among them from the very beginning, and at the same time being perfectly agreeable to the genius and cadence of the language, easily extended itself into the other species of poetry. . . .[15]

Parallel structuring of poetry is a technique whereby the sense of one verse or line closely corresponds with

[14]Ibid., pp. 26-32.

[15]Ibid., pp. 32-33.

another. Lowth distinguished among three kinds of paral-
lelisms: synonymous, antithetic, and synthetic. He defined
synonymous parallelism as: ". . . when the same sentiment
is repeated in different, but equivalent terms."[16] Basi-
cally, this definition can only be applicable when there
are two lines in sequence that present the same thought,
though the wording is different. Examples can be found at
random in the Psalms:

> He raiseth up the poor out of the dust,
> and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill
> (Psalm 113:7).

> Hear this, all ye people;
> give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world
> (Psalm 49:1).

The study that Lowth made embraces poetry found any-
where in the Bible, and this led him, of course, to include
many examples from the prophetic books, particularly Isa-
iah. His presentation of synonymous parallelism showed that
"There is a great variety in the form of the synonymous
parallelism. . . ."[17] From this observation it can be
assumed that the ancient poets, though conscious of form,

[16]Ibid., p. 35.

[17]Ibid., p. 39.

were not restrained by structural rigidity and thus were able to write more freely in an artistic environment that was conducive to the vitality of fresh expression. If this freedom is a true characteristic of synonymous parallelism, it is likewise true of the antithetic and synthetic forms that Lowth identified; therefore, Hebrew poetry had any number of structural variations that permitted extensive poetic innovations much on the order of what is done with conventional forms in modern Western poetry. For example, the sonnet in Renaissance England was subject to variations to satisfy the purposes of the poets. They had the liberty to innovate within the mechanical and thematic framework of the sonnet; so did the writers of Hebrew poetry within the framework of parallelism.

The definition that Lowth gave to antithetic parallelism is, ". . . when a thing is illustrated by its contrary being opposed to it."[18] As in the case of synonymous parallelism, this definition is basically applicable to two lines that are sequential, the second line contrasting to the statement of the first line. Lowth states that this form of parallelism does not fully equal the sublimity of other forms of poetry which "seldom indeed adopts this style."[19]

[18]Ibid., p. 45.

[19]Ibid., p. 48.

The following two examples show the contrasting ideas of
each statement:

> Some trust in chariots, and some in horses:
> but we will remember the name of the Lord our God
>> (Psalm 20:7).

> All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off;
> but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted
>> (Psalm 75:10).

The last distinction of the structure of Hebrew poet-
ry that Lowth made is the synthetic parallelism "in which
the sentences answer to each other, not by the iteration
of the same image or sentiment, or the opposition of their
contraries, but merely by the form of construction."[20]
Once again, as in the synonymous parallelism, the variations
are numerous. Lowth recognized this fact, but did not give
any particular subclassification to specific variations.
It is upon this one area of Lowth's work that other critics,
especially Gray, saw a weakness. Basic to Lowth's concept
of the synthetic parallelism, however, is the notion that
the construction of the second line adds to the thought of
the first line to provide a further development that other-
wise could not be achieved in such a brief expression, as

[20]Ibid., pp. 48-49.

in this couplet:

> The wicked shall be turned into hell,
>
> and all the nations that forget God (Psalm 9:17).

The construction is important to this statement because the reader is alerted by its development to several subtle implications that are important in their interpretation and subsequent application. The focus of the statement is upon the wicked, who can be expected to receive their just condemnation. The wicked can be considered as a class or group of people. Secondary to the statement is the addendum concerning nations, which likewise are groups or classes of people, that dare to forget God. In this sense of grouping, the wicked and the nations are equated or parallel, but what can be expected of the nations is qualified and to some degree controlled by them. For the wicked there is no alternative, but the nations do have several implied options: (1) The nation that has already forgotten God shall, like the wicked, be "turned into hell"; (2) forget God at some future time and, like the wicked, be "turned into hell"; (3) not forget God and, unlike the wicked, not be "turned into hell." Though the reason for the wicked being "turned into hell" is not precisely expressed in the first line, the second implies that it is because they had forgotten God.

By delineating the three main structural patterns of biblical poetry, Lowth has provided an invaluable guide by which the poetry can be classified. There are, however, some other distinctions related to structure that are important to a critical approach to Hebrew poetry. Gray has made it evident that the concept of synthetic parallelism is too general, and he has contributed toward clarifying and augmenting what he considers to be Lowth's weakness:

> The vulnerable point in Lowth's exposition of parallelism as the law of Hebrew poetry lies in what he found it necessary to comprehend under the term synthetic parallelism: his examples include, indeed, many couplets to which the term parallelism can with complete propriety be applied. . . . On the other hand there are other examples of what Lowth called synthetic parallelism in which no term in the second line is parallel to any term in the first. . . . And, indeed, Lowth himself seems to have been at least half-conscious that he was making the term synthetic parallelism cover too much. . . .[21]

Gray used two general terms to distinguish between what he considered the two categories of the poetry: complete parallelism and incomplete parallelism. To exhibit the variety of forms, Gray devised a system of letter symbols that closely follows the pattern of the original Hebrew wording so that the first line of a complete parallelism appears as a. b. c and the second line as a'. b'. c', indicating that the second line in every

[21]Gray, pp. 49-50.

item or unit is equal or parallel to the first. Psalm 105:6
is so constructed:

```
        a.              b.             c
     (O ye seed) (of Abraham) (his servant)

        a'.             b'.            c'
     (ye children) (of Jacob) (his chosen)
```

An incomplete parallelism is marked a. b. c for the
first line and b'. c' for the second line, indicating
that one of the items has been omitted. A clear example
of this structure is found in Psalm 114:2:

```
        b.    a.         c
     Judah was his sanctuary,

             b'.         c'
     and Israel his dominion.
```

The letter symbols show that the KJV has a rearranged word
that complies with the normal English subject-verb sequence;
however, the word order of the original (with a literal
rendition following) provides a visual insight of the
incomplete parallelism:

```
        a.            b.           c
     Hawyethaw Yehudah lekawdeshow

                 b'.        c'
               Yisrawale mameshlothaow

        a.      b.           c
     Became Judah his sanctuary

                 b'.         c'
               Israel his dominion
```

The incomplete parallel is thus inescapable in the Hebrew,
but a careful student of the KJV can still recognize this

structure, even without the advantage of knowing the original language. Not all parallelisms, whether complete or incomplete, are written in three items per line as in the example just cited. They may increase in length up to six units and contain any number of variations, yet maintain distinct patterns of parallel structures.

Moulton placed his emphasis of poetic classification upon stanzaic distinctions according to the number of lines that are involved in presenting one thought, whereas Gray and Lowth worked primarily with couplets. Beyond the couplet are triplets and quatrains and the larger strophe, according to Moulton's conclusions, but in each "Its underlying principle is found to be the symmetry of clauses in a verse, which has come to be called 'Parallelism.'"[22] This quotation indicates that he was fully appreciative of Lowth's views of Hebrew poetry. Lowth recognized parallel structures occurring in other than couplet combinations, but in his selection of passages for expositional purposes, he did not use any. This exclusion is not to be considered a weakness in the same sense that Gray considered Lowth's concept of synthetic parallelism to be because the principles that Lowth used for the couplet are, in general, equally true for the other stanzaic forms.

[22]Moulton, p. 46.

Moulton's primary contribution to the unraveling of the complexities of the structural mysteries of biblical poetry is in the area that relates to literary esthetics. He perceived a sublime beauty which is produced by the rhythmical movement of lines whose thoughts are linked "Like the swing of a pendulum to and fro, like the tramp of an army marching in step. . . ."[23] The distinct poetic beauty is generated by the subtle power of repetition that flows effortlessly in parallel thought. There is a surge of rhythm established in the stanzas that becomes somewhat reminiscent of the dashing of waves upon the shore. The quality of beauty as it flows is not overpowering to the point where it elicits any negative response by becoming monotonous; neither does it induce a sense of discomfort in the reader by being difficult to read. Just as a person becomes unconscious of the rhythmic movement in much of nature, so does a reader of Hebrew poetry. Herein is the essence of its beauty. Nothing is strained even though there is an awareness of a deliberate structural design that remains, to a great extent, enigmatic.

Moulton displayed the effect of parallelism by deleting the second lines of couplets in a series; the result is prose.[24] By complying with this principle, the following

[23]Ibid., p. 47.

[24]Ibid.

excerpt is composed of the first lines of the couplets in Psalm eight, verses three through eight:

> When I consider the work of thy fingers, what is man that thou are mindful of him? Thou has made him a little lower than the angels; thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; all sheep and oxen, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea.

These sentences exhibit unity and coherence within the framework of the larger thought unit, the paragraph of which the entire psalm of nine verses is comprised. They are structurally sound and constitute good prose; however, the poetic beauty of the psalm stands in striking contrast to the prose as soon as the second part of each couplet is placed back into its original position:

> When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,
>   the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;
> What is man that thou art mindful of him?
>   Or the son of man, that thou visitest him?
> For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels,
>   And hast crowned him with glory and honour.
> Thou madest him to have dominion over the work of thy
>   hands:
>   thou hast put all things under his feet:
> All sheep and oxen,
>   yea, and the beasts of the field;
> The fowls of the air, and the fish of the sea,
>   and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the
>   seas.

An exercise such as this in literature classes where biblical poetry is discussed, or in a Bible as Literature course, would be extremely helpful to students, particularly from the viewpoint of esthetics. By reading a number of psalms and applying Moulton's principle to a series of

couplets that are structured with a degree of regularity, the student can experience for himself the echoing beauty of rhythmic repetition in contrast to the prose form. The experience is one of discovery that involves only the student with the literary form, and as a result it becomes much more significant to him because the instructor can be totally detached from the experience since the discovery does not depend upon an interpretation or a comparative treatment with other literature. It also places a proper emphasis upon parallelism as the basic, almost exclusive, cornerstone of Hebrew poetry, because without it, the writing is no longer poetry.

Not only did Moulton view the parallel couplet as contributing to the esthetics of the poetry, but he also included the triplet, the quatrain, and the stanza in the same frame of reference. An important point that he made is that the couplet is not the only form that repeats a statement. The triplet also repeats the same idea in three successive lines so that a triple parallelism is the result:

Thou hast a mighty arm:
strong is thy hand,
and high is thy right hand (Psalm 89:13).

The quatrain is structured differently, according to his division of the distich into four units of thought instead

of the usual two as in synonymous parallelism:

> With the pure
>   thou wilt shew thyself pure;
> And with the froward,
>   thou wilt shew thyself froward (Psalm 18:26).

This distribution provides a good visual impression of
alternation between lines one and three, which are parallel,
and two and four, which are also parallel. Similarly, the
distribution of the four units of an introverted quatrain
is readily comprehended by the visual impression:

> Thou shalt tread upon
>   the lion and adder:
>   the young lion and dragon
> shalt thou trample under feet (Psalm 91:13).

The stanza, according to Moulton's analysis, falls into
four different types.[25] The first is the stanza of simi-
lar figures such as occur in Psalm 121. The psalm can be
divided into four stanzas, each comprised of two verses.
Every stanza contains a figure of the keeping power of the
God of Israel as He provides a consoling security for His
people. In stanza one He is viewed as a keeper by virtue
of His creation of the universe; in stanza two by virtue
of His capability for continuous conscious activity; in
stanza three by virtue of His control of the climates; and
in stanza four by virtue of His watching all human activity.

The stanza of varying figures is the second type of
stanza form. The figures used to describe the Godly man

[25]Ibid., pp. 54-67.

and the ungodly stand in sharp contrast to each other in Psalm 1. The tree to which the Godly man is compared is alive, appealing, and productive, but the variant figure of the chaff to which the ungodly man is compared is lifeless, unappealing, and unproductive. This contrast produces tension and adds to the quality of the poem's artistry.

The third structural form identified by Moulton is the antistrophe stanza. The structural principle of the stanza is similar to the Greek ode whose strophe and anti-strophe have corresponding metrical forms. The biblical lyric contains similar corresponding strophes and anti-strophes that are constructed of the same number of parallel lines so that the antistrophe equals its counterpart in the same manner as the metrical stanza of the Greek ode. This structural design is presented in Psalm 30: Strophe I (verses 1-3), Strophe II (verses 6-7a), and Strophe III (verses 9-10). Each of these strophes has its countering antistrophe in the intervening verses, which is structur-ally the same as its corresponding strophe. Variant usages of the strophe-antistrophe are the introverted and inter-weaving forms as are found in Psalms 99 and 114.

The strophe, according to Moulton's explanation, is a common structural phenomenon involving stanzaic patterns. He gave it this definition: ". . . where a poem is allowed to fall into well-marked divisions, which have, however, no

distinct relations with one another as regards length or
parallelism."[26] The twenty-fifth Psalm, for example, may
be divided into six strophes which, though unequal in struc-
ture, have a discernible pattern. The first seven verses
and the last seven verses correspond, as do verses eight
through ten and twelve through fourteen, leaving two single
verses, eleven and fifteen, that correspond to each other.
The numerical pattern in respect to the total number of
verses involved in each strophe is 7, 3, 1, 3, 1, 7. This
pattern is a beautiful blending of equal strophes at begin-
ning and end, with alternating strophes in between.

Important to the strophes in Psalm 25 is the narrator's
point of view because each strophe has a shift in person.
The first and last strophes are prayers of the narrator as
he speaks to God, but the two strophes comprised of three
verses are in the third person, showing God's relationship
to man in the first set and then man's relationship to God
in the second set. Of the single verse strophes, the first
is in the second person with the narrator appealing for par-
don. Harold Watts sees such shifts as a structural charac-
teristic: "Hebrew poetry is constantly displaying shifts
in person, tense, and mode. . . ."[27]

[26]Ibid., p. 62.

[27]Harold H. Watts, The Modern Reader's Guide to the
Bible (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949), p. 201.

The structural patterns identified by Lowth, Gray, and Moulton are by no means definitive, for there are other patterns that have been identified. Their degree of distinctness from the basic patterns of synonymous, antithetic, and synthetic parallelisms is sufficient to warrant some comment, even though, in some cases, the similarity to the basic forms is close.

Graham Scroggie identifies the climacteric parallelism as a separate form and defines it: "The second line completes the first."[28] In other words, there is a repetition of the first line in the second line except the last term in the second line differs from the last term in the first line. This structure is obvious in the following example:

    Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty,
    Give unto the Lord glory and strength.
    Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name
                              (Psalm 29:1-2).

This pattern is particularly interesting because it corresponds to the anaphora, a classical rhetorical device used by Aristotle, Quintilian, and Cicero, the Greek and Roman rhetoricians whose standard works on rhetoric have, to some degree at least, influenced all Western writing. Two possibilities emerge from this situation: (1) The device was a natural development fully within the cultural framework of

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[28]W. Graham Scroggie, The Psalms, rev. ed., I (London: Pickering & Inglis Ltd., 1948), 13.

each society, or (2) Greco-Roman civilization was influenced either directly or indirectly by this particular aspect of Hebraic style.

The translators of the KJV, or at least some of them, would have been thoroughly acquainted with this stylistic device so that the translation of a biblical anaphora would receive appropriate treatment to insure that the effectiveness was not lost. Regardless of the two possibilities by which the anaphora was brought into Western writing, the translators were adequately prepared to handle it, since the Renaissance educational process emphasized rhetorical stylistics.

The stylistic beauty of the anaphora is unmistakeable in Psalm 29:3-9:

> The voice of the Lord is upon the waters. . .
> The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the
>   Lord is full of majesty.
> The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars. . .
> The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire.
> The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness. . .
> The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve. . . .

The tone of the poet expresses awe as he perceives the Almighty. The statements come as if the poet's mind is locked into one avenue of thought that echoes and reechoes, not to be shaken loose and discarded. It penetrates deeply into his own contemplative soul as well as those of his listeners so that no one will ever forget the significance of the poetic experience. The anaphora in this case

intensifies the experience of the poem and illuminates the transcendence and magnitude of God.

The use of a refrain in many Psalms often produced what T. R. Henn calls "stepped" parallelism "in which a refrain reinforces the progression."[29] An initial state- ment is made at the beginning of the first line, and the second line forms the refrain. The following example from Psalm 136 shows the step structure and also contains initial repetitions that are reminiscent of the anaphora:

```
      O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good:
                        for his mercy endureth for ever.
      O give thanks unto the God of gods:
                        for his mercy endureth for ever.
      O give thanks to the Lord of lords:
                        for his mercy endureth for ever.
      To him who alone doeth great wonders:
                        for his mercy endureth for ever.
      To him that by wisdom made the heavens:
                        for his mercy endureth for ever
                                  (Psalm 136:1-5).
```

This Psalm has twenty-six verses. The refrain is repeated at the end of each verse, and the effect is as a series of hammer blows upon the mind that increase in force with ev- ery verse. By the time the last verse is heard, the idea of God's mercy being eternal has pierced through and lodged in the layers of the mind like a nail that pierces through the layers of grain in a piece of wood for permanent lodging.

[29]T. R. Henn, _Bible As Literature_ (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 129.

The last three types of structures depart from the usual treatment of individual verses according to their various parallel patterns and focus upon the entire psalm. The first of these is the envelope figure, which utilizes any number of parallelisms, but they are enclosed by a similar opening and closing statement. Psalm 8 is an excellent example because its opening verse, "O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth," is precisely the same as its closing verse, which is verse nine. All the verses in between exhibit this excellence ascribed to God. This structural pattern results in a strongly unified expression of thought which can be compared to a carefully constructed paragraph. Eugene Etheridge has made this observation of the envelope figure:

> In effect, it resembles a paragraph with a topic and summary sentence, with all the sentences in between in coordinate relationship to each other and all mutually subordinate to the topic sentence.[30]

There is a unique variation to the envelope formula that exhibits the artistic imagination of the poets who worked with such established conventions. Rather than repeat the opening statement at the close of the poem, as is the case with the usual envelope figure, the poet asks an initial question and then reserves the answer for the

[30]Eugene W. Etheridge, "The Forms of Biblical Poetry," Contemporary Education, 43 (November, 1971), 78.

concluding statement. Psalm 15:1 starts with the questions,
"Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle: who shall dwell
in thy holy hill?" The psalm concludes with the answer,
"He that doeth these things shall never be moved." Of
course, it is necessary for the reader to have read the
statements in the preceding verses to identify the ante-
cedents to which "these things" refer. The reader easily
senses a strong unity in the psalm because the intervening
statements, all of which deal with specific aspects of moral
conduct, support the generalized concluding statement.

The second structural design which involves the whole
psalm is the pendulum figure. This form takes the reader
in a back and forth movement between two separate ideas or
parts of the same object. Obviously, the reader who is not
alerted to this form may have difficulty in following the
sense of the passage because of the frequent shifts.
Psalm 78 is a classic example of the form because it "is
a treatment of the history of Israel alternating in theme
between God's power on one hand and human weakness on
the other."[31] In some cases the pendulum structure may be
recognized by a refrain that marks the close of a section
before the thought is shifted or by a frequent shift in the
use of the personal pronoun.

[31]Ibid., p. 77.

The last of the structural patterns involving the whole psalm is the acrostic; it appears in Psalms 9, 10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, and 145. The acrostic is developed from the Hebrew alphabet by starting each verse or group of verses by successive letters of the alphabet. Unfortunately, this device is lost in translation. Psalm 119 is unusual in the manner of its division. It has twenty-two sections of eight verses each. Within each one of the sections every verse starts with the letter ascribed to that section. Psalms 9 and 10 are unique in that they are companion poems, frequently considered as one rather than two,[32] with Psalm 9 ending with the letter caph and Psalm 10 beginning with the next letter of the alphabet, lamed. One distinct advantage of such a structural device is the mnemonic benefit that it provides for any who desire to memorize the poems, but unfortunately, this benefit is lost to anyone who works only with a translation.

The person who desires to become more acquainted with structural design will frequently be aided by turning to biblical scholarship rather than literary scholarship because biblical scholars have utilized the acrostic as a

[32]For an argument supporting the unity of Psalms 9 and 10 see Gray's Forms of Hebrew Poetry, Chapter VIII (pp. 267-295) in which he argues that the text has been corrupted sufficiently to disturb what would otherwise be a complete acrostic. He bases his argument upon two premises, that "the initial letters of the several sections should follow

means to aid them in outlining and interpreting the passages. A commentary, such as The Psalms by W. Graham Scroggie, is an excellent source for such help because his comments are given in laymen's terms, and he does not resort to phrases from the original language.

Up to this point the structural aspects of Hebrew poetry have been discussed in terms of the larger elements of the line, viz, the phrase, the clause, and the stanza or strophe as they relate to each other primarily by means of the phenomenon of parallelism. Certain conclusions about the structure should be made before moving into another distinct area.

The numerous variations in structure suggest first of all the remarkable creativeness of the poets who are often considered by many to have been primitive. The complex sophistication of the structure alone, even to the exclusion of what are not considered as conventional poetic devices, is sufficient evidence that the poets were conscious of their role in relation to their society. Variations also suggest the concern of the poets to avoid monotony, which was otherwise inevitable.

the order of the alphabet, and that the sections devoted to each letter should be of (at least approximately) the same length" (p. 244). Although all scholars do not agree upon the unity of the two psalms, there is general agreement that they are acrostic.

Because there was not unusual insurgence of external influences upon the poets, they generally supported the conventional practices of recognized art forms common to them nationalistically; thus the poetry of the Old Testament, whether from the prophets or from the traditionally recognized poetic books, is at once exclusively and purely Hebraic. The KJV has provided readers of the English language a good rendition of this Hebraic quality, particularly in the Psalms and Proverbs.

By virtue of their role in their society, the poets tended to create works that could be easily retained in the nationalistic religious setting. For example, the people sang many of the Psalms as a part of their worship; many songs are antiphonal in design so that choirs were able to use them; and the structure is easily adaptable for instrumental accompaniment to which the people were accustomed.

This list of conclusions also must include certain auditory advantages. It is evident that the predominance of parallelisms conditioned the listener to expect a repetition of thought, not of sound as we moderns are conditioned to expect with rhyme. Such repetition of thought was surely a benefit to illiterate listeners who had to rely solely upon oral transmission. Their understanding was increased because the repetition of the thought was usually rephrased so that, in effect, the poet was constantly saying "in other

words. . . ." This rephrasing gave the hearer opportunity to relate the thought to the context so that its contribution to the whole work achieved greater significance for him. He also benefitted from its mnemonic value because the repetition impressed the content upon his mind more easily than a single statement.

Without any doubt, parallelisms are basic to the structure of Hebrew poetry, but rhythm is another matter to consider in relation to structure. Intrinsic to the nature of parallelism is a rhythm that occurs due to the limitations of parallel structuring. A line of Hebrew poetry is short; thus when two lines are parallel, the conclusion of the second line is terminal, functioning in a similar manner as the rhyme words in syllabic poetry. The continuation of such parallel lines establishes a rhythmic movement to which the ear becomes accustomed, just as it becomes accustomed to the sound of rhymes in rhymed poetry. Even though rhythm is discernible, it must not be assumed that any particular meter is the underlying element.

To this date there has been no ancient source for metrics in Hebrew poetry. Because such information is lacking, any effort to reconstruct Hebrew poetry according to meter is futile:

> . . . and since the regulation of the metre of any lan-
> guage must depend upon two particulars, I mean the
> number and length of the syllables, the knowledge of

> which is utterly unattainable in the Hebrew, he who
> attempts to restore the true and genuine Hebrew versi-
> fication, erects an edifice without a foundation.[33]

The work of the Masorites, which extended somewhere between

200 to 1000 A.D., does nothing toward unraveling the mys-

tery of metrics even though they sought to preserve ancient

pronunciations of vowel sounds by establishing the vowel

point system under and over the consonants in what is now

referred to as the Masoretic text of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Josephus' early comment on metrics, which has already

been observed, has no supporting evidence; yet there

remains a possibility that some type of meter was used, not

of the sort discernible in Greek and Roman poetry. Natural

to the language is a cadence-like movement that "obtains

the appearance of a lively mixture of the Greek and Latin

metres. But it is only an appearance--for the forms of

verse, which conform to the laws of quantity, are altogether

foreign to early Hebrew poetry. . . ."[34] There are, how-

ever, word groups that are closely associated with accen-

tuated syllables that indicate stresses of groups or words

or thought units rather than upon measured syllables. A

flow of words so structured may have an undetermined number

of unstressed syllables.

[33]Robert Lowth, Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the
Hebrews, trans. G. Gregory, I (1787; rpt. New York: Garland
Publishing House, 1971), 67.

[34]Delitzsch, p. 24.

The major disadvantage of accentuated meter is that the student needs to have a knowledge of the original language to enable him to determine what the word groupings actually are because they are usually determined on the basis of a single Hebrew term or upon terms that are closely related syntactically, whose sense can only contribute to the thought when it is in combination with another word, similar to the way an adjective relates to a noun.

On the other hand, there are a number of instances that have not been obscured in the translation of the KJV, and the accentuated rhythm may be observed. One only needs to read a verse such as Psalm 46:7 to recognize the principle:

> The Lord of hosts is with us;
>
> the God of Jacob is our refuge.

By means of the appearance of the translation, by means of the sound, and by means of the syntactical arrangement of the words, word-groupings are made obvious. The major distinction is the subject and predicate elements of the clauses which are each simple in structure, being made up of two units each, the subject modified by the prepositional phrase and the copulative verb plus the modifying prepositional phrase in the first line and the predicate noun in the second line. The numerical formula 2:2 is descriptive of this structure and is a means by which it can be

distinguished from other lines whose total number of units may differ. The word group or unit in the Hebrew usually depends upon inflections, whereas in English the word grouping depends primarily upon the word relationship, for example, of adjective-noun or of preposition-object as in the verse quoted.

The KJV maintains a sense of the rhythmic pulse of the original, and a study of the movement of its lines is a rewarding experience, especially for students who have any knowledge of the structure of Anglo-Saxon poetry. The combination of 2:2 is unavoidably suggestive of Anglo-Saxon poetry, which relied upon a consistent four-stress line that was alliterative. Since any number of unstressed syllables could occur in the line, neither the measured line nor rhyme was a factor in Anglo-Saxon poetry. The resemblances are present and seem to provide a slight area of commonality between the Hebrew and English forms. Gray admits to three resemblances:

> (1) the isolated verse in Anglo-Saxon corresponds to the parallel distich in Hebrew; (2) the strong internal pause in Anglo-Saxon to the end of the first parallel period of the Hebrew distich; (3) there is a correspondingly great irregularity in the number of syllables in successive lines of Anglo-Saxon, and in successive distichs of Hebrew.[35]

Even though the similarities are present, Gray is careful in each item to state that he is referring to the

[35]Gray, p. 130.

distich and not the individual line as critics have come to understand is the basis of the Anglo-Saxon. The distich is inescapable in Hebrew poetry unless the structure is tristich or tetrastich, yet the principle of parallelism remains.

The Anglo-Saxon rests upon certain characteristics of a line which George Saintsbury describes as consisting ". . . of two halves or sections, each containing two 'long,' 'strong,' 'stressed,' 'accented' syllables, these same syllables being, to the extent of three out of the four, alliterated."[36] The principle of alliteration, which was a common device for Anglo-Saxon poetry, was not unknown to Hebrew poets who, however, did not attempt to use it with purpose. The rhythm of the Anglo-Saxon is not dependent upon its alliteration, and this becomes evident when compared with the Hebrew, which has rhythm but is minus the alliteration.

Saintsbury has observed in Anglo-Saxon poetry "that the measure is no mere patchwork unnaturally stuck together, but, such as it is, a real and living rhythmical organism."[37] Because the rhythm does not depend upon alliteration, what he concludes about the Anglo-Saxon can also be

[36]George Saintsbury, A History of English Prosody, 2nd ed., I (New York: Russell & Russell, 1961), 13.

[37]Ibid., p. 184.

concluded about the Hebrew. It is the careful treatment and positioning of the stresses that are important because the ear quickly attunes itself to any slight cadence of rhythm, especially when the work is longer and the ear hears the continual flow as it moves from thought to thought producing an agreeable combination between sound and sense.

An appreciation of the effect of rhythm in this regard has been greatly reduced in the modern era because poetic appreciation is now gained largely by visual means rather than auditory means. Appreciation of Old Testament poetry can be greatly enhanced by listening to the KJV whose translators have maintained a remarkable degree of the poetic style so that sound and sense are properly fused. Few, if any, translations match the literary distinctiveness of its poetry:

> In the revised versions, whether that of 1885, or the
> American Standard of 1901, or the Revised Standard
> Version of 1952, or for that matter in other trans-
> lations or paraphrases, the poetry of the Old Testa-
> ment, in my opinion and in that of countless others,
> misses the rhythm, the stress, of the Hebrew origi-
> nal. Whatever may be the value of the prose of these
> revisions (and I do not doubt that value), their
> translations of the poetry surely is lacking both
> in appeal and in literary value when compared with
> that of the Authorized Version.[38]

The 2:2 line structure establishes for the student a peg upon which he can hang various features more familiar

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[38]Mary Ellen Chase, The Psalms for the Common Reader (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1962), p. 11.

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to him from the Anglo-Saxon; however, the 2:2 line is only
one of several lines that are identifiable according to
stress units, which are also called thought units. As long
as the student understands the principle of the stressed
rhythm of the Anglo-Saxon, he can make a transition to the
thought unit of the Hebrew, which may increase in number to
a longer sequence of word groups that are divided into a
balanced line of 3:3:3 as in:

> Bless the-Lord, ye-his-angels, that-excel-in-strength,
>
> that-do his-commandments, hearkening unto-the-voice-of
>
> his-word (Psalm 103:20).

In order to gain a visual sense of the inherent balance the
line may be written:

Bless	the-Lord	ye-his-angels
that-excel-in-strength,	that-do	his-commandments,
hearkening	unto-the-voice-of	his-word.

Notice that the third unit of each is similarly structured
by the use of the possessive. This structure exhibits the
degree to which the poet controlled his word groups in
relation to the total expression so that the reader is
confronted with artistic design that cannot be attributed
to chance.

Another meter is the 3:2, which is commonly called the
"Qinah" because it has a dirge-like quality found mainly in

Lamentations. Theodore Robinson considers the 3:2 as "slow-
er and more dignified than the 2:2."[39] This observation is
illustrated well by Psalm 27:1:

>   The Lord is-my-light and-my-salvation;
>
>   whom   shall-I-fear?
>
>   the-Lord is-the-strength-of my-life;
>
>   of-whom   shall-I-be-afraid?

The longer expression normally slows the pace, but at the
same time there is an enhancement of the poetic quality.
The symmetry of the lines of this verse is perfect, and the
thought pattern is designed in such a way that the reader
is compelled to reflect upon it. He receives a threefold
barrage that his mind must deal with: (1) The repetition
of the subject forces him to consider it a second time.
The echo thus stays with him even to the end of the poem,
which again serves as a reminder of the subject. (2) The
possessive form personalizes the thought. He must relate
it only to himself; to do otherwise would violate the intent
of the statement. (3) Finally, the repetition of the
interrogative forces him to produce an answer. It is
impossible to bypass the issue.

Scholars agree that the most prominent of the metrical
forms is the 3:3 in which Job and many of the Psalms are

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[39]Theodore H. Robinson, The Poetry of the Old Testa-
ment (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1960), p. 31.

written. The principle of thought units is the same in 3:3
as in the other forms, but it provides the poet with a line
length that is natural to his language. A longer line
permits a density of thought structure which is greatly
enriched by the inclusion of modifiers or complements that
are impossible in the 2:2 line because it is restricted to
the subject and verb only. Psalm three, verse one, is
representative of the 3:3 line:

> Lord,   how-are-they-increased   that-trouble-me!
>
> many-are-they   that-rise-up   against-me.

Other variations of the metrical rhythm include the
2:3 (Psalm 28:6), the 2:2:2 (Psalm 91:3), and 4:3
(Psalm 141:3,4). From these forms and the examples that
have been given, a principle of rhythm emerges that seems
sufficiently conclusive even though the whole problem of
meters is veiled in uncertainty. Robinson states the prin-
ciple as, ". . . every member contains either two or three
units, and it seems clear that all Hebrew 'metres' are
combinations of two and threes."[40]

With the number of line variations available to him
and the variations of parallelisms, the poet had an abun-
dance of combinations at his disposal. This choice enabled
him to avoid monotony; it was a sufficiently flexible medium

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[40]Ibid., p. 30.

to adapt to different purposes in writing by lending itself, as with the 2:2 line, to the staccato of excitement or exhilaration on one hand or to the slow, methodical pace, as with the 3:2 line, of meditation and reflection on the other.

In addition to all of this, one must not forget that the poet was not shackled by syllable counting. This feature alone gave him latitude in relation to line lengths. It is not to be assumed that Hebrew writing sought to maintain uniformity in lines within a single work either by the total of syllables or by the regularity of meter. S. R. Driver makes this comment about the syllabic structuring of the line:

> Upon an _average_, the lines of Hebrew poetry consist of 7 or 8 syllables; but (so far as appears) there is no _rule_ on the subject; lines may be longer or shorter, as the poet may desire; nor is there any necessity that the lines composing a verse should all be of the same length. . . . Where the line is much longer than 7-8 syllables, it is commonly divided by a _caesura_ (comp. Ps. 19:7-9; Ps. 119). . . .[41]

Regarding the regularity of meter, there is no evidence that the poets purposefully attempted to maintain a pattern in any single poem. The Masoretic text, with its later vowel point system, does not tend toward any regularity of meter. The danger of attempting to force the concept of

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[41]S. R. Driver, _An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament_, 9th ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1961), p. 365.

patterned meter upon the text is crucial to established
principles of literary criticism because it implies a
rejection of the fact that other cultures had the artistic
capability to develop a highly sophisticated art form that
does not comply with Western standards of art. Scholars
who resort to emending the text in an effort to establish
a metrically patterned system violate the nature of the
art form with which they are working. Emendation of the
text among biblical scholars is a sensitive area of concern,
particularly in the ranks of conservative theologians who
generally reject "tampering" with the text. It should,
likewise, be viewed with great care and concern on the
part of literary scholars so that the extant text will be
accepted upon merits that have been permitted to express
themselves as a natural outgrowth rather than anything that
suggests an artificial imposition.

The Hebrew poet sought for symmetry of thought; thus
mechanics of achieving that thought were important to him.
He had ample freedom by which to achieve the delicate bal-
ance that he sought. In fact, Edward J. Kissane contends
that ". . . the Hebrew poet claims much more freedom than
his English or Latin counterpart. . . ."[42] Such freedom is

[42]Edward J. Kissane, The Book of Psalms (Dublin:
Browne and Nolan Limited, 1964), p. xxxvi.

enviable, even in the light of the great variety of English forms alone.

The structure of Hebrew poetry is, indeed, complex; there are still areas of understanding that are uncertain and will probably remain uncertain in terms of a definitive analysis, yet in the total maze of uncertainty the sophisticated strength of a highly developed artistry presents itself in a resplendent manner. The KJV has transmitted to us the feeling of this artistry; its unabating popularity over three centuries attests to this fact.

CHAPTER IV

IMAGERY IN OLD TESTAMENT POETRY

Only by experiencing a poem can the student come to
know the meaning of a poem. Meaning cannot be attained by
summarizing or by what some students call seeking a "message"
any more than the meaning of fatherhood can be attained
simply on the basis of being told what fatherhood is all
about. One must experience the role of fatherhood before he
can begin to comprehend the full meaning of it, and even
then the experience of becoming a father will not suffice.
Only by being a father to a child through the years of his
boyhood, adolescence, and youth can the totality of the
experience be brought together into a meaningful unit.

Similarly, the poet expresses an experience in such a
way that it discloses a challenge, conflict, emotion, action,
thought, or any other facet that contributes its part to
the complex interaction of parts that structurally combine
to make a meaningful unity. In their statement concerning
the meaning of poetry, Norman C. Stageberg and Wallace L.
Anderson make it very clear that expression of an experience
is essential: "The thought, in fact, is but one of many
parts, all of which interact to produce a unified and total

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experience. This total experience . . . is the whole

'meaning' of a poem."[1]

One of the major means of communicating experience is

by the use of imagery which enables the poet to reconstruct

the sensuous aspect of the experience. Its appeal to the

imagination results from the direct association that it has

with sense perception. Man experiences his environment

primarily through the senses; therefore, the poet, with his

desire to express an experience, will resort to sensuous

language that most nearly represents that environment in

which the actual experience has taken place.

Imagery, then, is to be understood in a narrow sense

as a word-representation of sense perception, or, as C. Day

Lewis puts it:

> In its simplest terms, it is a picture made out of
> words. An epithet, a metaphor, a simile may create
> an image; or an image may be presented to us in a
> phrase or passage on the face of it purely descriptive,
> but conveying to our imagination something more than
> the accurate reflection of an external reality.[2]

Though all humanity share the commonality of the five

senses, all do not have the same experiences involving the

senses, nor do all experiences involve the externals of

sensory perception. Some may, for example, deal with the

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[1]Norman C. Stageberg and Wallace L. Anderson, _Poetry as Experience_ (New York: American Book Company, 1952), p. 4.

[2]C. Day Lewis, _The Poetic Image_ (London: Jonathan Cape, 1964), p. 18.

thought processes of which man is capable when he concep-
tualizes an abstraction, or some may deal with a variety of
emotions. In such cases the poet often finds it necessary
to rely upon such figures of speech as the simile and meta-
phor, which compare dissimilar items in such a way that the
reader will comprehend an intended meaning rather than the
literal. These comparisons typically involve sense images;
therefore, imagery, in a broader sense, may also be under-
stood to embrace figures of speech.

Such writing enables the reader to position himself
along with the poet to see the same landscape that the poet
sees or to feel the same sting of the sleet as it strikes
staccato-like against the face. An experience is thus
recreated for the reader, and the concrete imagery gives a
poem the breath of emotion.

On the topic of the relationship between imagery and
emotion, Archibald MacLeish has this to say: "Images in a
poem do seem to have some relationship to the emotion the
poem contains."[3] He then says that "the emotion, somehow
contained in the poem, is an emotion which words cannot come
at directly--which no words as words can describe."[4] It is

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[3]Archibald MacLeish, _Poetry and Experience_ (Baltimore,
Maryland: Penguin Books, 1964), p. 53.

[4]Ibid., p. 65.

necessary to understand, as a result, that imagery not only serves to create a picture by using words, but it also serves as a fountainhead from which emotion may freely emerge.

John Dewey comments on the subject this way: "[Poets] build up a concrete situation and permit _it_ to evoke emotional response. Instead of a description of an emotion in intellectual and symbolic terms, the artist 'does the deed that breeds' the emotion."[5] The conclusion concerning emotion to which he comes is, "Without emotion, there may be craftsmanship, but not art; it may be present and be intense, but if it is directly manifested the result is also not art."[6] Here is a fundamental requisite of art, and it largely depends upon the treatment of imagery in the work whether that imagery is sufficiently powerful to evoke an emotional response.

Because imagery has this important role in the formation of poetry, and because Old Testament poetry uses it extensively, this chapter will show the main sources of Old Testament imagery, how that imagery may be understood, and how it can be related to other literature.

[5]John Dewey, _Art as Experience_ (New York: Capricorn Books, 1958), p. 67.

[6]Ibid., p. 69.

One of the most significant and beautiful of all sensory images is the archetypal image of the shepherd-sheep. It is presented in the brilliance of its fullest richness in Psalm 23. The visual image of the shepherd and the sheep placed in the placid, pastoral setting registers a satisfying, consoling, and reassuring emotional response in the reader as he reads: "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters."

This statement contains two elements which are part of the total image. They point out that the shepherd, first of all, is responsible to provide the sheep with sufficient, satisfying food and water. The normal habit of the shepherd was to take the sheep into the highland in the morning where they would feed on the more succulent grass--the Hebrew literally says "tender grass"--and to drink from the better sources of water supply.

This first area of responsibility is the one most commonly recognized by those who read the poem, but the second, which deals with the shepherd's responsibility to provide his sheep with a safe place to eat and drink, is frequently overlooked. Their safety required the provision of a safe place to eat and drink so that the sheep would not be endangered by menacing invaders that would either steal or devour them, or by menacing waters that would waterlog their wool and cause them to drown. A shepherd

would go to any length to provide a safe place for the sheep to feed and drink. He would lie down at night in the entry-way of the fold so that his body became a barrier that would keep out destructive animals, or he would spend a great deal of time and energy to interrupt the swiftly flowing stream by constructing a crude stone wall in the water so that it would be "still"--the original reads "waters of quietness"-- on the downstream side.

Psalm 23 is undoubtedly the best known of all the Psalms, yet the instructor in a Milton course, for example, may lack insight into the full impact of Milton's words from "Lycidas," "The hungry Sheep look up, and are not fed,"[7] because the imagery of the biblical shepherd and sheep remains dimmed by the passing of centuries that have removed the instructor from the original setting and circumstance. His exposure to biblical poetry, in all probability, has been limited, and he can do little more than inform his students that the poem is parallel in structure, uses shepherd imagery, and communicates the theme of God's con-tinuing provision for the psalmist regardless of the cir-cumstances. Such information is academically correct, but there is a quality to it that suggests academic sterility

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[7]John Milton, "Lycidas," ed. Frank Allen Patterson The Works of John Milton, I, Part I (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), 81.

because it does little to trigger the imagination, which, in consequence, does nothing to arouse the students' interest through heightening their esthetic response to the art form.

If, on the other hand, the instructor can show the significance of the individual elements of the total image of the psalm and move from there to show how such imagery has captivated the creative minds of later poets, his students can associate the old, unfamiliar art form of the Bible with the later, more familiar art. This process would immediately make the students aware of the vast pool of information that a poet must have from which he can draw appropriate and fresh meaning; it would make poetry more understandable in terms of cultural features to which it alludes; it would provide a historic dimension; and it would introduce the students to the experience of the poem more readily.

By being prepared with a knowledge of the two areas of responsibility associated with the shepherd-sheep image, the instructor can communicate with greater effectiveness the implications of Milton's line. It becomes quite evident that Milton accuses the clerical shepherds of his day of not providing food for their sheep, nor did they provide a safe place for them because a few lines later Milton writes: "Besides what the grim Wolf with privy paw/Daily devours apace."

The seventeenth century clergy, according to Milton's appraisal, were not providing the spiritual food and safety that the congregants needed. Thus, the contrast between the shepherd of Psalm 23 and the shepherds in "Lycidas" is brought into sharp focus: one is responsible, unselfish, consistent, and considerate; the others are irresponsible, selfish, inconsistent, and inconsiderate. Once the students see the contrast, the imagery of Psalm 23 will become an invaluable means by which their perception of shepherd-sheep imagery is broadened, whether it is in reference to "Lycidas" or to other poems using similar imagery.

Such associations relating to biblical imagery are not confined to the poetic genre, but can be just as meaningful in the study of other genres also, as in the case of George Eliot's Adam Bede. The pastoral atmosphere is ubiquitous in the novel; consequently, any reference to a shepherd and his sheep is only natural. During one scene Dinah Morris, who is a Methodist itinerant preacher, meets with the Reverend Mr. Irwine, who is a clergyman in the Established Church. As Dinah shares with him some of the reasons for her being in the ministry and seeks to give him insight into her kind of ministry, she describes the rural people's response to her message this way:

> But I've noticed that in these villages where the
> people lead a quiet life among the green pastures
> and the still waters, tilling the ground and tending

> the cattle, there's a strange deadness to the Word,
> as different as can be from the great towns, like
> Leeds, where I once went to visit a holy woman who
> preaches there.[8]

The clause, "where the people lead a quiet life among green

pastures and the still waters," contains the familiar KJV

expression from Psalm 23 that immediately flashes the

shepherd-sheep image upon the reader's mind because of its

familiarity. This statement is a direct borrowing, whereas

Milton's statement is allusory. In either situation the

biblical influence is evident, particularly the KJV. This

becomes all the more evident when the words of the KJV are

compared with the Rheims-Douay text, which reads, "He hath

set me in a place of pasture/He hath brought me up on the

water of refreshment."

To see the shepherd-sheep image only as a portrayal of

the responsibility of the shepherd to his sheep falls short

of comprehending a fuller significance of the image. The

concepts of relationship and resourcefulness are also

communicated by the image, and their overlappings blend

together with such a smooth assimilation that it is impos-

sible to tell where one leaves off and the other begins.

The idea of relationship is established in verse one of

the psalm with the words "my shepherd" and then continued in

[8]George Eliot, Adam Bede in The Writings of George
Eliot Together with the Life of J. W. Cross, I, Part I
(Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1909), 130.

verse four with the words "thou art with me" and finally
stated in the last verse "I will dwell in the house of the
Lord." The relationship presupposes the necessity of con-
tinuity from a present state to a future state, and the
burden of that continuity rests upon the shepherd. In
other words, it is his responsibility to bring the rela-
tionship to its ultimate. To refer to the responsibility
of the shepherd is indicative of the subtle movements of
the image that must carefully be made discernible to a
reader if he is going to gain the "meaning," or the experi-
ence, that the poem has to offer.

According to William Gesenius, the Hebrew word trans-
lated "shepherd" in the KJV is raw-aw, which basically
means "to feed, to pasture, to tend."[9] He goes on to state
that the sense of governance or rule is also a part of the
meaning so that the shepherd is a governor or ruler of his
flock. The Douay text gives this meaning by translating
the statement "The Lord ruleth me: and I shall want
nothing." This emphasis reveals that the shepherd is in
control, and he relates to the sheep as one who tends them
or cares for them uprightly so that their interests are pre-
eminent in his mind. He does not take advantage of those

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[9]William Gesenius, Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee
Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures, trans. Samuel
Prideax Tregelles (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans
Publishing Company, 1952), p. 773.

under his rulership as might a literal governor who makes
severe demands upon his subjects and is indifferent to their
needs.

The same word is used in reference to the rule of
David when he was king of Israel. The record says:

> He [God] chose David also his servant, and took him
> from the sheepfolds:
> From following the ewes great with young he
> brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his
> inheritance.
> So he fed them according to the integrity of
> his heart; and guided them by the skillfulness of
> his hands (Psalm 78:70-72).

David's role as governor is portrayed by the same image,
but on two different levels. On the first level he is
literally a shepherd "from the sheepfolds" who tends or
governs the sheep, but on the second level, God transposes
him into a figurative shepherd "to feed Jacob," which is
the role of governing over the nation, the flock of God.
The words "feed" and "fed" are the same except for inflec-
tional differences, as "shepherd" (raw-aw) in Psalm 23,
but the context of this passage obviously implies that the
meaning is to be understood as "governing."

David is depicted as having governed, or shepherded,
the nation "according to the integrity of his heart," which
means uprightness of heart with consideration for his
subjects. He thus becomes a historic example of the happy
relationship between the shepherd and his sheep which is
shown in Psalm 23.

The relationship exhibited in Psalm 23 is not exhausted by the portrayal of a vertical "over-under" relationship of a governor with his subjects, but it is extended in its original meaning to a horizontal "along-side-of" relationship of companionship also. The perspective of the image changes from the vertical dimension to a horizontal dimension which has a tendency toward greater personalization, particularly in the expression "for thou art with me." This shifting of the image makes the relationship between the shepherd and sheep much more intimate and, therefore, more comforting, especially in the presence of death and of enemies. The element of companionship is strong throughout the psalm and offers the sheep a sustaining hope that their dwelling will be with the shepherd.

Interwoven with the responsibility that a shepherd has to his sheep and the relationship that he maintains with them is the requisite of resourcefulness. This capability of the shepherd completes the shepherd-sheep image of the psalm. The words "I shall not want" indicate the satisfied condition of the sheep whose shepherd has been able to cope with every inconvenience, trial, threat, and necessity of the helpless and defenseless creatures. Sheep by nature are some of the most helpless and defenseless of all domesticated animals, and certain peculiarities, which can be corroborated by any person who has had any experience with

sheep, bring forth an astounding array of supporting evidence of the resourcefulness of the shepherd. Throughout the Bible are many references to these characteristics of the sheep, and all of them fit appropriately into the image of this psalm to display the resourcefulness of the shepherd as he cares for them. The following examples will highlight only a few situations.

Sheep are nearsighted, and frequently while grazing, they wander from their shepherd beyond their range of vision. In order to help them back, the shepherd needs only to give them a call to which they have been conditioned. Several flocks of sheep may be mixed together when shepherds meet on the grazing range. To sort them out would be impossible, but the shepherds need only to separate themselves, then call their sheep, and the sheep will congregate by the shepherd whose voice they know. This circumstance would frequently occur when the shepherds would make the sheep "lie down in green pastures," giving the men opportunity for visiting as well as providing a safer place for the sheep. A similar circumstance is recorded in the New Testament:

> To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.
> And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

> And a stranger will they not follow, but will
> flee from him: for they know not the voice of
> strangers (John 10:3-5).

Because their vision is so limited, the sheep would
frequently get caught in the thickets or holes from which
they could not free themselves. The shepherd would rescue
them from their peril by putting the crook of his staff
under the animals and then carefully pulling them free.
It is of this kind of aid that the psalmist speaks, "thy
rod and thy staff they comfort me." A New Testament
account of a similar situation is given in the form of the
parable of the lost sheep in Luke 15:4-5 in which the shep-
herd has lost one of his hundred sheep, and having found it,
returns with it on his shoulders. Connected with this
experience is the ever-present possibility that the sheep
might be hurt. If it is hurt, the shepherd is again able to
provide aid by applying oil: "thou anointest my head with
oil."

The shepherd's resourcefulness is associated with both
his intellectual and physical capabilities in that he is
discerning in matters of judgment and dependable in carrying
out those judgments so that they result in practical bene-
fits for the flock as indicated by the statements, "He
restoreth my soul" and "Thou preparest a table before me in
the presence of mine enemies." This capability of the
shepherd is seen in Psalm 78:72, that was referred to

previously. The latter part of the verse states that David, when ruling the nation, "guided them by the skilfulness of his hands." This word "skilfulness" appears in this form only once in the KJV, and its meaning in the original involves the intellect. Putting the word in combination with the hands suggests that the shepherd, in this case David the king, is adroit at sorting out (as if by his hands) the issues that will serve the nation best. A resourceful shepherd of a flock will likewise employ his skill to determine how he can "prepare a table" for the sheep even when the enemy is present.

By becoming acquainted with these different aspects of the shepherd-sheep image of Psalm 23, students of "Lycidas" can benefit in the four ways that were previously mentioned. These benefits can also be derived from the study of imagery in relation to other literary works and must not be restricted to what is presented here by example from "Lycidas."

The first benefit is an increased respect for the amount of scriptural knowledge and perception that the poet had in order to make the scriptural portrayal appropriate for his own particular use to create a fresh impression for the reader's intellectual comprehension. Though the imagery of the shepherd-sheep is based upon Psalm 23, the poet had to know how other facets of the shepherd-sheep image

from other parts of Scriptures relate and contribute to the basic concept even as shown by the illustration from Psalm 78:70-72. He also needed to know the habits of shepherds and the habits of sheep.

The second benefit is that a poem such as "Lycidas" is made more readily understandable when the student comprehends that in that ancient culture the shepherd played a very important role economically, but more importantly his personal integrity was highly esteemed because he governed the sheep "according to the integrity of his heart." When seen in the light of this cultural backdrop, Milton's shepherds can only be viewed with contempt.

The third benefit is related to the historic dimension from which the work is evolved. It is here that meaningful connections can be made with past things whether by comparing what once was with what now is, or by seeking improvement to replace the antiquated, or by acknowledging deterioration or decadence that must by some means be reversed. Whatever the situation, the use that Milton made of the biblical archetypal shepherd-sheep image is an important link between the old and the new. On a larger scale, this is what the KJV has done for modern society. It has provided a strong link between the ancient Judeo civilization and the modern western civilization.

The last benefit is the experience of the poem itself, which gives it meaning. With regard to imagery, which is an important element by which meaning emerges, there are other elements that are blended in to comprise the experience. Tone and tension also influence the experience by communicating the poem's emotional milieu along with symbols and figures of speech which add their unique intrigue.

Since the early Hebrew culture was so closely identified with its physical world, its vocabulary reflected that association to such an extent that it was mostly concrete. One needs only to scan the Psalms at random to pick out concrete images that exhibit the physical character of their vocabulary:

> "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength" (8:2); "wilt thou not deliver my feet from falling. . ." (56:13); ". . . in the shadow of thy wings I will make my refuge. . ." (57:1); ". . . the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword" (57:4); "if I make my bed in hell. . ." (139:8); "our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth. . ." (141:7); ". . . that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace" (144:12).

By means of such simplistic, direct sense images that move rapidly, yet easily, from one concrete image to another, the Hebrew poets create a medium through which the ideas and probings of their spiritual side of life emerge, or as John L. Lowes states it: "Instead of merely naming an

emotion, they reproduce the physical sensation that attends it. . . ."[10]

This situation is clearly exemplified in Psalm 142. The call of the psalmist upon God can be interpreted on a literal level and on a spiritual level. Since the psalm is generally accepted as one written by David, many consider it an expression of his condition when he had to flee from King Saul, who sought to kill him, and had to live in the cave Adullam (I Samuel 22:1); thus he speaks of being in a prison. The spiritual level involves the psalmist as representative man who is seeking liberation from the tyrannical oppression of evil that holds him as a prisoner. He has no means in himself to achieve the desired freedom; thus he calls upon God who shall "deal bountifully with me." Regardless of the interpretation, the "physical sensations" of which Lowes speaks are reproductions of the emotions of the incarcerated individual. Without naming the emotions that are experienced as the psalmist calls upon God to "Bring my soul out of prison," the concrete images communicate the intensity of them, because prior to this final appeal there is established a sense of despair, "I cried unto the Lord;" of depression, "I am brought very low;" of

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[10]John Livingstone Lowes, Essays in Appreciation (1936; rpt. Port Washington, N. Y.: Kennikat Press, Inc., 1967), p. 8.

isolation, "no man cared for my soul;" and of frustration,
"they [my persecutors] are stronger than I."

Labels are not necessary to identify the emotional
condition of the speaker as he brings the reader into the
"feeling" of the experience that has worked its way into
the depths of his soul. What Psalm 142 does is to fulfill
the design of what George Santayana explains as "the great
function of poetry" when he says:

> The great function of poetry . . . is precisely
> this: to repair to the material of experience, seizing
> hold of the reality of sensation and fancy beneath the
> surface of conventional ideas, and then out of living
> but indefinite material to build new structures, richer,
> finer, fitter to the primary tendencies of our nature,
> truer to the ultimate possibilities of the soul.[11]

The images that the poets display in the Old Testa-
ment fall into two very broad categories: natural and socio-
cultural. Each of these reveals an intimacy that is attrac-
tively simple yet very profound, for by the treatment given
to each, the poets have met the criteria of Santayana's
"great function of poetry," particularly in respect to
"seizing hold of the reality of sensation." The designa-
tion of these broad categories does not imply that more pre-
cise classifications cannot be made; it is an attempt to
simplify what otherwise is quite unmanageable. Categories
are often broken down into areas of less breadth by modern

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[11]George Santayana, _Interpretations of Poetry and
Religion_ (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), p. 270.

critics and tend toward indiscriminate listings. Ryken
lists nature, religious worship, hunting, war, farming,
and family life;[12] Chase lists rocks, trees, birds, water,
bees and honey, country life, and home objects;[13] and Henn
lists archetypal images, warfare, life style, value images,
flowers, eagles, and the dragon.[14]

Of the early standard works on biblical literature,
Lowth's study recognizes the fact that the task of cate-
gorizing is immense, and in an attempt to provide a stabi-
lizing base from which to work, he lists four main sources
of imagery:

> Those images or pictures of external objects,
> which like lights adorn and distinguish the poetic
> diction, are indeed infinite in number. In an immen-
> sity of matter, however, that we may be enabled to
> pursue some kind of order, . . . we may venture to
> fix upon four sources of these ideas, whither all that
> occur may be first, from natural objects; secondly,
> from the manners, arts, and circumstances of common
> life; thirdly, from things sacred; and lastly, from
> the more remarkable facts recorded in sacred history.[15]

On the other hand, Moulton differs from Lowth by not at-
tempting to establish any categorical distinctions of
imagery. Instead, he chooses to show how it functions

[12]Ryken, p. 125.

[13]Chase, pp. 108-114.

[14]Henn, pp. 63-69.

[15]Lowth, I, 118. Lowth gives fuller treatment to
each area in the next four successive chapters, pp. 120-213.

as a major contributing mode "by which a theme can be developed in lyric poetry."[16]

Nature, the first category from which images are derived, fascinated the Hebrew because he was amazed at the fact that God placed man in a position whereby he could not only have a relationship with the Creator, but could also be given authority, as depicted in Psalm 8, over the earth. His closeness to the soil evoked from him an adoration for the Creator of that soil--"O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth" (Psalm 8:1)-- that always made him conscious of the fact that God was not a part of nature. God transcended it, yet was actively engaged in all of its events, and acted morally to "still the enemy and the avenger" (Psalm 8:2).

The imagery of plants and trees "is so characteristic of the Hebrew poetry, that it might almost be called the _botanical_ poetry."[17] Psalm 1, the introduction to the entire Psalter, exhibits this botanical imagery by using two similes in verses three and four that compare a godly man to a tree and an ungodly man to chaff:

> And he shall be like a tree planted by the
> rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in
> his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and
> whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

[16]Moulton, p. 192.

[17]Lowth, I, 125.

> The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff
> which the wind driveth away.

These contrasting images sum up the value of a proper rela-
tionship to God; their concreteness provides a means for
the mind to comprehend the concepts of godliness and ungod-
liness; and their compactness of artistic power creates
an unforgettable impact upon the reader.

The tree image calls to the reader's attention many
qualities that are natural to it: strength, stateliness,
beauty, uprightness, durability, and depth, all of which
can in some respect be related to godliness. In a more
definite manner, however, the image is given particular
characteristics that are appropriate to the poet's purpose
to show that the godly man has vitality, productivity,
perpetuity, and prosperity.[18]

The tree is said to have been "planted by rivers of
water." The expression presents an apparent impossibility
which requires some kind of explanation, for how can one
tree possibly be planted by more than one river? The
translators were correct by using the plural because in the
original the word is peleg, which indicates "division"
into what James Strong calls "a small channel of water, as

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[18]Scroggie, p. 49. These features are a consolida-
tion of Scroggie's list of characteristics of the godly
man that are derived from the tree image: "Vitality . . .
Security . . . Capacity . . . Fertility . . . Propri-
ety . . . Perpetuity . . . Prosperity."

in irrigation"[19] so that the image portrays a tree inten-
tionally positioned in a field which is watered by a num-
ber of small irrigation ditches. Thus its root system is
supplied by "rivers."

A tree planted in such an advantageous location is
going to have a _vitality_ of growth that other trees normally
do not have. Vitality of growth is made possible because
there is an adequate supply of water upon which the roots
may feed. The godly man, likewise, has every advantage
for good growth since he can partake "of the water of life
freely" (Revelation 21:6) which water has its source in
God. The tree is also _productive_ because the verse states
that it "bringeth forth his fruit in his season." The fruit
can be associated with the contribution that the godly
person may make to the Kingdom of God by his good works.
Perpetuity is assured for the tree in that "its leaf also
shall not wither." This idea is closely linked with
vitality, but here the emphasis is upon freshness, which is
an obvious spiritual characteristic of one who is in
harmony with God. Then there is _prosperity_ indicated by
the words "whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Such hope
is a constant encouragement.

[19]James Strong, _A Concise Dictionary of the Words in
the Hebrew Bible_ accompanying _The Exhaustive Concordance of
the Bible_ (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1890), p. 94.

Contrasted to the tree is the chaff to which the ungodly person is likened. Only one description is given of the chaff; it can be blown away. The sight was common at harvest time to the Israelite, but modern readers can appreciate it only by an understanding of the agricultural process of that ancient culture. A large, flat area of ground exposed to the wind served as the threshing floor. It was a circular area with a diameter up to forty feet. The sheaves of grain were piled in the center, and a heavy drag was pulled over the grain by oxen. A worker pulled grain down from the pile into the path of the oxen as they went around the floor so that the stalks were broken and the kernels of grain freed leaving the chaff and the grain mixed. A simple procedure, winnowing, was the means by which the grain was separated from the unwanted chaff, and it was done by throwing the mixture into the air. The breeze caught the chaff and blew it away, but the heavier grain fell into a pile at the feet of the winnower.

The chaff thus seen in the image is dead, fruitless, transitory, and valueless, characteristics which stand in direct contrast to the four key characteristics observed in the tree image. The argument of the psalm is objectified in these two nature images and held before the reader for his consideration of its spiritual significance. The alternative is there, and this psalm is as an introductory

keynote speech that alerts its hearers to what can be expected in succeeding passages because one of the great issues of that society, as well as societies in general, was the problem of coping with the apparent prosperity of the ungodly and the suffering of the godly: "Behold, these are the ungodly who prosper in the world; they increase in riches" (Psalm 73:12).

It all seemed so unjust; therefore, as Scroggie states, the problem "occupies a prominent place, but the Hebrews firmly believed in Jehovah's righteous government of the world, notwithstanding appearances to the contrary."[20] This belief is associated with their sociocultural view of mishpat, a word that is used in Psalm 1:5, "Therefore, the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment [mishpat]."

The word mishpat is usually identified with justice or righteousness as it pertains to judgmental pronouncements involving the Hebrews, and it is an important factor in their sociological structure. What makes the word significant in the Psalms is that in almost every one of the fifty-eight times that it is translated "judgment," it is used in reference to God, who is the embodiment of justice and righteousness, and not to man, whose judgments in many cases are unjust.

[20]Scroggie, p. 48.

The sociological ideal was that those individuals who had gained positions investing in them the responsibility of *mishpat* would do so justly. This was epitomized in King David even though he, as did others, acted in a manner less than what the idealistic code of *mishpat* demanded; however, he, unlike others in similar roles, restructured his reign more in compliance with God-like *mishpat*:

> But when his kingdom became secure against attack, David slowly drifted away from the *mishpat* of the desert, and in middle age assumed certain prerogatives of the oriental despot. Repentance gained for him the esteem of his fellow-tribesmen and subjects, however, so that to succeeding generations he symbolized the ideal Hebrew ruler (and hence figured largely in the Messianic hope).[21]

The Psalter thus can be identified as a book of praise because righteousness and justice will prevail, even as the concluding verse of the introductory psalm states: "For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish." Consequently, the individual who is "like a tree" has reason to praise and to be assured that everything will be well with him.

A variety of tree images is used throughout the Psalms. The green bay tree of Psalm 37:35 is not a particular species, but is a generalized reference to any tree that is indigenous to Palestine. The tree in Psalm 1 can

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[21]Howard Becker and Harry Elmer Barnes, Social Thought from Lore to Science, 3rd ed., I (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1961), 116.

be thought of in a similar way, except that it evidently is
a fruit-bearing tree planted near the irrigation ditches.
Typically, willow trees grow near the water courses even
as Psalm 137:1,2 indicate. Other trees common to the area
are the palm, Psalm 92:12; the sycamore, Psalm 18:47; and
the fir, Psalm 104:17. Some of the trees have commercial
value, such as the fruit-bearing trees that are not specifi-
cally named, Psalm 1:3 and 148:9, and one that is named,
the fig tree of Psalm 105:33; the cedar tree, Psalm 92:12,
important for its lumber; the aloe tree, Psalm 45:8,
valued highly for its aromatic resin as well as its lumber;
and the olive tree, Psalm 52:8.

The image of the green olive tree in Psalm 52:8 is
similar to the image found in Psalm 1 because a righteous
man is likened to it. The olive tree, however, is very
common to the region, but its commonality does not lessen
its importance:

> A considerable part of the Israelite peasant's
> prosperity in Old Testament times came from his
> cultivation of this tree which does not require
> much tending. It grows without irrigation, does not
> need deep soil, but flourishes even in rocky
> terrain and is therefore common also in the hill
> regions. . . . Its foliage retains its greenness
> in the parched days of summer when its leafy,
> spreading top is a delight to the heatweary eye.
> It is a long-lived tree, sometimes lasting for
> hundreds of years; its trunk thickens as it grows

older, but its vitality is in no way impaired by
the passage of the years.[22]

The oil of the tree's fruit is a valuable export, having
a history that goes back in the biblical record to inter-
national trade between Israel and Hiram, king of Tyre
(I Kings 5:11).

The depersonalized approach to the subject of the
righteous and the unrighteous in Psalm 1 through the tree
image is radically changed to a personalized approach in
Psalm 52 where the narrator identifies himself as likened
to the green olive tree. In fact, the entire psalm is
personal; whereas, the first psalm, written in the third
person, is generalized.

In the first five verses of Psalm 52 the righteous
man speaks in the second person, permitting the reader to
hear what he says to the wicked who have seemed to prosper
against him. The narrator, in verses six and seven, then
relates an observation concerning the derision of the
righteous as they view the fallacy of trusting in material-
ism and wickedness. Then in a sudden shift in perspective
the narrator speaks in the first person, "I am like a green
olive tree." The effect is startling because every descrip-
tion that he has heaped upon the wicked up to this point

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[22]Benjamin Mazar, ed., The Writings, in The World of
the Bible, IV (New York: Educational Heritage, Inc., 1964),
36.

has a decaying effect morally and results in his spiritual demise: "boasteth thou thyself in mischief"; "Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs"; "Thou lovest evil . . . and lying"; "Thou lovest all devouring words"; "God shall . . . destroy thee . . . take thee away . . . pluck thee out . . . and root thee out. . . ." The green olive tree to which he compares himself is just the opposite; therefore, he speaks with confidence, with consolation, and with joyful hope.

This attitude of the narrator is unmistakable as he states his conclusion to the discourse:

> I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.
> I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done
> it: and I will wait on thy name; for it is good
> before thy saints.

Adversities, reversals, disappointments, and losses are now made more tolerable, and life takes on new meaning.

These psychological benefits derived from man's identity with the tree image of these psalms, interestingly enough, are similar to Arnold's treatment of the tree image in "Thyrsis." Note first, however, some similarities that are basic to the poems. The setting of the poems is pastoral, giving the narrators a commonality of appreciation for the meaning and significance of nature as they relate to it. The images that are central to the meaning of the poems are similar: the fruit-bearing tree in Psalm 1, the green olive tree in Psalm 52, and the signal-elm in "Thyrsis."

The situation of the narrators is similar because each is
threatened by a force that seems to reduce him to helpless-
ness. In the case of the psalmist, the wicked were pros-
pering, and he was not capable of overcoming his unhappy
condition; in the case of Corydon, death had taken his dear
friend, and he was rendered incapable of overcoming his
unhappy condition:

> Yes, thou art gone! and round me too the night
>   In ever-nearing circle weaves her shade.
>   I see her veil draw soft across the day,
> I feel her slowly chilling breath invade
>   The cheek grown thin, the brown hair sprent with gray;
>   I feel her finger light
> Laid pausefully upon life's headlong train;
>   The foot less prompt to meet the morning dew,
>   The heart less bounding at emotion new,
> And hope, once crushed, less quick to spring again.[23]

The depressed mind of Corydon is lightened by the
sight of the signal-elm, which is a "happy omen" to him.
The tree does for him what the tree does for the psalmist
by giving him a sense of confidence, consolation, and
joyful hope:

> Despair I will not, will I yet descry
> 'Neath the mind canopy of English air
>   That lonely tree against the western sky.
>   Still, still these slopes, 'tis clear,
>   Our Gypsy Scholar haunts, outliving thee!
> . . . .
> Know him a wanderer still; then why not me?[24]

[23]Matthew Arnold, "Thyrsis," The Poetical Works of
Matthew Arnold, ed. C. D. Tinker and H. F. Lowry (1950;
rpt. London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 266.

[24]Ibid., p. 268.

To associate Arnold's use of the tree image in "Thyrsis" with biblical usage does not imply that Arnold chose to use the image to gain any advantage from its biblical context. What is significant is the fact that poets from different historical and cultural periods are able to recognize the poetic value of the tree image and use it to help develop their themes in such a way that the resulting effects are remarkably similar.

Another image from nature that is very prominent in Old Testament poetry is water. The occurrences are too numerous to mention, but they range from dew to rain, from quiet streams to rushing rivers, from peaceful pools to fascinating cataracts, from tears collected in bottles to mighty seas collected in the great cavities of the earth. By actual count these references occur at least one hundred seventeen times in the psalms as "water," "sea," "stream," "river," "tears," and "pools." Ancient Hebrews found water to be one of their primary concerns because parts of the land of Palestine, according to the season of the year, became parched from lack of water, and at other times the stream and river beds would overflow from the abundance of water. In times of flooding, the water was treacherous because it often descended on the unsuspecting in flash floods. As a result, water imagery is often used to symbolize calamity and danger.

A representative example of the significance of water imagery is found in Psalm 42, which is the first psalm of the second of five divisions of the Psalter. The opening verses of the psalm speak in expressions that relate to water--"As the hart panteth after the water brooks," "My soul thirsteth," "My tears have been my meat," and "I pour out my soul"--so that the reader is impressed with its emphasis upon the desperate need of slaking man's spiritual thirst. The small animal is parched during the dry season and searches desperately for satisfying water, and the simile places man in the same condition. This impression occupies the first four verses, but then in verse eight the image is radically changed to one of a torrential flow of water with the narrator evidently caught in it, "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me."

What was natural to the physical environment is now pictured as taking place in life, although not necessarily in the way that may be expected because the narrator is speaking in fear due to calamity befalling him. John P. Lange explains the image this way:

> The image, therefore, is not that of waves rushing after each other in rapid succession, but that of a man in an abyss of water whose roaring joined with the voice of unseen and unmeasured cataracts impresses him with a sense of great and imminent

danger. The rush and roar at once excite and
stupefy him.[25]

The imagery has moved in a bold sweep from portraying
a desperate desire for water at the beginning of the psalm
to calamitous fear brought on by too much water. In the
physical world this is exactly what frequently takes place,
and it parallels the experience of the narrator. The situa-
tion is ironic because it is his own ambivalence that gives
rise to "the noise of thy waterspouts" and causes him to fear
when at the same time he reminds himself in verse eight,
"Yet the Lord will command his lovingkindness in the day-
time, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my
prayer unto the God of my life." There is good reason for
this vacillation because the psalm is an expression of the
state of mind of the poet when he was in exile (verse six)
and unable to attend the temple worship because Absalom,
David's son, had rebelled. According to Lange, the poet
was with David during this period of exile, and he longed
for the privilege to worship in the temple as he had done
before.[26]

It is to this image that Gerard Manley Hopkins alludes
in "Nondum" when he expresses a keen desire for his silent

[25]John Peter Lange, Commentary on the Holy Scriptures:
Psalms, trans. Philip Shaff (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan
Publishing House, n.d.), p. 284.

[26]Ibid., p. 282.

God to whisper to him reassurances that he needs to quell
his doubts:

> And still th' abysses infinite
> Surround the peak from which we gaze.
> Deep calls to deep and blackest night
> Giddies the soul with blinding daze.[27]

Just as Lange refers to the abyss as "deep calleth unto
deep," so does Hopkins in these lines, having caught the
essence of the emotional turmoil into which man is cast.

John Greenleaf Whittier also alludes to the image in
"Massachusetts to Virginia":

> The voice of Massachusetts! Of her free
>   sons and daughters,--
> Deep calling unto deep aloud,--
>   the sound of many waters![28]

The allusion here is a combination of two different ref-
erences. Added to the image given in Psalm 42 is the
auditory image of Psalm 93:3-4 from which the phrase
"the noise of many waters" is taken. The sense of turmoil
is maintained, even as in Hopkin's poem, but it is not an
individual disturbance of which Whittier is speaking.
His is a societal issue involving the social conscience
of two states relative to slavery and freedom. He

[27]Gerard Manley Hopkins, "Nondum," Poems of Gerard
Manley Hopkins, ed. W. H. Gardner, 3d ed. (New York: Ox-
ford University Press, 1948), p. 44.

[28]John Greenleaf Whittier, "Massachusetts to Vir-
ginia," The Complete Poetical Works of John Greenleaf
Whittier (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1900),
p. 63.

strongly asserts that Massachusetts will have "No slave upon her land," a statement proudly upholding freedom in the state. The Virginians had spurned this "deep calling unto deep," as Massachusetts gave her "kindest counsels" to uphold freedom, so he declares that Virginia must bear the burden of guilt upon her conscience:

> We wash our hands forever of your sin
>   and shame and curse.[29]
> . . . .
> We leave ye with your bondmen,
>   to wrestle, while ye can,
> With the strong upward tendencies
>   and godlike soul of man.

Because the religious faith of the Hebrews was so completely woven into the history of the nation, their national heritage was extremely important to them, and as a result, biblical writers often referred to specific historic events that served their intent either to remind, instruct, warn, encourage, challenge, or rebuke their readers. One of the most significant among many events was Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage. The poet Asaph in Psalm 77 provides insight into this event with poetic elegance that is seldom achieved and less seldom transmitted in translation as esthetically adorned as it is in the KJV.

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[29]This statement is an allusion to Pilate's action at the trial of Christ. The incident is recorded in Matthew 27:24.

In a cluster of visual, tactile, and auditory images involving water from the depths of the sea to the heights of heaven to describe the awesome activity of God as He delivered the people out of Egypt, the poet reconstructs the event with these words:

> The waters saw thee, O God,
> the waters saw thee; they were afraid:
> the depths also were troubled.
>
> The clouds poured out water:
> the skies sent out a sound:
> thine arrows also went abroad.
>
> The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven:
> the lightnings lightened the world:
> the earth trembled and shook.
>
> Thy way is in the sea,
> and thy path in the great waters,
> and thy footsteps are not known.
>
> Thou leddest thy people like a flock
> by the hand of Moses and Aaron (Psalm 77:16-20).

Several features of these lines combine to make them into a superior poetic utterance. The first feature is the movement that begins with the waters of the sea in the first triplet. The movement in the next two triplets is a climaxing ascension to the heights of the clouds and skies where the fierce storm unleashes its severity of power back down to the trembling earth. The fourth triplet moves back to the sea again wherein is the path of God where no man is able to follow to become knowledgeable of His ways because the psalmist has already declared in

an earlier statement (verse fourteen), "Thou art the God that doest wonders." The image of God's pathway in the waters not being known is readily understood when compared to a man's walk in water, for when a person steps forward, the water immediately covers the place where his foot has been so that his pathway, or footstep, is "not known."

Not only is the movement of the action evident, but there is a remarkable shifting in the kinds of imagery that contribute to an effective contrast. The first three triplets have images of tempests that rage in both the waters and the skies so that, in the fourth triplet, the reader is left dazed in unknowing wonder at the powerful Deity who has done this. The final couplet, however, has an image of the same Deity as a shepherd. The shepherd-sheep image suggests tranquility, quietness, and tenderness, all of which gives a sense of intimacy--of knowing.

A second feature is the use of personification by which the waters are made capable of seeing God and experiencing reactionary fear; the depths experience a fearful disturbance just as the waters; the clouds pour out water; the skies make a noise; and the earth trembles. The effect of this personification is that the poet brings together the natural elements--air, water, fire, and earth--so that they actively contribute to the

deliverance of Israel by means of a storm which, according to F. B. Meyer, may be implied in the early record.[30] The verse to which Meyer refers is Exodus 14:24, "And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire, and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians." Some biblical scholars may not agree with Meyer's view concerning the storm, but there can be no doubt about his identifying the passage in Psalms as "A poetical account of the passage of the Red Sea."[31] Indeed, it is the poet's rendition of a great moment in Israel's history.

The third and last main feature that makes this passage so poetical is its concreteness achieved by the variety of images, but there is another device that is used in conjunction with the images, and by being a part of them, heightens their effectiveness. That device is the hyperbole. For example, clouds do not normally pour out water. The Hebrew word that the poet uses is zawram, which means to gush or flood and is so translated in Psalm 90:5, the only other place in the Psalms where used. It is an obvious exaggeration just as "the

[30]F. B. Meyer, Psalms (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, n.d.), p. 95.

[31]Ibid.

lightnings lightened the whole world." The poetic figure of God having footsteps like a man who is capable of walking in "great waters," or waters of great depth, is likewise an exaggeration. These hyperboles serve to broaden the concept that man has of God who "doest wonders."

Animal life is another source for nature imagery that is so common in the Scriptures, and more particularly in the poetry. Sheep, that needed the constant attention of the shepherd, are probably the best known of the animal images, and comment has already been made concerning their character and habits. They are commonly identified with the economic as well as the religious areas of that early Hebrew society. Doves are also a prominent image in biblical poetry, probably because they, like sheep, were important to Hebrew religious ritual. Both doves and pigeons, often inaccurately considered as being the same, were regarded with fondness by the people and frequently were maintained as pets. The doves, however, "were given preference because they remained wild and were more elusive."[32] Since they were highly regarded, doves were unmolested, and propagated freely in all parts of Palestine.

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[32]Gene Stratton-Porter, "Dove," _The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia_, ed. James Orr, II (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957), 871.

Characteristic of the dove is that it will fly away before a storm to its resting place and there be secured. This is the desire of David as he states in Psalm 55:6,7: "Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness." The occasion for the statement is a conspiracy against David, which is recorded in II Samuel 15:7-12. His son, Absalom, rebelled and influenced Ahithophel, David's personal advisor, to turn from David, so that it became necessary for David to flee from Jerusalem. Lange carefully points out that, chronologically, David wrote the psalm "not after the outbreak of the rebellion, but shortly before it."[33] Because the poet knew the habit of the dove to flee before the storm broke, he desired to have the same capability, and as a result, he, like the dove, could be able to gain his desired place of safety.

Lord Byron, in a lighter tone, as he speaks of Don Juan's situation in Catherine's court in Russia when Miss Protasoff favors Juan, alludes to the same words of David:

> It is enough that Fortune found him flush
> Of youth, and vigour, beauty, and those things
> Which for an instant clip enjoyment's wings
> But soon they grow again and leave their nest.

[33]Lange, p. 339.

> "Oh!" saith the Psalmist, "that I had dove's
> Pinions to flee away, and be at rest!"[34]

In this allusion Byron does not attempt to match the des-
perate, horrified tone of the psalmist, but he displays the
fleeting, transitory quality of youthfulness as it relates
to the swift flight of a dove.

The second broad category of biblical imagery is the
sociocultural image. Since Hebrew culture identified so
closely with nature, many of the nature images involve
certain cultural associations. The shepherd-sheep image
of Psalm 23 or the chaff image of Psalm 1 at the harvest
season with regard to mishpat can be understood only when
they are received in conjunction with the cultural habits
of the people.

There are, however, other sociocultural areas from
which images are drawn that do not relate directly to
nature. The first of these is the family. Throughout
successive generations in the history of Israel, great
stress was placed on this primary social unit. The poets
visualized the family relationship as a mini-portrait of
a greater, more significant relationship of God as father
to His children: "Like as a father pitieth his children,
so the Lord pitieth them that fear him" and "all of you

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[34]George Gordon, Lord Byron, Don Juan and Other
Satirical Poems, ed. Louis I. Bredvold (New York: The
Odyssey Press, 1935), p. 519.

are children of the most High" (Psalm 103:13; 82:6). This image is significant from a sociocultural perspective because the heads of households were revered highly and obeyed without question; God was also to be revered and obeyed.

Another of the sociocultural images is the portrayal of God as King. The social order of the Hebrews is established in the Pentateuch, and it is from this document that a mature culture developed. By the time of the writing of the Psalms, the government was monarchical, whereas in the time of the giving of the Law, it was theocratic. The monarchical government did not abrogate the Law; it sought to uphold it. From monarch to peasant there was a dependency upon God, who was the giver of the Law. The Psalms reflect this dependence upon God in the prayer of the psalmist, "Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end . . . I shall observe it with my whole heart" (Psalm 119:33). Also, God is portrayed as a king in the submissive, suppliant prayer of the monarch, David, "Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray" (Psalm 5:2). Evidently, David, even though he was the king of Israel, looked upon himself as subservient to another, the King of the universe.

Along with this concept of God as king, the entire
nation, including the king, looked to God as their great
military chieftain who would lead them victoriously through
battle, just as they were accustomed to any earthly king
doing when they went to war with another nation. This
image of God as a military leader is shaped in these con-
crete terms of warfare as David calls upon God to fight
the battle for him:

> Plead my cause, O Lord, with them that strive
> with me: fight against them that fight against me.
> Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand
> up for mine help.
> Draw out also the spear, and stop the way
> against them that persecute me (Psalm 35:1-3).

Mazar comments that the weapons, which David calls upon
God to use, are well known: one, a small shield; another,
the buckler, a large shield; and the spear, otherwise
translated as javelin. It is approximately ten feet long
and the blade eight to nine inches.[35]

These images of God as king and as warrior have an
interesting parallel in Milton's depiction of God in _Para-
dise Lost_. War is experienced in heaven at the rebellion
of Lucifer, who leads his fellow conspirators against the
Almighty, and after two days of battle, God speaks to His
Son:

[35]Mazar, p. 32.

Two dayes are therefore past, the third is thine;
For thee I have ordain'd it, and thus farr
Have suffered, that the Glorie may be thine
Of ending the great Warr, since none but Thou
Can end it.
. . . .
And this perverse Commotion governed thus,
To manifest thee worthiest to be Heir
Of all things, to be Heir and to be King
By Sacred Unction, thy deserved right.
Go then thou Mightiest in thy Father's might,
Ascend my Chariot, guide the rapid Wheeles
That shake Heaven's basis, bring forth all my Warr,
My Bow and Thunder, my Almightie Arms
Gird on, and Sword upon thy puissant Thigh;
. . . .
There let them learn, as likes them, to despise
God and <u>Messiah</u> his anointed King.[36]

In the passage, Milton rehearses the transfer of the
responsibility of war from God to His Son, whom He recog-
nizes as King, and the tone is laden with the positive
qualities of power and authority that are fitting for a
king. The Son, as King, receives the commission to take
command in the war, making use of the Father's implements of
war for the task. All of the military implements that
Milton uses in these lines are taken from specific images
found in the Psalms of God as warrior. The reference
to the use of the chariot is related to Psalm 104:3 where it
is said of God that He "maketh the clouds his chariot";
the use of the bow is from several passages, which imply
the weapon, such as Psalm 64:7, "But God shall shout at

[36]Milton, II, Part I, 202-203.

them with an arrow"; the use of thunder comes from
Psalm 77:18, "the voice of thy thunder was in the heaven";
and the use of the sword is an obvious borrowing, that is
changed slightly by the insertion of words needed for the
pentameter line, from Psalm 45:3, "Gird thy sword upon
thy thigh."

All of these weapon images should be understood in
the sense of their being used in an aggressive, offensive
effort because Milton exhibits the Son as charging into
battle against "his impious Foes" upon "his fierce
Chariot" with such ferocity that He had to restrain
Himself from putting forth His full strength as He "Drove
them before him Thunder-struck, pursu'd/With terrors and
with furies. . . ."[37]

Noticeable in this passage on weaponry is Milton's
omission of a shield, which normally is used for defensive
purposes. The implication is that the Son of God did not
need it because the foes "astonisht all resistance lost"
at the overwhelming display of almighty power as Christ
rode over their shields. In contrast, Satan apparently
did need a shield that is said to be massive "like the
Moon."[38]

[37]Ibid., p. 207-208.

[38]Ibid., p. 18.

Because the intent of the psalmists was not to compile poems that exhibit the social and cultural mores of their generations, the customs, values, and progress of the people are not specifically delineated, but are assumed to be understood on the basis of their general identity with the times. To readers in the twentieth century, certain cultural practices can never be fully grasped, especially as they relate to ancient Judaistic religious ritual; however, as Chase observes, even though the Psalms are not a commentary on sociocultural practices, by means of their artistic rhetoric, they have left a rich insight "about the values which those who wrote, read, or sang them held most dear; about the things which they loved; and about the daily affairs which most clearly concerned them."[39]

The sensuous quality of the poetry with respect to nature and sociocultural imagery serves to provide the reader with a sense of the psychological temperament of the writers as they experience the grandeur of God and their relation to Him, their physical surroundings, their human frailties, aspirations, and motives, their oppressors, and their history. The temperament is felt, not described, as emotion flows in characteristic lyrical fashion. It is by

[39]Chase, p. 114.

intuitive insight into the nature of the experiences that poets form the network of images and develop figures of speech that in their compressed vividness flash through the mind in an unforgettable array by which meaning may emerge. This is the primary function of the figures of speech which give a meaning not to be understood literally, yet literal associations must be present if the figure is to be effective.

When the psalmist writes "Unto thee will I cry, O Lord my rock" (Psalm 28:1), the process by which understanding is achieved first eliminates the possibility that "rock" is literal. "Rock" must be construed, then, as a symbol which really means something other than its original signification; however, the literal characteristics commonly associated with the state or essence of "rockness" must be retained. This essence is solidarity, unyielding strength, durability, and inpenetrable hardness. By identifying God as a rock and assuming that He has all these characteristics, the psalmist leads the reader toward understanding how he may relate to God with whom he may obtain safety, strength, and stability. He moves the reader toward knowledge of the unknown by presenting it in terms of the known, the qualities of which are suggestive of the unknown.

Similes and metaphors abound in the Psalms, but not as much in extended form throughout whole poems as in separate, concise clauses which may be strung together as in Psalm 18:1-2:

I will love thee, O Lord, my strength.

The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.

The accumulative force of these metaphors portrays the assured confidence in the relationship that the psalmist enjoys with God. The terms that he uses come from the military, which contributed much to his experience, and from physical land features with which he was very familiar. On the surface, it might appear that juxtaposing military objects and land features is incongruous in such a cluster of metaphors, but such disparity serves to bring the surety of the psalmist's evaluation of his position into sharper focus. The rock, one of the physical identities, is considered as a safe place for protection against the onslaught of the enemy; likewise the high tower, a military identity, is considered as a safe place for protection because the enemy cannot reach up to it. Each of the metaphors speaks to this point: the psalmist does have a refuge, a safe place, in God.

James Routh offers an explanation why poets resort
to using figures of speech so frequently, and it is cer-
tainly applicable to the ancient Hebrew poets. He states
that they deal mostly "with things intangible and not
sharply defined, and with correspondingly undefined states
of mind for which they must 'coin new symbols' . . . ."[40]
The poets are required to be extremely loose and flexible
in constructing figures of speech that will suggest "things
intangible . . . and undefined states of mind," but at the
same time there is a resulting responsibility on the part
of the reader to be sufficiently flexible in his response
to the figure so that he can achieve a fuller impact of
the esthetic quality that is there to be enjoyed.

For this esthetic enjoyment, the KJV is an invaluable
literary instrument because it stands conspicuously isola-
ted as a translation that by its own literary strength has
gained the unique position to be identified as an English
work of art. Students who are given the opportunity to
explore the stylistic beauty of phrase and rhythm into
which its poetic imagery and figures are cast will tread over
the same territory covered by literary giants, as well as
lesser literary figures, and they will benefit from the

[40]James Routh, The Theory of Verse (Atlanta: Univer-
sity of Georgia, 1948), p. 21.

exploration in similar ways. They will gain greater flexibility in their response to the esthetic stimuli of images and figures that flash by, enabling them to get the feeling of the poetry, whether it be exhilaration or despair, anticipation or reflection, victory or defeat, bravery or fear. They will also be more inclined to remember the vivid portrayals of universal experiences, and from this resource they will be able to draw meaningful associations for contemporary situations.

CHAPTER V

HEBREW POETRY IN THE COLLEGE LITERATURE CLASS

That Hebrew poetry has directly contributed little
to modern Western poetry is a fact that cannot be denied.
The poets of the Western world have neither structurally
patterned their poetry after the parallelisms that the
Semitic poets of an ancient era mastered, nor have they
adopted the thought-rhythm of the ancients as a means by
which to achieve the rhythmic flow that is essential to
poetry. The structural design and rhythm of modern poetry
stems mainly from the classicists of Greece and Rome whom
Western poets have sought to emulate in so many ways, and
any resemblances to Hebrew poetry that may occur can not
be attributed to a generalized poetic norm.

If, from a literary perspective, the poetry of the
Hebrew culture from another historical period has had
little to contribute to Western literature, why should
instructors spend valuable time in literature classes to
emphasize the principle of biblical polygenre interdepen-
dence, to analyze the structural features of the poetry,
and to examine the kinds of imagery that predominate in the

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poetry? The answer to this question is two-fold and will constitute the main part of this chapter.

The first part of the answer is found in the King James Version that has served as the major link between the ancient and the modern English-speaking civilization. The solution rests upon the fact that the KJV happens to be a translation of that ancient literature, and it has undeniably contributed as much as, if not more than, any other single literary work or individual writer to the great mass of literature in the English-speaking world. Its being a translation of Judeo-Christian thought is not what has given it its great recognition as "The Noblest Monument of English Prose."[1] There are many other notable translations of the same document, and none has as yet successfully competed with the KJV to achieve acclaim as a literary masterpiece. Furthermore, there is no reason to expect that it should be erased from the roster of literary artistry any more than Chaucer's Canterbury Tales should be erased simply because there are more recent versions that modernize the English, making it easier to read and to understand. A recent version is helpful, but it can never be used as a substitute with the intent to show from it the greatness of the primary work.

[1]Lowes, p. 3.

The KJV has been generally accepted as the standard source for literary allusions among three centuries of writers in the English tongue. Milton was among the group of writers closest in time to the KJV, close enough that it is thought that while he was at Cambridge he heard lectures delivered by the Regius Professor of Greek, Andrew Downes, who had shared in the work of translating the KJV.[2] More important, however, is the fact that Milton had received his own copy of the KJV, probably from his parents upon his fourth birthday. This translation impressed his young mind to such an extent that ". . . its diction, its imagery, its rhythms, early became a part of him."[3] Though he patterned his own great epic after the classicists, Milton saw in the translation of the Bible an esthetic attraction which merited and demanded his concentrated study just as much as the classical writers. That Milton wrote English paraphrases in verse of Psalm 114 and 136 at the age of fifteen is a well-established fact. Commenting on the paraphrase of Psalm 114, Parker states that it is "far more Milton than psalmist" and the lines "are Biblical in tone and have the effective use of parallelism as conspicuous in Hebrew poetry. The young Milton is here

[2] William Riley Parker, Milton: A Biography, I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 27.

[3] Ibid., p. 10.

imitating a manner, not translating anything, and the manner eventually became part of his own."[4]

At fifteen, when he wrote the paraphrases, Milton had some knowledge of Hebrew, but certainly not a mastery of it, because he had just started to study Hebrew in his fifteenth year.[5] It is important to notice Parker's expression that Milton was "imitating a manner" in the paraphrases, which suggests that he sensed the rhythmic balance of the parallel lines and sought to achieve the same effect. He had already had at least ten years of exposure to the poetic, rhythmic structure of the KJV, its turn of phrase, and its balance of thought expressed in concrete imagery. Added to these ten years were several months of study in the very language from which the beautiful poetic sections of the KJV were translated. From such circumstances, it is not unreasonable to conclude that his limited exposure to the language at that point would have reinforced his appreciation for what the translators of the KJV had produced because they were sensitive to the literary style of the Bible.

Because the KJV occupied such an important place in Milton's preparation for writing, students of Milton need

[4]Ibid., p. 19.

[5]Ibid.

to be well acquainted with the same version in order to prepare them for a rewarding study of Milton. A student choosing to go back to a biblical source other than the one Milton used is much like a painter deciding to paint a portrait from another painter's portrait or from a photograph in preference to using the live model even when the model is available. L. A. Cormican places strong emphasis upon the necessity for students to study the Bible as a preparation for studying Milton, and logic based on his statement leads to the conclusion that the KJV is the "live model" to which students should turn:

> It may be suggested that the best "preface" to Milton is not a piece of scholarship or literary criticism, but the intense reading of the Psalms, which Milton could take for granted in his "fit audience." Hebrew poetry can, more effectively than scholarship or criticism, habituate the reader's mind to Milton's mood and purpose. To endeavour to read him without any close acquaintance with the Bible is to evade the kind of preparation which he assumed.[6]

Cormican does not specify which version of the Bible should be used, but he does refer to the "intense reading of the Psalms" that Milton assumed with regard to his "fit audience." The most likely version with which Milton would expect his readers to be acquainted would be the KJV, the one to which his own ear was already conditioned.

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[6]L. A. Cormican, "Milton's Religious Verse," From Donne to Marvell, vol. 3 of The Pelican Guide to English Literature, ed. Boris Ford (1956; rpt. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1963), p. 181.

In contrast to Milton, T. S. Eliot stands as one of the literary masters who is most distant in time from the early version. During the intervening centuries between Milton and Eliot a number of other translations, both Catholic and Protestant, independent and corporate, have appeared;[7] yet the lapse has not lessened Eliot's regard for the importance of the KJV.

In an article appearing shortly after the publication of the New Testament portion of the New English Bible in 1961, Eliot shows why he considers the new translation on a level much lower than "dignified mediocrity."[8] His contention is that the panel of scholars who worked on the translation should have at least been able to produce a mediocre rendition of the Scriptures. Whether or not the translation is mediocre is not a decision that is pertinent to this discussion, but what is pertinent is the fact that at no place in the article does Eliot measure mediocrity by a standard established by a version other than the KJV. By stating, "The age covered by the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I was richer in writers of genius than

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[7]Information concerning the many English translations of the Bible following the publication of the King James Version in 1611 may be obtained in A Literary History of the Bible by Geddes MacGregor, Abingdon Press, 1968.

[8]T. S. Eliot, "A Scholar Finds the Beauty Wrung Out of New English Bible's Verses," Literary Style of the Old Bible and the New, ed. D. G. Kehl (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1970), p. 54.

is our own, and we should not expect a translation made in

our time to be a masterpiece of our literature . . . ,"[9]

Eliot implies that the KJV is a great work of art. The

implication is then followed by an explicit statement that

the KJV is "an exemplar of English prose for generations

of writers"; thus, Eliot's regard for the KJV is made

very clear.

Milton and Eliot, though separated by generations of

writers and by differing convictions regarding prosody,

share a common indebtedness and regard for the KJV, and

Albert S. Cook, in his chapter on the KJV and its influ-

ence, cites Bunyan, Swift, Newman, Macaulay, Ruskin, Huxley,

Carlyle, Whitman, Wordsworth, and Coleridge as examples of

writers who highly esteem the KJV.[10] Since so many writers

have resorted to the KJV as a standard literary work of

art for their own literary achievements and since no other

translation stands on a competitive level with the KJV

in terms of specific or general literary influences, the

KJV does merit valuable instructional time in literature

classes.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Albert S. Cook, "The 'Authorised Version' and Its
Influence," The Cambridge History of English Literature,
eds. A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller, IV (New York: The Mac-
millan Company, 1909), 43-50.

John Pritchard's study on how to approach the New
Testament from a literary perspective led him to conclude
that the KJV should be used in preference to other trans-
lations. What his conclusion says about the New Testa-
ment is also applicable to the Old Testament:

> Many English versions of the New Testament are
> competently done. Which translation should the liter-
> ary students read?
> . . . .
> The King James Version (KJV), however, has for
> centuries held the status of an English classic,
> hardly viewed consciously as a translation. Since the
> mid-seventeenth century most English authors have owed
> to it their biblical situations and echoes. Its
> phraseology and cadences are deeply embedded in
> English usage. Although its vocabulary includes
> meanings no longer in common use, it is not difficult
> for today's readers. For literary study the KJV is to
> be used. It may be read along with a later translation
> as commentary, to show the readings from better manu-
> scripts and to clarify occasional archaic usage.[11]

The second part of the answer to the initial question
about time spent on the study of the KJV in literature
classes rests upon no less than four values that are de-
rived from a knowledge of Hebrew poetry, particularly in
its translated form in the KJV. These values not only
relate in a limited sense to the poetry specifically, but
they can also be related in an expanded sense to include
the various biblical genres in general. Any examples,
however, that involve values will be confined to poetry.

[11]John Paul Pritchard, _A Literary Approach to the
New Testament_ (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972),
pp. 8-9.

The first value that students gain from a knowledge of Hebrew poetry is that they acquire a proficiency in associating English literary allusions to appropriate biblical contexts and thereby better understand the significance of the allusions to the poems. Milton has already been cited to exemplify biblical allusions. It is true with the study of any writer that if allusions are not recognized and properly identified with their sources, as far as students are concerned, their function in the poem is impaired; they have no power; and they become verbal adornments that seemingly contribute nothing to the poetry.

Poets ranging from those who are commonly identified as minor to those who are called great have resorted to allusions which may not be easily recognized. For example, William Shenstone, a minor eighteenth century poet, wrote in "The Schoolmistress":

> Sweet melody! to hear her then repeat
> How Israel's sons, beneath a foreign king,
> While taunting foeman did a song entreat,
> All for the nonce untuning every string,
> Uphung their useless lyres--small heart had they to
> sing.[12]

The allusion is rather obscure in terms of the precise source, but in relation to its general historic setting it is better known. The reference to "Israel's sons" identifies

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[12]William Shenstone, "The Schoolmistress," _The Poetical Works of William Shenstone_, ed. George Gilfillan (New York: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1968), p. 266.

for the reader what the subject of the Schoolmistress'
narration happens to be, and "beneath a foreign king" pro-
vides the needed clue to identify the Hebrews in the land
of Babylon during the captivity. A generalization of this
ancient episode to which Shenstone refers is available in
the Bible from the historical record of the Babylonian
captivity, but a search for the actual location of the
account from the biblical books of history would be futile
even with the aid of a concordance.

     The allusion does not come from the history books of
the Bible. Instead, it comes from Psalm 137:1,2:

    By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down,
    yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.
    We hanged our harps
    upon the willows in the midst thereof.

These lines reinforce the argument of interdependence of
biblical genres because they are very clearly historical in
content, yet poetic in structure, expression, and tone.
They provide insight into the intense emotion that surged
during that event. The person who is acquainted with the
lines and their historic association is the one who will
gain the most from such an allusion.

     Some allusions are more direct than Shenstone's, as
in the cases of Algernon Charles Swinburne and T. S. Eliot
when they refer to the same episode in Israel's history.
These allusions are easily identifiable because they are only

slightly altered from the way in which they appear in
the source. Swinburne alludes to the situation in two
lines of "Super Flumina Babylonia": "By the waters of
Babylon we sat down and wept" and again "By the waters of
Babylon we stood up and sang."[13] The allusion to Israel's
years of oppression under Babylon is appropriate to the
poem because Swinburne is in complete sympathy with the
Italian desire for liberation from the tyrannical oppres-
sion of Austria, and he considers both circumstances to be
similar.

Eliot's reference to Israel's despair appears in
the Fire Sermon section in "The Waste Land": "By the
waters of Leman I sat down and wept."[14] As with Swin-
burne's lines the reference is lifted directly from the
Bible except that Eliot substitutes the name of the lake
at Lausanne, Switzerland, where he first wrote "The Waste
Land" in 1921, and the singular first person pronoun in
the place of the plural first person. The identity of the
allusion is a simple matter because it is direct, but its
contribution to the poem cannot be as clearly distinguished

[13]Algernon Charles Swinburne, "Super Flumina Babylo-
nis," The Complete Works of Algernon Charles Swinburne, eds.
Edmund Gosse and Thomas James Wise, II (New York: Russell
& Russell, 1968), 102.

[14]T. S. Eliot, "The Waste Land," The Complete Poems
and Plays 1909-1950 (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Com-
pany, 1958), p. 42.

as in Swinburne's poem. The context in which it appears
is a complex of historical allusions, all of which, Steven
Foster concludes "contribute their part to the poetic
scene";[15] however, the emotion of the Israelites' pathetic
plight in Babylon where the nation's existence is nearly
void of rational meaning is conveyed into the emotion of
"The Waste Land" in which civilization is spiritually
impotent, shriveled, and destitute in need of vitalizing
regeneration.

A thorough acquaintance with the manner of expression
of the KJV will help identify allusions, as in the case of
these from Swinburne and Eliot, because their expression is
so similar. In a more generalized way, Saintsbury claims
that Swinburne "made perhaps the most direct, abundant,
and felicitous use of the phrase of our Version that
English Literature has seen, and also derived from it the
style--that is to say, the body--of many of his finest
passages."[16] Neither Swinburne nor Eliot is an isolated
example of how biblical allusions are important to poetry;
therefore, the better acquaintance that students have with

[15]Steven Foster, "The Waste Land and the Modern World,"
A Collection of Critical Essays on "The Waste Land," ed.
Jay Martin (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc.,
1968), p. 19.

[16]George Saintsbury, A Saintsbury Miscellany (New
York: Oxford University Press, 1947), p. 130.

the KJV, the greater their enrichment as they study litera-
ture.

A second value of a knowledge of Hebrew poetry is
that it gives students an opportunity to develop a greater
esthetic appreciation of the Bible. This appreciation is
not necessarily related to the Hebraic elements of a
national literature and culture as much as it is to the
enrichment derived from the literary style of the KJV.

A literary work is often regarded as a product of its
historic period because it frequently contains the tell-
tale evidences of certain political or religious issues,
philosophic or scientific proposals, or national or inter-
national events that are significant to the time. Different
periods in history have literary styles that are peculiar
to them, and the KJV is fortunate to be a product of a
period that lays claim to being at the zenith of English
writing. The writing style of the Elizabethan era was
vivacious, coming at a stage of expressiveness that was
a convergence of the Latin, French, and Anglo-Saxon tongues
which were on the threshold of maturity as a completed
amalgamation.

The influence of the age is unmistakably present in
the pages of the KJV, and in this respect it is the pro-
duct of its time when, in Dwight MacDonald's words, ". . .

Englishmen were using words more passionately, richly, vigorously, wittily, and sublimely than ever before or since."[17]

No single influence was responsible for the style of writing in the KJV. A complexity of various influences was brought together so that one often dimmed another or made the other more brilliantly prominent depending on the approach made to the subject. Geddes MacGregor contends that "the secret of the literary splendor and lasting success of the King James Version is that it was written by men hampered by exacting discipline and sometimes irritating restrictions."[18] By this contention, he places much of the burden of stylistic influence upon the rules that governed the translators because they were forced to exhibit the greatest amount of their collective genius within established limitations.

David Daiches suggests a different influence by saying: "For the English translators always insisted that their version should be pleasant to read, familiar yet impressive, simple yet dignified, and it is this combination of qualities . . . that makes the style of A.V. what

[17]Dwight MacDonald, "The Bible in Modern Undress," Literary Style of the Old Bible and the New, ed. D. G. Kehl (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1970), p. 34.

[18]Geddes MacGregor, A Literary History of the Bible: From the Middle Ages to the Present Day (New York: Abingdon Press, 1968), p. 188.

it is."[19] This emphasis deals mainly with diction even
though other factors are closely related as influences.
There are others who also regard the Anglo-Saxon diction
that predominates as a major factor contributing to the
stylistic beauty. Lowes upholds the idea by showing from
a selected passage containing one hundred forty-four words
that only ten are not from the Anglo-Saxon,[20] and Ferdinand
Schenck likewise emphasizes the idea by a comparison with
Shakespeare's diction: "The Bible is stronger even than
Shakespeare in words of Anglo-Saxon origin."[21]

Though opinions differ concerning influences upon
the style of the KJV, there is common agreement that its
beauty is superb. Criteria are needed, however, by which
beauty may be determined within the framework of literary
esthetics. In his discourse on "The English Bible: and
the Grand Style," J. Middleton Murry uses two expressions
that are pertinent to the topic when he states, "Through-
out, the Authorized Version has the high qualities of
simplicity and firmness of phrasing."[22] Even though he

[19]David Daiches, The King James Version of the Eng-
lish Bible (1941; rpt. Chicago: Archon Books, 1968), p. 168.

[20]Lowes, p. 15.

[21]Ferdinand S. Schenck, The Oratory and Poetry of
the Bible (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1915), p. 11.

[22]J. Middleton Murry, The Problems of Style (London:
Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 115.

does not promote these two characteristics as basic stan-
dards for judging literary beauty, they become a signifi-
cant aid in determining the esthetic stature of different
versions that are studied comparatively. Psalm 100:1-2
from the Revised Standard Version, the New English Bible,
and the King James Version will illustrate the point:

    Make a joyful noise to the Lord,
    all the lands!
    Serve the Lord with gladness!
    Come into His presence
    with singing!   (RSV)

    Acclaim the Lord
    all men on earth,
    worship the Lord in gladness;
    enter his presence
    with songs of exultation. (NEB)

    Make a joyful noise unto the Lord
    all ye lands.
    Serve the Lord with gladness;
    Come before his presence
    with singing.   (KJV)

    The criterion of simplicity is satisfactorily met as
it relates to diction in the Revised Standard Version and
the King James Version, but the words "acclaim," "enter,"
and "exultation" in the New English Bible do not have the
same aura of simplicity about them as their counterparts
in the other versions. "Acclaim" and "exultation" bear
the marks of their Latin origin far more severely than
does "enter," and their prominent positions at the begin-
ning and end of the thought unit make them even more con-
spicuous. As a result, the New English Version, in this

instance at least, does not achieve a high level of esthe-
tic acceptability.

The phrasing of the versions needs much closer
scrutiny because the movement of the lines, especially in
the RSV and the KJV, is very similar. Both make excellent
use of assonance in the first line, making the phrasing
very poetic in sound. The prepositional phrase at the
end of line one in the RSV presents a disruption of the
trochaic movement so that the phrase can be stressed on
the preposition "to" and again on its object "Lord." In
this case the line must be read "Máke ă jóyfŭl nóisə tó
thĕ Lórd." On the other hand, the concluding phrase may
also be read as anapestic with the preposition receiving
no stress at all: "Máke ă jóyfŭl nóise tŏ thĕ Lórd."
In either situation the rhythm is broken so that there is
no "firmness of phrasing." In contrast, the first line of
the KJV is a regular trochaic line making it more pleasant
to the ear because of its firmness. A similar situation
occurs in the fourth line where the initial verb "come"
is followed in the RSV by "into," which accepts the stress
on the first syllable, and by doing so, interrupts the
trochaic movement. The KJV uses "before" and maintains
a regular trochaic flow in the line.

Another distinction should be made in relation to
the matter of phrasing. The entire Psalm 100 is a call to

all the people to worship, and every statement except the
last verse begins with the verb, the subject being under-
stood as the second person. The phrasing of the second
line in the RSV involves a shift from the second person to
the impersonal third person, "all the lands." The KJV
uses the phrase as a poetic apostrophe by stating "all ye
lands" and avoids a shift in persons; thereby, the result
is more poetic.

These isolated illustrations from the three versions
indicate the kind of evidence that can be amassed for
accepting the KJV as esthetically superior to other ver-
sions, and in addition, the subtleties of the stylistic
beauty of the KJV provide another strong argument why it
should be preferred in the college literature class above
other versions.

The esthetic richness of the KJV is enhanced by
other factors as well. The foregoing analysis of the struc-
ture of Hebrew poetry revealed the great number of struc-
tural patterns possible by the parallelisms in combination
with different line lengths. Although original poetic
forms are normally disturbed in translation, the patterns
of parallel forms in the Psalms are discernible in the
KJV. They are esthetically appealing because the balance
of parts necessary to parallel verse is carefully

maintained, and the rhythm of thought units comprising the parallelism is controlled.

Another important esthetic factor is the treatment of the imagery in the translation. Unlike the problems involved with structure that tend toward distortion, the poetic image need not be greatly distorted in translation, which must be sufficiently precise in order to convey an honest portrayal of the sense perception and to generate the same emotional atmosphere as the original. Much of this is dependent upon sensitivity to good literary style resulting in a harmonious blending of the imagery to the theme. To achieve a level of good harmony in a work is to achieve an esthetic quality that is extremely satisfying to those who study it. The KJV not only achieves this level, but it consistently maintains it throughout the Psalms.

The esthetic superiority of this harmony can be demonstrated by a comparison of the first verse of Psalm 23 as it appears first in the KJV and then as it appears in the Living Bible:

> The Lord is my shepherd;
> I shall not want.
>
> Because the Lord is my shepherd,
> I have everything I need!

The KJV maintains the sententious style of the Hebrew with its simplicity of word order. Sententiousness is common to Hebrew writers, and as Chase points out, "They rarely

subordinated clause to clause."[23] The strength of the con-
cise declarative sharply delineates between the contrasting
positive and negative statements. The balance between the
two is perfect, as a relationship between the provider and
the impoverished is established at the outset. The theme
of provision is supported well by being blended together
with the image so that the esthetic harmony reflects the
emotion of the experience.

On the other hand, the Living Bible violates the
sententious style by resorting to subordination. Such
structure makes balance impossible, and it results in an
unmerited emphasis on the narrator. This lack of balance
is not a true portrayal of the relationship between image
and theme, as it is presented in the original, and thereby
misses the level of esthetic beauty to which the KJV has
risen.

Also, the esthetic richness of the KJV is greatly
enhanced by the way that it has captured the musical quality
of the poetry. Undoubtedly the strongest inherent quality
is its emotional content that fairly exudes from every
Psalm. There is an intense personalization, which is
characteristic of lyric poetry, that brings the reader
into the same arena of conflict into which the narrator is

[23]Mary Ellen Chase, Life and Language in The Old Testa-
ment (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1962),
p. 143.

cast. The emotion is as keen in the translation as it is in the original, and a primary reason for this is the fact that the sententious style employing a simple Anglo-Saxon vocabulary naturally communicates the tone normally expected with emotional experiences.

Ryken places emphasis upon the emotional aspect of lyrical poetry by stating that a lyric is "a short poem, originally meant to be sung, expressing the thoughts and especially the feelings of a single speaker."[24] The renditions of the Psalms in the KJV meet these requirements because in them the range of emotion is superb as it spreads from the depths of gloom to the pinnacle of highest praise (Psalm 79:1, 13), from the frustration of confusion to the serenity of resolution (Psalm 55:4, 22), and from the fear of defeat to the assurance of victory (Psalm 94:3, 22).

The emotions in the lyrics are extremely fluid, and the reader can easily identify with them. This involves another reason why students should be encouraged to study the KJV in preference to other versions. To identify with emotions means to catch the same spirit of the emotions, and students are more prone to do this when reading the KJV because it captures the delicate emotional nuances in artistic fashion. Compare these translations of Psalm 69:1

[24]Ryken, p. 123.

from the New English Bible and the KJV:

> Save me, O God;
> for the waters have risen up to my neck.

> Save me, O God;
> for the waters are come in unto my soul.

The first translation is from the New English Bible, and
the rendition offers an image of fact in terms of a literal
portrayal as if the narrator were actually drowning. The
Living Bible presents the image in much the same way:
"The floods have risen," without any reference to the
extent of its rise. The Revised Standard Version, which
was published earlier, evidently influenced the New English
Bible because they are the same except the Revised Standard
Version uses "come" instead of "risen." None of these
reflects the intense emotion of the moment except for the
initial cry of "Save me."

On the other hand, the KJV renders the passage meta-
phorically so that the image of the water depicts overwhelm-
ing sorrow from which the narrator has no way of escape
other than by the help of God. Emotion, however, involves
the spirit of the moment, and it is this that the KJV
brings into play by using "are come in unto my soul." Under
the strain of the experience, the psalmist does not have
a particular level on his anatomy to which sorrow rises,
but it is permeating his whole anima--the life principle
connected with breathing. This metaphorical expression is

more esthetically desirable and satisfying, and at the same time is an accurate translation of the original.

The third value that students derive from a knowledge of Hebrew poetry is that they gain greater insight into the traditions and heritage of a minority people who have given much toward influencing the course of the societies of the Western world. When the psalmists cry out for justice, at a time when there seems to be no justice, the principle of mishpat cannot be ignored. It was a part of their social structure as were the ethical and moral codes upon which they determined behavioral patterns for individual or group interaction. These aspects of the Hebraic social order are inherent in the poetry and frequently prompt the poets' concern for acceptable and appropriate conduct as they relate to men and as they relate to their God. It is in this area that the Judeo social impact comes to modern Western cultures mainly through the avenue of its religious institution. The trunkline of communication that brought this contribution to the English speaking peoples of the world is the KJV.

The matter of relevancy may be raised by thinking students. In the first place, the Jews have been given an image of an antiquated people, whose past is far more important to us than their present. Much of this appraisal is the result of the attitude promulgated by textbooks on

the junior and senior high levels of education. The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith made two studies, one in 1949 and another in 1960, of textbooks used at those levels and found that "World history textbooks continue to follow the practice of devoting much more space to the ancient Hebrews than to later Jewish history. . . . In 1960 fewer than half of the world history books linked the traditions of the ancient Hebrews to modern times and the moral values of today."[25] Literature can and does bring the matters of Hebrew antiquity up to the present by showing, for example, that the psychology of guilt is the same today as it was then. In Psalm 51, David gives expression of his guilt that resulted from his murder of Uriah and his immoral conduct with Bathsheba. He cannot shake his guilt: "my sin is ever before me," because he knows that his conduct was not the accepted behavior of his society as stated in its code of morality. The Hebrews have greatly influenced modern moral values to such an extent that modern man experiences the same guilt as did his ancient predecessor; therefore, the ancient is made relevant. Modern cultural practices are built upon past social structures as Francis Merrill indicates:

> The element of time is important because the past influences the thoughts and actions of each of us,

[25]Michael B. Kane, Minorities in Textbooks (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970), pp. 14,15.

> operating through the heritage of a group. In this
> sense, we are heirs of the great traditions of Christi-
> anity, democracy, and the other tenets of our society.
> These traditions form part of the setting within
> which we interact with others.[26]

To admit to the validity of Merrill's statement is to admit

to the relevancy of the study of ancient Hebrew poetry or

of other biblical genres as well.

Hebrew poetry is relevant to modern society in terms

of moral values in general as well as to certain specific

controversial moral issues of our current society. One

such issue is abortion. Students in a literature class

can find a fruitful contribution to the issue in Psalm 139:

13-16.

> For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered
> me in my mother's womb.
> I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully
> made: Marvellous are thy works: and that my soul
> knoweth right well.
> My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made
> in secret, And curiously wrought in the lowest parts
> of the earth.
> Thine eye did see my substance, yet being unperfect;
> And in thy book all my members were written, which
> in continuance were fashioned,
> When as yet there was none of them.

These verses are suggestive of a concept of life's beginning

that may or may not be accepted by those concerned with the

moral entanglements of abortion, and in this light, they are

very relevant.

[26]Francis E. Merrill, Society and Culture: An
Introduction to Sociology, 4th Ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New
Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1969), p. 80.

Rights of individuals and of minority groups are significant issues that have prompted unusual interest in our present society. This subject is not overlooked in biblical poetry where the dignity of the individual is upheld. The Psalmist recognizes in Psalm 9:4 and 140:12 that the rights of individuals must be safeguarded:

> For thou has maintained my right and my cause;
> thou satest in the throne judging right.

> I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the
> afflicted, and the right of the poor.

Relevant, even to the extent of international concern, is the geographical-political boundary of modern Israel. The Psalms have much to say about the esteem of the Hebrew for his native soil to which he has a strong emotional tie, and they provide an excellent background for the running conflict that is continually being agitated between the Israeli and Arab nations.

The first three values of a knowledge of Hebrew poetry have been presented with the student in mind; however, the fourth is related to the instructor who finds that he is hampered by the random, unstructured information that he has learned about the Bible, and poetry in particular, within the framework of a religious institution. He may also find it difficult, in his attempt to be academically honest, to delete religious indoctrination from the primary goal of literary instruction. It is reasonable to conclude that

the approach taken in this study will be beneficial to such
an instructor for these reasons:

1. No defense is necessary for using the KJV as a
    primary source because it is a recognized classic
    in English literature.

2. Being a classic, the KJV is the "main trunk" from
    which three centuries of writers have drawn materi-
    al, enhancing their work with numerous allusions
    to it.

3. Being a classic, the KJV is a means by which the
    instructor may lead his students toward a greater
    esthetic response because art acts as a stimulus
    to which an informed individual may respond more
    meaningfully.

4. The instructor's presentation of material will
    be enhanced because he is competent in handling
    the complex material related to the structure and
    imagery of the poetry.

5. The instructor will be able to keep the material
    relevant for his students so that they may relate
    to it better.

6. With this background in the poetry of the KJV
    the instructor can treat it as literature, and
    by so doing he will avoid propagandizing a particu-
    lar religious view.

That the instructor should use the KJV in the literature class is not to imply that more recent translations should be ignored. It does suggest, however, that the KJV should be granted the recognition that it rightfully merits. Other translations and paraphrases can be of significant help in matters that need clarification, such as modernized word meaning or paragraph divisions.

The attitude that an instructor should take toward the KJV in a literature class is adequately summarized by Donald Coggan, Archbishop of York, as he refers to the KJV this way:

> There is a kind of monosyllabic simplicity and yet majesty about much of the language. Consider this: "Thus will I bless Thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in Thy name." Or: "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Or again: "The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land." For sheer beauty, it would be hard to improve on sentences such as these.[27]

Such an attitude places the focus upon the KJV's simplicity, majesty, and beauty, which in combination make it emerge as a great English classic.

[27]Donald Coggan, The English Bible, in Bibliographical Series, ed. Bonamy Dobrée (London: Longmans Green & Co., 1963), p. 23.

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