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A Cultural Study of the David and Jonathan Relationship through the Ritual in 1 Samuel 18:1-5

By Kevin Christopher Roy Tyson

A thesis submitted to the Department of Theology and Religion, of the
University of Durham, in candidacy for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy on the
31th of December 2010.

Abstract

This thesis introduces a *cultural hermeneutic* for the study of the David and Jonathan relationship as found in the 1 Samuel 18:1-5 ritual. Its goal is to encourage biblical scholars and theologians to augment the use of exegetical tools in analysing biblical matter with methods from social anthropology and the social sciences. This will offer a third alternative interpretation of the heroes' relationship apart from late modern tendencies to engage in either a strict pro-homosexual reading or anti-homosexual rendering of the David-Jonathan narratives. This Ph.D. dissertation sets anthropological gift theory and material from selected comparative ethnography alongside the influence of the alleged Deuteronomistic Historian in an analysis of the socio-political transition of Premonarchical Israel to statehood to propose a textual and socially contextual bond of new male-male intimacy between David and Jonathan now classified as a warriors' brotherhood. Other key theological and social scientific areas explored are the Yahweh Religion, both chapter *nineteen narratives* in the Books of Genesis and Judges, the term 'loyal love' (in Hebrew, *hesed*), the Holiness Code and pollution theory, ritualised kinship and identity, patriliney (in which a child acquires social status from its father) and power, and domestic groups.

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Abbreviations

ABD – Anchor Bible Dictionary	MT – Masoretic Text
AD – Anno Domini	NASU – New American Standard Updated 1995
Ag. Ap. – Against Apion	NIV – New International Version
ANE – Ancient Near East	NKJV – New King James Version
Ant. – Antiquities of the Jews	NRSV – New Revised Standard Version
BC – Before Christ	NT – New Testament
DH – Deuteronomistic Historian or Deuteronomistic History	OT – Old Testament
EL or ELOHIM – God	P – Priestly Source
ESV – English Standard Version	RSV – Revised Standard Version
HDR – History of David’s Rise	Syr. – The Syriac translation or Peshitta
Iron Age IIA – <i>ca.</i> 1025-925 BC	Targ. – The Targum (Jonathan)
KJV – King James Version	TWOT – Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament
LORD GOD – Yahweh Elohim	UK – United Kingdom
LXX – Septuagint	US or USA – United States of America
LXX ^A – The Codex Alexandrinus, a second major uncial manuscript of the Septuagint	Vulg. – The Vulgate (Jerome’s Latin translation)
LXX ^B – The Codex Vaticanus, a major uncial manuscript of the Septuagint	War – War of the Jews
LXX ^L – The so-called Lucianic manuscripts of the Septuagint	YHWH – Yahweh

Declarations

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published in any format, including electronic and the Internet, without the author's prior written consent. All information derived from this thesis must be acknowledged appropriately.

Portions of this thesis have been presented in seminars and conferences, and previously submitted to the Faculty of the School of Divinity of Regent University for the degree of Master of Arts of Biblical Interpretation.

Key concepts from the following scholars influenced the development of this thesis' argument: Robert Alter, Aristotle, Yehudi A. Cohen, Philip Leroy Culbertson, Mary Douglas, Meyer Fortes, Clifford Geertz, Maurice Godelier, Marcel Mauss, Carol Meyers, Martti Nissinen, Julian Pitt-Rivers, Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, Pitirim A. Sorokin, Lawrence E. Stager, Gererdus van der Leeuw, Eric R. Wolf, and Yigael Yadin.

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Chapter 1 – Methodology

How do we understand the ancient, Israelite relationship of David and Jonathan when modern, everyday discourse is couched in western, sexualised language and innuendo? In the late modern age, issues of identity are enormously varied, not least in relation to matters of sexual identity. For what some might call the sexual revolution, with all that it entails for sexual politics, this antithesis has become key in responding to a Victorian Age of traditional family life and reproductive roles, whereby ‘a natural condition’ in sexuality ‘becomes something each of us “has” or cultivates’.¹ As this complex worldview evolves, the sexual component, in various discussions and ideas, comes to the fore in popular and academic circles (see also Giddens’ ideas of democracy and privatisation²). Not surprisingly, an infusion of (or perhaps a confusion of) sex and eroticism into modern discussions are juxtaposed to this relevant sexual enlightenment. For the purpose of this study, it is observed that a sexual view of the David and Jonathan relationship in 1 Samuel, and how we reckon that view to our ‘democratic’ world (i.e., self-identity) have become foundational in queer theory and its implications within biblical studies and theology³ – where the study of God incorporates biblical studies and other sub-disciplines in Theology, and not simply the systematic or

¹ Anthony Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies*, Reprinted ed. (Oxford: Polity Press, 1993), 1-17, 42.

² Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).

³ Anthony Heacock, *Jonathan Loved David: Manly Love in the Bible and the Hermeneutics of Sex* ed. J. Cheryl Exum, Hugh Pyper, and *et al*, *The Bible in the Modern World*, vol. 22 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011).

doctrinal aspects. However, this thesis will not rehearse the sexual politics of David and Jonathan, as many have discussed this before.⁴ Instead, this thesis will revisit the identities of David and Jonathan, with a broader scope on their relationship and culture, contrary to that of a specific sexual lens: At its core, this thesis will observe the ritual in 1 Sam 18:1-4. Our attempt may be what, the sociologist, Anthony Giddens refers to as a new development of a pure relationship between other forms of kinship and friendship with promises of intimacy and democracy to fuel this particular non-sexual relationship.⁵ Clearly as we redefine sexual identity, some modern western readers endeavour to make arguments for homosexual and coital relations between such characters as David and Jonathan, Gilgamesh and Enkidu, Achilles and Patroclus, Jesus and John, Jesus and Judas, or more contemporary figures such as Sherlock Holms and Dr. Watson.⁶ The attraction to categorise any two men in some traditional relationship or in another way, is a fairly common endeavour in this late modern age where post-structural ideas dominate: ‘There is great difficulty in studying same-sex relationships in a heterosexist and homophobic society because of the tendency to distort innocent relations, to read consummated

⁴ Susan Ackerman (2005) and her bibliography, Anthony Heacock (2011) and his extensive bibliography, H.S. Pyper (2007), “Love at First Sight? David, Jonathan, and the Biblical Politics of Gender” (Y. Peleg, 2005), “Does the Bible Speak about Gays or Same-Sex Orientation?” (L.J. White, 1995), *Tragedy and Biblical Narrative* (J.C. Exum, 1992), *Jonathan Loved David: Homosexuality in Biblical Times* (T. Horner, 1978); and in this thesis: S. Bigger, P. Bird, D. Boyarin, **G.D. Comstock**, R. Gagnon, K. Locke, **M. Nissinen**, S. Olyan, and H. Waetjen. See the bibliography in the end matter for details.

⁵ Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy*, 188.

⁶ In order to manage the word count of this thesis, to maintain the integrity of our focus, and to avoid regurgitating material already in the public sphere, readers who are interested in perceived homosexual aspects of the David-Jonathan, Gilgamesh-Enkidu, and Achilles-Patroclus relationships are referred to *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality and other essays on Greek Love* (D. Halperin, 1990), Susan Ackerman (2005), and Anthony Heacock (2011) to begin a search or study. Of note is *Achilles in Greek Tragedy* (Pantelis Michelakis, 2002) for a more asexual classical analysis of the Achilles-Patroclus relationship and other intimated homosexual relationships in Greek history. For a biblically minded analysis, note also *Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship* (John T. Fitzgerald, 1997).

sexual activity into passionate innuendos, or because of an inability to put aside twentieth-century biases in order to be sensitive to a pre-Freudian epoch'.⁷ Again, this thesis will not treat the complexity of these more recent, non-traditional issues, but favour an exploration into the diversity of asexual male-male relations, such as the warriors' brotherhood. For discussions on sexual versus asexual intimacy and sexuality from pre-modernity forward, please refer to authors such as Anthony Giddens, and for discussions on homosexuality and coital relations in the David and Jonathan relationship, the reader might begin with Susan Ackerman and Anthony Heacock.

Notwithstanding, in this attempt to present what is, in effect, a cultural hermeneutic of the 1 Sam 18:1-4 ritual which bonded the David and Jonathan characters, issues such as sexual politics appear to be unavoidable. While there is neither the space in this thesis to rehearse the extensive arguments of proponents and opponents of a 'gay rights agenda' (viz., queer theorists) or a 'fundamentalist heterosexist agenda', nor the intention to debate pro/anti-homosexual (biblical) views, sexuality, 'sexual identity', or the like, I will present brief perspectives on the aforementioned. For example, the chapter on The Impact of OT Precepts on Israelite Society minimally treats the sexual identities of David and Jonathan; however, for more extensive discussions, the reader should refer to Susan Ackerman's work *When Heroes Love* (2005) and Anthony Heacock's book *Jonathan Loved David* (2011). Both of these authors include extensive

⁷ Karen V. Hansen, "Our Eyes Behold Each Other: Masculinity and Intimate Friendship in Antebellum New England," in *Men's Friendships: Research on Men and Masculinities*, ed. Peter M. Nardi (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications, Inc., 1992), 43.

bibliographies in their books which one might use to pursue a more thorough study of perceived homosexuality, a gay rights agenda, or a heterosexist agenda in the David-Jonathan narrative. While the pursuit of the sexualised argument and its subsidiary hypotheses on an effemination of Jonathan, etc. have been introduced in the academic and public spheres for some time now; it is time to move the discussion forward to another kind of male-male relationship, to new scholarship, and to include more liberal ideas, such as that of the warriors' brotherhood. First, I stipulate that the practice of male-male coitus has existed in human history (see also *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality* [1990], David Halperin and *History of Sexuality* [several volumes], Michel Foucault) and that language in today's world is couched in the need of giving and receiving love. Secondly, when I speak of those pro/anti-homosexual proponents to biblical texts, my intention is not to debate one's modern western freedoms, rights, and responsibilities which are based on the natural law and God's gift to humanity. To assent cognitively to a worldview is a choice, and those decisions are not the focus of this thesis. Finally, as I follow Heacock's final comment which clarifies that 'it is none of our business' whether David and Jonathan were homosexual, I would add that it was not the goal of the ancient narrator/writer/editor to make it our business. Instead, the goal of 1 and 2 Samuel was to describe the political History of David's Rise (HDR) (q.v., Kyle McCarter in this thesis⁸), as Kyle McCarter concludes in his well cited work on *1 Samuel*, and as

⁸ Following McCarter's idea of the HDR, Steven L. McKenzie, in *King David: A Biography* (2000), treats the narrative as a political apologetic for David's ascension to the throne. As our goals in this thesis are not to delve into the modern debate about sex, eroticism and other coital matters, likewise, a more in depth study of the politics of David's ascension will not be treated here. See McCarter and McKenzie to begin your search and study.

Heacock, himself, concludes in his three observational categories of interpreting the David and Jonathan relationship (viz., ‘political allegiances’).⁹

While the political is preeminent in this debate, many contemporary discussions have referred to this relationship as either a friendship or a homosexual union. However, I will propose a third alternative within the diversity of male relationships, which is the ‘warriors’ brotherhood’. This conclusion is developed through my desire to engage with ideas from social anthropology and to discover a complementary discipline for biblical studies – in order to rediscover the relationship from a new viewpoint. As I offer a fresh perspective on the relationship, I reiterate that my intention is not to support pro/anti-homosexual readings already in academic and popular sectors of society, but to operate this thesis as a critical, textual and social-contextual study of the David-Jonathan stories. The research is rooted primarily in Old Testament studies and its forms of textual analysis coupled with tools of social anthropology to enhance our reflective understanding of the narrative in context. At the outset of this study, no relevant e-theses were found which related to our specific asexual discussion. Instead our approach treats the Bible as a work of literature (including *Samuel*, *Leviticus*, and *Deuteronomy*¹⁰) in order to develop a cultural hermeneutic of the warriors’ brotherhood. This genre becomes *classical* for Israel, and regards the final form as a definitive and normative work about Israelite culture. As such, this thesis

⁹ Heacock, 150, 35.

¹⁰ See also Mary Douglas, Anthony Heacock, and Susan Ackerman, to name a few, on how these authors have accepted earlier traditions into later text and societies.

employs a textual, cultural, and contextual approach to the David-Jonathan narrative.

My goals of this thesis are (1) to propose the warriors' brotherhood as the relationship for David and Jonathan based on the ritual in 1 Samuel 18:1-4, (2) to employ and encourage a cultural, biblical hermeneutic whereby interdisciplinary methods from the social sciences, such as comparative studies, will feature in the approach on the David and Jonathan narrative, and (3) to consider the macro-transition of Early Israel from a premonarchical society to statehood within the discussion of the micro-transition of kinship structures involving this new type of relationship (i.e., warriors' brotherhood) – from the perspective of the Deuteronomistic Historian (DH). One might observe in male-male relations a certain continuum or diversity of male relationships which are dependent on a kinship or non-kinsman-like status, and a certain level of affect and amiability: So that more affective and amiable relations might include the father-son/son-father relationship, brother-brother, comrades in arms, homosexual partners, pastor-parishioner, mentor-apprentice, cohorts or initiates, best mates/friends, or even the God-*adam* relationship. And less affective and amiable relations might be those of king-subject, teacher-pupil, partners on a police force, doctor-patient, or the tribal chief-shaman relation. While the term 'friend' covers a broad spectrum of the relationships on the continuum, on the surface, it cannot detect certain nuances in the relationship; so that when I speak of a warriors' brotherhood in Early Israel the use of the term friend becomes anachronistic and ethnocentric. Likewise, all male-male relations, past or present, cannot be defined as 'homosexual' simply because

that relationship appears to contain more affect and amiability than others on the continuum, and thus would be considered anachronistic and ethnocentric in the warriors' brotherhood in Early Israel, as well. In order to achieve this new designation we will explore a variety of asexual male relations and introduce the impact of ritualised relations on male-male relationships.

Within the boundaries of the thesis, we will utilise elements of the text-centred and author-centred methods of hermeneutics and biblical interpretation. This decision segregates the reader-centred approach and its popular views from this thesis (cf., Chapter 5 in Heacock), and considers Source Criticism (viz., the DH) as it is an integral part of the author-centred approach. I will treat the Bible as literature and as a definitive cultural history of Israel. Furthermore, in that the nearest relation to the David-Jonathan story is 1 and 2 Samuel, I will address the DH and P (Priestly) material within (regardless of how one labels these sources) as they comprise Israelite culture and the Hebrew Text. Although one might address the editor or redactor more generically as such, I will cite the DH and P, specifically, as there are certain nuances with each which seem important to explore. I will employ an inductive approach to study the text (viz., the ritual in 1 Sam 18:1-4) and to perform its content limited exegesis in this thesis. That is to say that I cannot conduct an extensive analysis of all the Hebrew verses and terms in 1 and 2 Samuel, for example, as first I am restricted by a word limit, secondly I am integrating another discipline into this thesis, and thirdly it is not part of my purpose or the above stated thesis. However a few key terms such as 'covenant' and 'loyal love' will feature in my analysis, as well as my focus on 1 Sam 18:1-4. In using inductive

study, I have chosen social anthropology as an aid in discovery and research. This decision separates the deductive method and its adherents from this thesis. I will consider the appropriate genre of the text I am discussing. For example that 1 Sam 18:1-4 is written as narrative and that 2 Sam 1:26 is written as poetry or lament. I will engage the observed ritual of 1 Sam 18:1-4 as a social phenomenon, and move the discussion away from sex, eroticism, and biased religious teachings to one of kinship, power, exchange, time and space, social structure, and other related social scientific concepts instead. Actually, I have found this more difficult in practice, as of late. I will respect the time and space of 1000 BC Israel as it contrasts to the West in late modernity. I will 'isolate' the social culture of Early Israel from its theological component at times to understand the human element separate from the Divine element, and then reintegrate the two, as the text of the Bible is a theological work itself and as Israelite culture is definitively religious. I assure the biblical scholar that those instances of temporary theological suspension are not intended to create a God-less Bible, Christianity, Judaism, or Islam. In fact, it is impossible to redact completely and to deconstruct YHWH from the Bible, its text, and Israelite history. I will restrict conversations of the David-Jonathan relationship within the overarching story of the History of David's Rise (e.g., Yahwism, military, monarchy and politics of the period). I will *not* suggest or consider that this thesis is a complete, comprehensive, definitive, conclusive work of the totality of biblical studies and social anthropology, separate or combined, in late modernity. Moreover, this is an exploratory thesis in which ideas were formed as I followed the research (q.v., my comments on inductive study), and in which my proposal of the

David-Jonathan relationship, as a warriors' brotherhood, may develop in the future. I will assert robustly this new thesis lest my quiet voice not be heard. Again, offence is not intended to anyone as I hope the reader will be tolerant of a viewpoint which does not support either a pro-homosexual or anti-homosexual view of the David-Jonathan relationship.

With respect to homosexuality and the recent book, *Jonathan Loved David: Manly Love in the Bible and the Hermeneutics of Sex*, published after my findings, a search for reviews revealed that The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Round Table of the American Library Association recommended Heacock's book in their selective bibliography for 'gay men interested in exploring their lives as spiritual journeys', and for its ability to avoid 'blatant homophobic treatments of the subject'.¹¹ Taken from a Unitarian Universalist's perspective, Anthony Heacock mentions a wide array of scholars from queer theory and biblical studies in his contemporary analysis of 'manly love', queer hermeneutics and 'sexual criticism' in the David and Jonathan relationship. Indeed, his study into sexuality does diverge from my own study of scholars in the social sciences and biblical studies. Heacock would say that I have taken a 'traditional' hermeneutical approach in that my exegetical methodology adheres to the author-centred and text-centred interpretive methods, which limit my research to the text's historical location both in time and space. Conversely his decision utilises the reader-centred approach and its popular views as he develops a 'novel way of reading the Bible' for modern gay men.

¹¹ American Library Association, *Glb Religion & Spirituality - a Selective Bibliography: 2011–Present*(accessed 11 February 2012.); available from <http://www.ala.org/glbtrt/popularresources/religion4>.

Referring to theological studies as a ‘fringe field’, Heacock is ‘armed with a theology degree’, despite theology’s fringe views, in order ‘to *expose* the social, religious and academic prejudices’ of traditional biblical interpretation which tends ‘to suppress *the truth*’ for him as a gay man – who has seen traditional biblical studies wreck the lives of many [emphases his]. I applaud Heacock for his work and support of both North American and British gay men as *Jonathan Loved David* is geared to ‘how gay male Christians in the United Kingdom read the Bible’. His analysis is broad enough to appeal to many pro-homosexual proponents and those interested in the ‘1 Sam 18:1 – 2 Sam 1:27 tale of erotic passion’.^{12 13}

As laudable as his goals may be to one side of the discussion, my intention is to treat the broader debate with concepts from historical sources, the hermeneutical method, the anthropological method, an application of biblical genres, the use of mainstream or traditional scholars in biblical studies, and the space-time dichotomy of geographic locales, peoples and periods. However I will discuss, briefly, issues of sex and eroticism in a later chapter as I engage with S. Bigger, P. Bird, D. Boyarin, **G.D. Comstock**, R. Gagnon, K. Locke, **M. Nissinen**, S. Olyan, and H. Waetjen. Moreover, this thesis introduces the novel concept of the warriors’ brotherhood as it applies to the David-Jonathan relationship, instead of rehearsing concepts of sex and eroticism.

¹² Heacock, ix-xi.

¹³ On pp.7-8 of his book, Heacock lists eight verses or pericopes as ‘proof’ texts which ‘prove’ an erotic relationship between Jonathan and David. I have limited my scope to the ritual found in 1 Sam 18:1-4, although the other seven pericopes and other relevant verses have been mentioned throughout the thesis.

A 'Traditional' Approach

What is this 'traditional' method on the 'fringe'? Although I have defined some aspects of this already (e.g., a text-centred approach; the OT as a unified, classical work of literature for Israel), I will elaborate beginning with theology in the wider sense of the term which includes biblical studies and the like. To clarify my position on Theology, I will take, the Durham theologian, Ben DeSpain's (ca.2015) approach: In synthesising Aquinas and Tolkien's methodological use of fairy stories, the application and use of theology is a practice which results in or leads to an engagement with God of the Judeo-Christian Bible. So that as one approaches the biblical text, one must assume a position in which s/he suspends disbelief in order to interact with the material; not unlike Tolkien's proposition that one must suspend 'belief' when engaging with fairy stories. Regardless of whom the researcher is, whether a black man, a woman, a person with a disability, a fundamentalist, or a queer theorist, which might all be helpful in any theological discourse, the nomenclature or distinction of 'theology' or 'theologian', should be that exercise or person's exercise in which the *telos* is YHWH of the Old and/or New Testaments.

In stipulating this, I do not mean to exclude anyone, for that would be contradictory to a traditional method and the teachings of the classical Bible. It would be more accurate to say that my view of a traditional method has more to do with the method and less about the individual. For if a woman were to engage with the Bible, would it not be more appropriate to value the individual and say that 'C.

Meyers suggests that’, rather than the ‘feminist theologian, Carol Meyers suggests’? However, that is another convention which I will tackle in another project as my current thesis is rife with controversy and ‘non-traditional’ approaches as it is. In fact where the traditional method includes many people, I am suggesting that the traditional method should include other disciplines. To support a biblical investigation, I believe it is helpful to consult the social sciences, the physical sciences, history, ANE studies, classical studies, psychology, archaeology, law, foreign languages, ancient languages, etc. Within foundational courses on hermeneutics and biblical studies, the student often approaches The Book of Mark as the pruning ground for developing new exegetical skills. As one encounters the swift ‘immediacy’ of *Mark* in chapter one as Jesus first makes an appearance in the synagogue, it is striking that when Jesus taught the crowds *truth*, the people acknowledged (by their ‘astonishment’) that his teaching was ‘as one having authority, and *not* as the scribes’ (Mark 1:22) [emphasis mine]; and that this ‘*new* teaching’ was ‘with authority’ (v.27) [emphasis mine]. More to the point, the people recognised a difference between Jesus’ new teaching of the established Scripture and his authority, and then contrasted it to a seemingly old teaching and diminished authority of the scribes. How could they have made that assessment? Clearly they would have had to know an established authority which expressed itself in the Scripture and in the credibility of those who taught the Word of God to others. Through mental assent and a rational process, they deduced the difference between what they knew and what was now being presented to them, and reconciled the two so as not to discard the Scripture – for they accepted Jesus’ new teaching of

the old Word. Moreover, the crux of their assessment was their observation of the Christ exorcising a demon (vv.23-28), so that the art of demonstration became crucial to their mental exercise. In his encyclical on *Faith and Reason*,¹⁴ John Paul II wrestles with these two titular concepts which can explain the events of Mark 1: truth is known through a combination of faith and reason.¹⁵ The people of Mark 1 discovered the truth through their established faith and reasoning – in which that faith had its basis in Christ’s person or authority, teaching or authority, and demonstration of that authority. In other words, the people reasoned that Jesus was not like the scribes, did not follow their ways, or did not mirror their diminished effectiveness. In developing a framework for the authority of Scripture, one cannot set faith and reason aside, especially if one claims to do biblical exegesis or Theology. As the ‘ultimate authority’,¹⁶ the Bible is relied upon for its established tradition (including that over the millennia), the message(s) it conveys, and its effect. Therefore, in this discussion on new approaches to tradition which affect a move to God (i.e., theology), one discerns a positivist effectiveness in the new discourse set within a tried and tested rubric: a new authority embedded in traditional teaching.

¹⁴ Pope John Paul II, *Fides Et Ratio. Faith and Reason: Encyclical Letter Fides Et Ratio of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Relationship between Faith and Reason.*, English ed. (Dublin: Veritas, 1998).

¹⁵ See also G.F. Hawthorne (2004): ‘There is certainly a sense in which faith and knowledge are close in idea, and the meaning of the one is strengthened by sharing in the meaning of the other’.

¹⁶ J.P. Moreland, "How Evangelicals Became Overcommitted to the Bible and What Can Be Done About It," in *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Authority of Scripture: Historical, Biblical, and Theoretical Perspectives*, ed. Carlos R. Bovell (Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick Publications, 2011), 290-91.

Wherein the OT embodies the oldest history-writing in existence and is the one course which presents a continuous story from the earliest times to the Persian Age (*Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. I, 1924, p. 222; Vol. III, 1925, p. viii*), the authority of the Bible must be ‘*articulated and formalized [sic] at the theological level*, with certain older approaches now being seen as conditioned responses to general cultural developments . . .’.¹⁷ Thus, we have accepted the OT as classical and authoritative and will utilise the traditional, older approaches to develop a theology of David and Jonathan. Using traditional methods to interpret a traditional book (with a fresh perspective) has its merits in being ‘responsible and reliable’ with the interpretation of Scripture.¹⁸

Not unlike the genre of historical narrative in the OT, we will include in chapter four an analysis of the Icelandic sagas, which contain ethnographic value in its cultural context.¹⁹ In the ‘historical anthropology’ of the Samuel narratives, we will consider some warnings from select French schools of anthropology which cautions against imposing modern criteria on people in earlier centuries. Such social scientific values, which are tangential to some of the concepts of time and space, coincide with our own text-centred and author-centred approaches to biblical hermeneutics, while simultaneously embracing a *sitz im leben* (life-situation) of the story with our own story. Following the biblical scholar and hermeneut, Charles L. Holman, I too will argue that a modern ‘imposition’ on ancient lives and stories

¹⁷ Alister E. McGrath, *A Passion for Truth: The Intellectual Coherence of Evangelicalism* (Leicester: Apollos, 1996), 57-58.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 95.

¹⁹ E. Paul Durrenberger and Gisli Palsson, "The Importance of Friendship in the Absence of States, According to the Icelandic Sagas," in *The Anthropology of Friendship*, ed. Sandra Bell and Simon Coleman (Oxford: Berg, 1999), 61.

should be restricted to the application phase of hermeneutics – identified in this thesis as cultural hermeneutics. Thus, the method chosen for this thesis is an *inductive* one, as I have learnt from Prof. Holman (d. 2006). Whereas in a deductive method of Bible study the reader enters scholarship with certain premises or conclusions and then seeks to test or establish such with certain biblical texts, in an inductive method key aspects of the text are observed and studied further to see where they lead before forming a conclusion. Basing his method on R.A. Traina (1952),²⁰ Charles L. Holman advises the scholar ‘to observe’ the text before ‘interpreting’ the material and ‘applying’ the principles learned to our modern world, or to one’s own life today.²¹

At its core, the thesis begins by observing and limiting the scope of text to the ritual found in 1 Samuel 18:1-4, NRSV. As we observe key aspects, other parts of 1 Samuel and the Old Testament (OT) will be incorporated to aid our interpretation and application of the ritual. Attempts to include or elaborate on other Scripture in the David-Jonathan narrative will be minimised so as to focus on the cultural implications of the ritual rather than a strict sexual reading of the ‘erotic proof texts’.²² More specifically, a tendency to elaborate on 2 Samuel 1:26 without its context will be minimised, in order to avoid an unintended coital reading. The purpose of this thesis is not to promote or to rejoin a pro-homosexual view or anti-homosexual view of the text or the Bible. Instead our goal is to add thesis-specific

²⁰ David R. Bauer and Robert A. Traina, *Inductive Bible Study: A Comprehensive Guide to the Practice of Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2011).

²¹ Charles L. Holman, "Principles of Bible Study I," (Virginia Beach, Va.: Regent University, School of Divinity, 2002).

²² Heacock, 7-8.

material, relevant to ritual, culture, and a social scientific approach, to the wider biblical discussion on David and Jonathan.

The basic elements of this scholarship include themes of military and monarchy, and kingship and kinship in the warriors' brotherhood ritual. In chapters seven and eight I will take a simple approach to examine OT rites in light of its phenomenology, and as it relates to the Baruya tribe of New Guinea. This will lead to the idea of David's initiation into an elite warriors' class, which later becomes David's Mighty Men. I will interpret select phenomenological concepts, such as the use of robes, to explain how David might have become part of Saul's family and eventually heir to the Saulide dynasty. I will explore socio-cultural issues of time and space, Israel's move to a national brotherhood, the power of women in the OT, fertility and the importance of patriliney, gift exchange, and a fresh interpretation of biblical text within a cultural context. This summary reiterates my intention to avoid possible discussions of coitus or eroticism between David and Jonathan, and to focus on aspects of kingship, kinship, and defence forces, instead. In fact, in a recent article published after my findings, Gary Stansell, a Heidelberg theologian, also supports the view that a cross-disciplinary discussion of biblical studies and the social sciences can limit the inclusion of sex and eroticism from the David-Jonathan discussion. Stansell further adds that there is no support for a queer reading of the narrative and no support for a homosexual or erotic component in the ethos of Ancient Israel. I encourage the reader to review Stansell's work as complementary reading to my own thesis, as he mirrors many of my own methods; and as I will treat his work in chapter four, minimally.

In chapter five, as we explore a fresh interpretation of the David-Jonathan relationship towards the concept of warriors' brotherhood, we will also explore a fresh interpretation of Genesis 19 and propose that 'Divine justice' is the key to understanding that narrative. Not only will this 'nineteen narrative' serve as a backdrop to 1 Samuel in the OT literary corpus, but it will also serve as an example of how revisiting a text in a cultural context can move us towards greater understanding. Another benefit of this method could lead the modern reader to explore ancient civilisations through ancient spectacles and perceive within ancient texts, as Gen 19 and 1 Sam 18, God's justice for the hurting rather than a tool for 'gay-bashing' or a warriors' brotherhood rather than an erotic encounter. Following Heacock, I reiterate that it is 'our business' to see what the author/editor wants us to see, and the Divine justice and warriors' brotherhood themes seem more appropriate for Gen 19 and 1 Sam 18, respectively.

Instead of relying on modern politics, we will tend to a traditional hermeneutic of the alleged eroticism in 2 Sam 1:26. As it is not our intention to delve into sex and eroticism, we will touch on 1:26 throughout the thesis with cursory analyses in chapters three and four. We mentioned above that reading v.26 in the genres of poetry, elegy, lament, and dirge are appropriate to our hermeneutical method. In so doing one must consider the artistry of 2 Sam 1 to include such elements as metaphor and other imagery, the public Israelite audience, and celebratory expressions of life and death, delivered in hyperbole. Although important, we will not compare the format and language of 2 Sam 1 to other dirge-type psalms written by David, other similar poetic material written by other authors,

including Solomon and Qoheleth, and other ANE laments. Instead, we will observe how metaphor and simile, in select psalms and proverbs, form brotherhood relationships in which the participants are not consanguineal kin. Conclusions from this study will lead us to further develop v.26 from literal and metaphorical perspectives, to consider the concept of a nationalistic²³ brotherhood, and to observe how the relationship between Yahweh and Israel resemble a kinship structure. We will enquire whether the public sphere of the funerary, where ch.1 takes place, is an appropriate social space for an alleged, private, sexual relationship to be revealed. Would David do so at a funeral as opposed to a pronouncement at court, which would validate the ‘homosexual’ relationship within the state? As he addresses other Israelites here, is this supposed declaration of coitus appropriate for this society from a cultural perspective? Why wait until the death of the lover if the narrator made attempts to expose the illicit affair earlier in the story? Further, would the narrator include this kind of admission in the tale? Would the editor, centuries later, choose to include this admission in his take on the story? Also, as the celebration of life is evident in ch.1 for both Saul and Jonathan, and David’s very expressive sentiments are delivered in a state of mourning to the point of hyperbole, could one consider v.26 as hyperbole also? Does David intend to convey that their love was a sexual effeminate love or a type of intimacy which was shared and exceeded the existing social construct one might find with a man in a

²³ Negative images of nationalism might be conjured as the European reader observes ‘nationalistic’ terms used in this thesis. In political and popular circles of the day, ideas of nationalism and racism seem to be equated (cf., Julia Roos, *German History*, 2012). However, I follow a more traditional definition of nationalism as it relates to common symbols in a society and how a society develops cohesion over time. Eva-Maria Asari, Daphne Halikiopoulou and Steven Mock tease out the issues in a ‘British National Identity and the Dilemmas of Multiculturalism’ in *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 2008.

relationship with a woman? The contrast of the grandiose as opposed to the literal must be considered and will be treated in Walter Brueggemann's study of 1 Sam 1:26.

We will begin our discussion with introductory material on social science and the OT in chapter two. In the following pages we will argue the need for a 'cultural hermeneutic' and the significance of the social sciences in analysing biblical matter. As we explore precedent for such an hermeneutic, we will introduce key social scientific concepts and scholars who have utilised their own field of study to enhance how one understands religion and the Bible. Then in chapter three, the discourse will move to a brief, exegetical analysis of select David-Jonathan texts (viz., 1 Sam 18:1-4), some affects of the Documentary Theory on the narrative and associated biblical texts, and a brief treatment of the connectivity of certain books in the OT, such as *Samuel* and *Leviticus*. We close chapter three with a comparison of social, philosophical, emotional, psychological, and religious thoughts often applied to the David-Jonathan material in late modernity and Classical Antiquity, in order to validate the need for this proposed cultural hermeneutic.

Chapter four exposes the biblical/theological reader to relevant data and theories in social anthropology. We will introduce social scientific 'structure' and cultural classifications, kinship concepts, such as descent theory and ritualised kinship, and survey some cultures and their classifications, in order to inform readers who are unfamiliar with the nuances of structure, domestic groups, and ritualised kinship. This presentation will lead us to a synthesis of ego/alter-ego (selfhood and otherness) from the previous chapter and insight into exchange and

reciprocity theory. We then return to a familiar domain in biblical scholarship, as we sample often cited biblical commentators and their views on ‘ritualised kinship’ in the David-Jonathan narrative. We will close chapter four by exploring some later readers to the David-Jonathan story and discover surprisingly common themes to those of the early readers.

Continuing with the biblical scholarship component, chapter five revisits the chapter ‘nineteen narratives’ in both Genesis and Judges, with concepts that impact a pro/anti-homosexual reading of the nineteen narratives, and the David-Jonathan narrative. The need for social scientific concepts to broaden the strict, pro/anti-homosexual renderings of the text becomes apparent, and chapter six treats a cultural presentation of Premonarchical Israel. We will identify the domestic group as a ‘family household’, propose a patriliney²⁴ and economy of Early Israel, and develop the David-Jonathan narrative beyond sexuality. Having introduced some contributions from social anthropology, chapter seven explores ideas of power, sacred time, exchange, gift theory, heroes, and war as it relates to the David and Jonathan characters and their story. We conclude by developing the *brotherhood* identity of ‘the self’ and ‘the other’ in the David-Jonathan relationship within the macro-transitional stage of Israel approaching statehood, and a national brotherhood – with a focus on the other and concepts of selflessness.

In this further edition of the thesis, I make this personal note: We live in a world with personal, political, and religious bigotry where struggles against

²⁴ The terms ‘patriliney’ or ‘patrilinealy’ are used to describe social structures in which a child acquires social status from its father.

individuals, or between individual groups, dominate human camaraderie. As this thesis moves through the application stage (which will be developed largely by the reader) it is my hope that you consider the Christian teaching to love one another. This thesis will propose the concept of the warriors' brotherhood for the David-Jonathan relationship, and no doubt will incite passionate emotions, political debate, and/or scholarship from pro-homosexual and anti-homosexual worldviews. However if the reader would consider some of the benefits of asexual, homo-social behaviour in occidental Israel past or Western Civilisation present, and respect 'the other' while not necessarily agreeing with another worldview, then perhaps male-male (and female-female) support for one another – as found today in non-sexualised yet intimate aspects of people who tend to homosexual relations and in non-sexualised yet intimate aspects of people who play professional team sports – can become part of the way we live. I hope that fear of the other, or their worldview, can be mitigated by the fraternity of homo-social support (and hetero-social support) for one another, or simply, the goal to love one another. In *Postmodernity and its Discontents*, Zygmunt Bauman summarises a sentiment that I share: '[I]t seems plausible that the key to a problem as large as social justice lies in a problem as (ostensibly) small-scale as the primal moral act of taking up responsibility for the Other nearby, within reach . . .'.²⁵ Perhaps in our quest for self-identity and self-gratification, we have lost a consideration for the other. The concept of warriors' brotherhood for David and Jonathan might contravene late modern ideas of self-pleasure, but might be useful as a new discussion in the late

²⁵ Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodernity and Its Discontents* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), 70.

modern debate; and perhaps cause us to reflect on how the self can take up some responsibility for the other.

Chapter 2 – Social Science and the Old Testament

From the perspective of biblical history, the context of Early Israel's transition to monarchy is an important setting to visualise for the David-Jonathan relationship. Within this cultural window we will utilise anthropology to help us decipher the culture or “webs of significance” that humans themselves spin and in which they are suspended'.²⁶ The cultural background to this lies in Iron Age²⁷ Israel and the matrix includes one thread moving from tribal structure to another of statehood; further threads relating to interpersonal relationships and to Israel's Yahwistic religious system. In this chapter we will begin our discussion with introductory material on social science and the OT, and argue for a 'cultural hermeneutic' together with the social sciences in order to analyze biblical matter.

Social Anthropology: Significance of Symbolism

As the observer analyses the cultural threads of the OT, the scholar would also focus on the impact against the wider society. In our analysis, this perspective includes a paradigmatic shift in analysing the Old Testament narrative of David and Jonathan. We will endeavour to identify the symbols in the story; including a view to the 'paradigmatic scenes'²⁸ of the contextual relationships of comrades fighting a war – which is essential to understanding the story of David and Jonathan.

²⁶ Thomas W. Overholt, *Cultural Anthropology and the Old Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 4.

²⁷ The term *Iron Age* may evoke debate between the Minimalist, Maximalist, or composite views. My intention here is not to promote any one perspective, but to utilise a useful archaeological term employed by cross-disciplinary scholars to describe images of the *social evolution* of the period (ca. 1000 BC), or in other words, images which a less specialised reader would conjure.

²⁸ See Needham below.

Literary scenes

The first of two literary scenes we will preview is found in Robert Alter's, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. His description of 'type-scenes' reminds the OT scholar of the cycle of apostasy through successive narratives in The Book of Judges (and Deuteronomistic History²⁹) in which the writer repeatedly outlines the fixed pattern of Israel's sin and apostasy, her³⁰ punishment, her repentance, and her deliverance. (Also noteworthy are repetitive elements in Genesis 19 and Judges 19.) This is a simplistic description of the pattern involved in Alter's type-scene which is based on the *epic* tradition of Homer and thus cannot be applied to all biblical matter as,

. . . the Bible is not descriptive, and concomitantly, the type-scene is a performance of a quotidian situation, and the Bible touches on the quotidian only as a sphere for the realization [*sic*] of portentous actions: if in the Bible someone is brewing up a mess of lentil stew, the reader can rest assured that it is not to exhibit the pungency of ancient Hebrew cuisine but because some fatal transaction will be carried out with the stew, which even proves to have a symbolically appropriate color [*sic*].³¹

In other words, the biblical narrators (and editors) tend not to describe all the details of every story, instead they focus the reader's attention to critical junctures in the everyday life of Israel which are type-scenes and present themselves as symbols of extraordinary circumstances.

²⁹ See H.W. Wolff, 1961.

³⁰ The use of 'her' as a personal pronoun for the nation of Israel reflects a contemporary literary convention which seemingly began with Catherine the Great of Russia in the 18th century. My intention is not to imply a position in any perceived debate about categorizing a nation, seafaring vessel, or the like as having feminine characteristics.

³¹ Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1981), 51.

Some examples of the Alter type-scene include the annunciation, the birth of a hero to his barren mother, the epiphany in the field, the initiatory trial, and the testament of the dying hero. With the exception of the annunciation the other specified type-scenes actually occur in *The Books of Samuel*: Samuel is born to the barren Hannah (1 Sam 1). In the field of chapter 20, Jonathan and David renew their covenant, confirm the revelation of danger from Saul, and realise that David's immediate departure means they might never see one another again. David is first tried in the fight against Goliath (1 Sam 17). And David eulogises or testifies to the deceased hero Jonathan (2 Sam 1).

Although type-scenes in the biblical narrative do not mimic those of Homeric epics precisely (or simplistically the *Judges* cycles) in describing a routine series of events or actions for one scene, they do alert the reader to key interruptions in Israel's history. Alter also notes that even the absence of an expected biblical type scene could be a clue to the hearer and reader.³² So then a literary cue for the audience in 1 Samuel 18 could well be a type-scene which alludes to covenant and gifting. It is the loyal love and ritualistic symbolism which grasps our attention here and merits the analysis produced in this thesis.

A second literary scene, being used as a cue, occurs in *Circumstantial Deliveries* where Rodney Needham describes how the paradigm of one scene or event can evoke a complexity of meaning in the recipient (e.g., reader, listener): 'At the level of events, there are incidents which make an awesome and poignant

³² Ibid., 52.

impact, as though they conveyed a mystagogical significance about life'.³³

Needham uses the example in Luke 22:60-62 to further his argument: Earlier the Christ informed his disciple Peter that before the cock crowed three times, Peter would deny him. Now the time had come and the narration climaxes. The disciple denies knowing his Lord, the reader 'hears' the crowing of the cock, the Christ turns to Peter, Peter remembers his Lord's caution, he goes out and weeps bitterly. Needham points to the instinctive empathy of the reader at this juncture in the narrative and highlights that the reader need not be told that Peter wept bitterly, for we have already felt the betrayal in the detail (i.e., the cock crows and the Lord gives Peter a certain look).³⁴

The symbolism in the physicality of a look, stare, wink or twitch can reveal religious mysteries or cultural norms necessary for the observer to understand. Fortunately in Luke 22 the details, the layers of the stare and the crowing are given, **and** are easy to relate to in the modern West. However, observing a custom or reading about it in narrative does not often reveal the significance behind the symbolism. Moreover there may be neither an equivalent symbol and/or interpretation in our time and space, nor even one at all. When David and Jonathan's hearts are knit together and acknowledged in the symbolism of a gift-giving covenant, or when their 'love' is described as 'more than that of a woman' and expressed in the ritualistic Song of the Bow, can we then ascribe homosexual tendencies to these ancient middle eastern events steeped in religious paradigm? Do

³³ Rodney Needham, "Circumstantial Deliveries," (Berkeley: University of California Press, c1981), 88.

³⁴ Today some may use a 'word picture' to describe in text or speech a graphic emotion or image.

these ‘stares’ really mean betrayal or would it mean conspiracy, jocularity, or might these even be disciplinary?

This thesis takes the paradigmatic-scene or type-scene of David’s soul binding to Jonathan’s, in covenant love, as a window into Early Israel’s culture. Selective social anthropological concepts will be used to analyze issues grounded in power, kinship, and inter-personal relationships. Issues of Deuteronomic law will be studied both in theologically contextual and socially contextual ways to seek some sense of what the community and reader of the time might have understood. As indicated, selected anthropological concepts, like the comparative method, will serve to aid biblical scholarship in this hermeneutical endeavour.

By means of a comparative method, social anthropology investigates the similarities and differences of humans within a people group or groups by observing human patterns of behaviour and communication within culture, politics, economics, and religion. The fieldwork reports anthropologists compile on their expeditions, ‘. . . will prove to be rich sources of comparative materials for helping us to understand specific phenomena’,³⁵ such as male relationships in societies across the world. Then we will compare these models to those of Early Israel, even though they are being applied to an ancient text rather than to a living population – it will prove useful in comparing human relationships.³⁶ This operates, ‘on the

³⁵ Overholt, 1.

³⁶ Feeley-Harnik believes that data derived from live informants are beset by problems like those derived from ancient texts (Overholt, p.10).

principle that by concentrating on broad patterns of behaviour we can look beyond culturally specific details and learn something about important social processes'.³⁷

Emic or Etic

Although emic and etic concepts are very complex and possibly contentious, the observations of the above broad or universal patterns of behaviour are generally referred to as an etic view. In contrast to an emic view the etic observes behaviour from outside the culture, simply speaking. For example, one's perspective of the environment and creatures in a fishbowl would differ considerably from the fish's own view and from other fish commenting on that view. The outside etic observations of what it is like to live in a fishbowl, the climate and textures, the relationships with other aquatic creatures, the food, etc., would contrast to the fish which actually live in marine life – contained or otherwise.

So then the observer of another culture would perceive matters differently than the generally accepted emic perspective of the members themselves.³⁸ The Bible reader then observes Israelite culture from an etic view like the British Anthropologist conducting an ethnographic analysis in a specific African society. To complicate our study further still, the biblical matter itself is not an account of a trained observer conducting ethnography *per se*. For *The Books of Samuel*, stakeholders like narrators, writers, editors, redactors and the like contribute to the product we have today, although many of these contributions are from Israelite

³⁷ Overholt, 12.

³⁸ Although there are emic models that are the product of outside observers; such a discussion is beyond the scope of this thesis.

culture, the period of composition can vary by centuries and where the emic actors are in their sociocultural space.

The social scientist can then aid the biblical scholar in sifting through the layers of culture in order to understand the actors' behaviours and practices. It becomes the scholar's task to compare the etic view of cultures in time and space; to see and question human nature specifically and generally; and to gain a better understanding of others and ourselves. Likewise it is our task in this thesis to address the patterns in social structures and human actions as it compares to the David-Jonathan story.

New Testament studies today portray an etic view of people in the Greco-Roman world. The Gospels in particular are used to question and understand the Christian culture. Although this is an etic view in nature, the practical discussion of *The Book of Mark*, the 'author' *Q*, the Synoptic Gospels in relation to *The Fourth Gospel*, and the rest, all add complexities to the discussion. For all intents and purposes, *Q* undertook an emic view of life and people, and *Mark*, *Matthew*, and *Luke* also compounded their views. The final form of the Synoptics is not ethnography in and of itself, and the scholar cannot completely appreciate the influence of each layer in our time. And so the assistance of the social scientist can be called on to negotiate the cultural terrain as scholars like Malina (1981, 1986) and Overholt (1996) have contributed.

Semitics, Semiotics and Symbiosis: Key Scholars

Some well known scholars in this field who have worked in the areas of religion are Clifford Geertz, Edward Evans-Pritchard, Emile Durkheim, and Mary Douglas. Such people consider theoretical systems and models as a means of comparative study. In particular, those scholars rounding out this list tended to a unique school of thought involving comparative studies with Semitic peoples and societies.

However when societies change and the relation between the social environment and cosmology evolves, rituals change with the rejection of the old in favour of the new; but the *new* rituals may not appear to be rituals at all, for a social revolt or change may be underway.³⁹ In times of flux, whether the culture is our own or another, human beings do not easily identify the difference or change, for the milieu would be too highly charged.

Precedent for Biblical Studies and Social Anthropology

Other biblical and theological scholars have delved into social anthropology in order to gain new insights. Bernhard Lang in *Anthropological Approaches to the Old Testament* (1985) proposes that biblical scholars will begin to take ‘anthropology as their guiding and inspiring model of research and explanation,’ as anthropologists have long before utilised biblical material in reverse studies. Social scientists since the 1960s have been aware of, ‘the Bible as a storehouse of

³⁹ Richard Fardon, *Mary Douglas: An Intellectual Biography* (London: Routledge, 1999), 119-20.

ethnographic⁴⁰ data about an interesting non-Western culture – one that in fact is incorporated into our own history’. According to Lang, as the anthropologist reads the Bible s/he becomes aware of nuances of ancient culture of which the biblical scholar is ignorant.⁴¹

Within the three historical periods of anthropology,^{42 43} most relevant to our study is the second period, from the mid-nineteenth century to early twentieth century, which saw an important influence of social anthropology on the OT. Of note is Fustel de Coulanges’ proposition that, ‘the patriarchal⁴⁴ family was the most primitive form of social life’, and that the family then was, ‘formed not “by nature,” but by religion’.⁴⁵ To study the OT in light of patrilineality and with a focus on religion rather than historicity are still important considerations for biblical scholars today.

German OT scholarship then utilised these findings to interpret many Israelite customs. German scholar Bernhard Stade argued that ancient Israel practised ‘ancestor worship’ (q.v., Excursus: Patrilineal Society) which both generated and maintained the solidarity of its social institutions, which explained the role and power of the father figure, the patrilineal laws of inheritance, and even the

⁴⁰ Lang uses this term in an anachronistic or colloquial sense as the Bible is not an ethnography in the technical sense.

⁴¹ Bernhard Lang, "Introduction: Anthropology as a New Model for Biblical Studies," in *Anthropological Approaches to the Old Testament*, ed. Bernhard Lang, Issues in Religion and Theology (London: SPCK, 1985), 2-3, 17.

⁴² J. W. Rogerson, *Anthropology and the Old Testament*, Growing Points in Theology. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978), 11-13.

⁴³ See Evans-Pritchard’s work *Social Anthropology* (1951). See also J.W. Rogerson.

⁴⁴ More precisely, descent traced through the male line, or patrilineage.

⁴⁵ Rogerson, 13-14.

influence of religion behind the law.⁴⁶ Further influences of anthropology in the second period can be seen in the OT scholar Wellhausen's theories and the resultant theory of the Deuteronomistic Historian which *this* author tends towards.

New Testament researchers were more open to utilising cultural and historical data in order to understand the text than their OT counterparts. Bruce J. Malina is a prominent example of one who promoted Bible study and cultural anthropology⁴⁷ in the NT and was later accepted by his peers. Malina advocates the idea of eavesdropping on speakers of another time and social system in order to understand their language and discourse. At the cusp of one's deliberate intrusion is the advice to: 'pay careful attention to the cultural system that "created" them [i.e., the society or culture] and which they embody'.⁴⁸

Otherwise what tends to happen is that modern western ideals are likely to be imposed on earlier times and differing geographic and social places, as the term ethnocentrism so clearly implies, when accounting for the misidentifying of another culture's story based on one's own ideal. What is more, ethnocentrism is often accompanied by anachronism, for example, and is the, 'imposing the cultural artifacts and behavior of your own period on people of the past [*sic*]'.⁴⁹ Malina combines these concepts into an ethnocentric anachronism so that we might present it as a caution against the danger of viewing David and Jonathan's love in Early Israel with a modern view of homosexuality. What is demanded is a more properly

⁴⁶ Ibid., 14-15.

⁴⁷ Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1981), 1-24.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 9.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 10.

constructed language, action and corresponding symbolism and thought, of the period.

Excursus: Patrilineal Society

In this thesis we will speak of the eponymous Israel, the GOD of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, or the Patriarchs, in general, as implied outcomes of the practice of ancestor worship, and use such language to reinforce the notion that Early Israel was a patrilineal society (cf., Radcliffe-Brown, 1977). Although the transition of Early Israel to statehood might have seen a modification to how we view patrilineality (q.v., Chs. 4-5), I culminate the point of Israel as a patrilineality in my reference to Yahweh as the ultimate paterfamilias for Early Israel through his male descendents: Abraham, Israel/Jacob, etc. This view follows the identification of Early Israel as a patrilineality in Mary Douglas' work on rituals and taboos, Howard Eilberg-Schwartz' work on symbolism and circumcision, Carol Meyers' work on the family household, Lawrence Stager's work on tribal peoples and constructs, and to an extent, William Robertson-Smith's work on ancestor worship and A.R. Radcliffe-Brown's work on alliance theory and unilineal descent. Whether the patrilineal structure of Israel can be defined through religious/Priestly means, as in Eilberg-Schwartz; agricultural means, as in Meyers; or other anthropological lenses,⁵⁰ this thesis supports the patrilineal concepts observed in the (religious) ideals of Israelite literature (viz., the *Torah* and the *Former Prophets*) over possible practice(s) in the broader Hebrew culture, or that of the ANE. Where some may contend that Israel was a polygynous

⁵⁰ For an excellent discussion on identifying Early Israel as a patrilineal society using descent and alliance theories, and what now seems to be an affirmation of aspects of this thesis, the reader might note Harvey E. Goldberg's article (pp. 9-34) in the *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society* (24), 1996.

society, I would concur in the sense that the practice of one male mating with multiple females, or even other social phenomena, might occur in Early Israel; however constitutionally (e.g., the Holiness Code, Levitical, Deuteronomic or Mosaic Law) and editorially (e.g., DH, P, the transmission of Scripture) that would not be the case. This concept would be akin to the act of murder occurring in Great Britain, yet the laws of the nation prohibiting such action and the formal and informal social leaders (e.g., political, religious, academic, household) denouncing such an act while promoting ideals of civility. In this case, one would **not** label all of British society as murderers. So that while Abraham or Jacob had multiple wives, the biblical writers and/or editors denounced such a practice in the catastrophe of the stories (e.g., the perpetual rifts between Sarah, Hagar, Isaac and Ishmael; the rifts between Leah, Rachel, and their children – most notably Joseph to his brothers) while promoting a ‘patrilineal law’.

Patrilineity and matrilineity are two systems within the unilineal descent structure and are based on relatedness of the offspring to a common ancestor: the father and his paternal ancestors in a patrilineal society, and the mother and her ancestors in a matrilineal society. It is important to note that within a patrilineal society, for example, the power or importance of the mother and her relatives are not necessarily diminished or eliminated (q.v., the avunculate). Later, in this thesis, we will also observe that the concepts of descent structures can be intertwined with notions of alliance theory, whereas the relevance of marriage and the conjugal pair play a fundamental role in units of association.

Nature or Nurture of the Old Testament

In terms of biblical study, the narratives provide accounts of the Israelite people and their neighbours in the ANE. The transmitting of ideas and perspectives can be summed up as discourse which takes on various characteristics.

Understanding the discourse or internal states and reactions of societies is essential for the biblical scholar in understanding the OT and its cultures. The study of social anthropology in light of the OT illuminates the conventions, values, and norms regulating a society: ‘Any system of social interaction between humans is based upon socially shared knowledge and appreciation of previous discourse. Nearly all historical, mythical, and scientific knowledge derives from the socially acquired and shared appreciation of discourse. . .’⁵¹

The methods of discourse the narrators, writers and historians of the OT use vary in form from proving a point to showing and simply telling.⁵² These speakers being interested in the flow of action surrounding them in their present is what we aim to decipher and exegetical or strict historical methods alone cannot explain all the particulars of a people. ‘[E]valuations of the importance of the past are determined more by the contemporary cultural scripts of the historian, that is, the social, rather than any objective or “scientific” criteria,’ and this holds true for speakers in antiquity as well as today.⁵³

⁵¹ Bruce J. Malina, *Christian Origins and Cultural Anthropology: Practical Models for Biblical Interpretation* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1986), 166.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 167.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 168.

The OT accounts seem to have been reorganised by speakers or editors of a much later period in different social conditions holding different religious beliefs.⁵⁴ But while the social and religious cultures of Israel changed, the editor did not. From the editor's perspective, the real function of the Yahweh Religion was not necessarily to make one think, enrich one's knowledge, nor to add to concepts, but rather to make one *act* and to aid one in *life* and living.⁵⁵ As I will propose, a Deuteronomistic Historian (DH) while editing Israelite narratives from an earlier period, attempted to reconcile the contemporary actions and lives of the Israelites with that of the Decalogue and Holiness Code. The DH took a radical standpoint⁵⁶ which generated ideological implications that lead one to conclude that the best option for Israel was to restructure their exilic/post-exilic society according to that of an earlier period. So in order to produce an educational piece as to the ways or righteous ways of a nation, the editor reorganised earlier stories as an ideal for their modern reader when *social structure* and *individual agency*⁵⁷ seemed at odds with one another.

The editor seemed to have placated the needs of the reader during the Exilic/post-Exilic period. 'Typically, readers of this period sought four kinds of information from these books – ethical instruction, foreknowledge of the present

⁵⁴ E. O. James, *The Old Testament in the Light of Anthropology: A Course of Public Lectures in the University of Leeds* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1935), 6-7.

⁵⁵ Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, trans. Joseph Ward Swain (London: Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1915), 416.

⁵⁶ Malina, *Origins and Anthropology*, 181.

⁵⁷ Clifford Geertz, "Ritual and Social Change: A Javanese Example," in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (London: Fontana, 1993), 142-69.

day, a divine plan for history, and theological truths. . .'⁵⁸ With such demands, editors of the day reorganising earlier narratives to highlight key requirements would be more the rule than the exception. This rule is practised today in Western society as editors and publishers direct authors to reorganise certain pieces within a work to promote the book for maximum readership and sales.

In addition, 'The compilers of the biblical narratives knew nothing about galactic universes, geological ages, and Palaeolithic cultures'.⁵⁹ They recorded events from their contemporary views and knowledge just as modern Westerners would contrarily record events with the above knowledge in mind. So then we must take caution from our own contemporary view and knowledge as we visit this earlier time. Employing other social sciences like anthropology in deciphering the culture and the theological language of discourse (i.e., the written *word*) helps to elucidate a time and people, past and present.

Developing a Cultural Hermeneutic

Before such an analysis can be done, those who *practise* social anthropology first compile ethnographies of peoples. Ethnographic data is generally the practitioner's observations of and interaction with a group or culture. As previously alluded to, the editor or DH would not have made a constructive ethnographer. His analysis would have been bias to changing his reader's perspective as it related to the Exile. Although the biblical matter has a theological slant, as modern observers our intention is to filter as much of that bias and see below the editorials in order to

⁵⁸ Overholt, 17.

⁵⁹ James, 7.

understand what is meant by the paradigmatic scenes and type scenes in *Samuel*.

The biblical material cannot be classified as ethnographies, but this does not preclude an investigation below the historical details and cultural customs.

We will endeavour to produce something akin to what Geertz identifies as a *thick description*⁶⁰ of both the behaviour and its context of the David-Jonathan loyal love actions.⁶¹ In our social anthropological analysis of the relationship and surrounding culture our study will endeavour to decipher the communiqués, intentions, established social codes and the like for our two heroes and Early Israel for some specific ‘wink or twitch’ within these layers to aid our understanding of loyal love, covenant, family or fraternity then. We begin this with Israelite culture and customs from 1000 BC and compare and contrast this to similar communiqués, intentions, established codes, and other social groups then and now.

Our goal in this thesis is neither to devise a panoptic template of Israelite, Hebrew, ANE society, nor to apply a single generic model or pattern to all of the OT, but to compare ethnographic patterns of similar cultural and personal descriptions to that of the David-Jonathan narrative. One challenge to conducting cross-cultural analysis on OT text and societies is that many within theological and faith-based circles have attributed the phenomena the text describes as absolutely unique to those that *produced* the Bible⁶² and/or to the OT characters in Israel and the ANE described within it. From a biblically relevant perspective, this raises the

⁶⁰ Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Towards an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (London: Fontana, 1993), 3-7.

⁶¹ Although not many of the social scientists, which I cite in this thesis, engage with Geertz' model, I will attempt, nonetheless, to use the ‘thick description’ as an additional tactic to syncretise the social sciences with biblical hermeneutics.

⁶² Overholt, 17.

question of the use of the Jew or Christian adhering to specific or general tenets of their respective faiths based on OT material. Restricting the sum of human behaviour and activity to a particular group dehumanizes other people or groups and destroys human interconnectedness. Furthermore it is not uncommon to compare and contrast Israelite textual phenomena with other experiences in the ANE, New Testament (NT), modern Judaism, or modern Christianity.

Thomas W. Overholt has summarised his observations on humanity with a few guideposts most anthropologists agree upon in their discipline. It is worth mentioning them here as they provide a footpath for our study:

. . . that in order to understand how societies work it is necessary to take into account both agency (that is, individual human action) and social structure . . . that it is necessary to operate with a nonpositivist epistemology which holds that anthropological description does not so much mirror social reality as provide one of several possible maps that can guide us in our attempts to understand society.⁶³

Of import is that our study will not conclude the final and only authoritative understanding of the David-Jonathan relationship, but it does offer one perspective not previously considered. It is difficult for anyone to affirm with total certainty what 1 Samuel describes. For the most part this is because we do not have all the data from that time and space available to us – hence our use of a theoretical lens to construct an etic view of history. Further, our analysis is perhaps the first of subsequent discussions to consider both human action and social structure in the biblical matter of 1 Samuel. This anthropology of David and Jonathan will not be the only anthropology.

⁶³ Ibid., 5.

Herein lies the need for the discipline of anthropology and its ability to venture into other universes and spheres in order to *grasp* a proverb, *catch* an allusion, or *see* a joke – where ‘getting a joke’ subsumes there is some determinate substantive content to get.⁶⁴ So, with the David-Jonathan narrative one cannot apply all modern Western philosophies or conventions of politics, sexuality, relationships or love to understand the phenomena of covenant and loyal love. We must strive to understand the web of significance for Early Israel rather than that of today’s West. Geertz defines this: ‘Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning’.⁶⁵ To understand the culture or the specific web is to understand the circumstances and interpret the surrounding environment, and in this case, to translate the controversial scene of David and Jonathan’s love more appropriately into today’s discourse. This is the potential benefit of the social sciences for biblical interpretation. With this in mind we will compare the narrative and relationship of David and Jonathan with those of potentially similar cultural contexts. This context would include warfare, heroism, alliances and power. It is a typical dramatic narrative in text which grabs the reader of any culture. While observing the culture in the 1 & 2 Samuel text we must bear in mind the layers of the oral tradition, written tradition, and Deuteronomistic editing, to name but a few. The way these factors influence what we read today is a complicated web. The OT text is,

⁶⁴ Ibid., 4, 20.

⁶⁵ Geertz, "Thick Description," 5.

shaped by the interplay of authors, who have particular mindsets, with the social realities of their time and place and the rulers of their language. Texts do not mirror social reality directly, but to the extent that we can discover their “determinate and particular” meaning (LaFargue, 1988, 354), they need not leave us entirely in the dark.⁶⁶

As one studies biblical matter from a literary or cultural perspective one must take care to maintain a balance between analyzing the text and subtext, while complementing a focus on the specific with the general in order to maintain a delicate yet necessary balance of, ‘texts [which] are shaped by the interplay of authors who have particular mindsets’. What is key is that these authors (and editors) write, ‘with the social realities of their time and place and the rules of their language’; then once utilised in synergy, the literary, anthropological, historical, and the like can illuminate even the smallest or most provisional advance in our understanding of the text and its people.⁶⁷ For people in a society to function a common language or system of meaningful words is necessary to facilitate communication as simultaneously, meanings and communication are affiliated with actions or customs. So using social anthropology, for example, to understand what a people says or does from an ‘acted document’⁶⁸ is not only an exercise for the text but also critical to the investigation of the subtext.

While much study has been devoted to an exegetical and textual hermeneutic of 1 Samuel 18, our focus will be a cultural hermeneutic of the 1 Samuel 18 ‘field work’ and *the narrative* beneath the text. This thesis will explore various cultural models and ethnologies as interpretive devices for approaching the David-Jonathan

⁶⁶ Overholt, 21.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 17-21.

⁶⁸ Geertz, “Thick Description,” 10.

narrative. We will identify and compare patterns of behaviour using English translations of the Bible (primarily the New Revised Standard Version and the New American Standard). In developing this cultural hermeneutic we will observe how humanity is similar yet self-identifies differently, and analyze the resultant patterns.

Hence the essence of this thesis is that the David-Jonathan narrative must maintain a cultural appropriateness in order to understand relationship and covenant. It is possible to define this covenant and relationship only after we attempt to define the belief.⁶⁹ While the relationship may be untidy to modern Western society the reader is encouraged to view through the cultural window of the editor and narrator in Early Israel and view the relationship in light of David's rise to monarchy, the ongoing threat of the Philistines and other enemies, the religious laws and culture (including the Deity),

Comparative studies

In terms of method, we might suggest that a *complementarity*⁷⁰ of the anthropological and theological spheres is necessary for human understanding: to understand ourselves is to understand the culture in another sphere of space or time. We spoke of the mathematical sphere earlier. Where would modern Mathematics be without our understanding of ancient Babylon's abacus or classical Greek's Pythagorean theories or the more recent integration of the Swiss' Calculus? Crossing boundaries of time, geographical space and cultural space have proven useful in Mathematics in the modern West. So, too, venturing beyond a modern

⁶⁹ Durkheim, 36.

⁷⁰ Denis R. Alexander, "Models for Relating Science and Religion," in *Test of Faith* (Durham, UK: The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion, St. Edmund's College, Cambridge, UK, 2007).

Western ideal of relationship to other peoples and areas of Earth, in times present and past is indispensable for analyzing concepts of relationships.

Clifford Geertz explains well the need for comparative studies in *Thick Description: Towards an Interpretive Theory of Culture*. Admittedly Geertz himself writes about a variety of issues,

. . . and most of all about particular attempts by particular peoples [in order] to place these things in some sort of comprehensible, meaningful frame. To look at the symbolic dimensions of social action - art, religion, ideology, science, law, morality, common sense - is not to turn away from the existential dilemmas of life . . . it is to plunge into the midst of them. The essential vocation of interpretive anthropology is not to answer our deepest questions, but to make available to us answers that others . . . have given, and thus to include them in the consultable record of what man has said.

The abacus, Pythagorean Theorem, and Calculus do not answer all the questions of Mathematics or life, but these contributions from a variety of cultures are included in the consultable meta-record of life. Our goal then in borrowing available answers and comparing aspects of various cultures past and present with that of Early Israel and David-Jonathan particularly is not to answer the deepest questions of life, or to solve comprehensively the riddle of their relationship, but to add value to our discussion on relationships and *to place things in a comprehensible, meaningful frame*. We will begin asking the questions of the David-Jonathan narrative by first exploring the exegetical frame of the text.

In this chapter we observed that biblical exegetes have used the social sciences in order to expand their understanding of the biblical text. In this thesis we advocate such an approach and encourage more use of the tools which other

disciplines can offer to biblical studies. We have noted that the use of the comparative method is important in peeling the layers of culture and society in order to understand people's behaviours and practices. We have observed that literary cues for readers of 1 Samuel 18 could well be a type-scene or paradigmatic scene which alludes to covenant, loyal love, soul binding, gift theory, and well be clues into Early Israel's culture. The cultural clues that we discover from Early Israel will aid us in understanding how the warriors' brotherhood could well be a viable explanation for the David-Jonathan relationship. In the next chapter we will observe the society of Israel in *Samuel* by focusing on study from traditional exegetical methods which also highlight certain themes such as covenant, loyal love and soul binding, directly from the biblical text.

Chapter 3 – Exegetical Matter

In this chapter we will conduct a brief traditional hermeneutic of the 1 Samuel 18:1-4 text. The title of this thesis indicates that our focus is on 1 Samuel 18:1-4 and as such our intention is to keep that focus. However in light of contravening views we are adding a few perfunctory pericopes to this chapter. We will observe some key terms such as loyal love, and investigate a corollary modern western view of intimacy and the perceived erotic text of 2 Sam 1:26. Other biblical passages on friendship and a consideration on the phenomenon of friendship in late modernity will also be treated.

English Translation of Select Texts

1 Samuel 18:1-4, NRSV

¹When David had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was bound to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. ²Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father's house. ³Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. ⁴Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that he was wearing, and gave it to David, and his armour, and even his sword and his bow and his belt.

Textual notes to the translation⁷¹

18:1. LXX^L is somewhat at variance and fuller throughout.

⁷¹ P. Kyle McCarter, *1 Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary*, ed. William Foxwell Albright and David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Bible*, vol. 8 (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1980), 299-309.

‘This alternative account [including 18:1-5] was absent in the primitive version of 1 Samuel and is, at least from the perspective of the textual critic, properly *excursus* material’. McCarter adds that, ‘once the tale of David’s victory over the Philistine was introduced into the older narrative about David’s rise to power by the Josianic historian . . . it began to attract more material from the same circle of tradition. Thus this alternative account of David’s early days at court may have belonged to the idealized David traditions that had long circulated in Jerusalem and, assuming that they continued to be cherished in royalist circles in the Exile, survived into the postexilic period’.

1 Samuel 20:8, 14-17, NRSV

⁸Therefore deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a sacred covenant with you. But if there is guilt in me, kill me yourself; why should you bring me to your father?

¹⁴ If I am still alive, show me the faithful love of the Lord; but if I die, ¹⁵ never cut off your faithful love from my house, even if the Lord were to cut off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth’. ¹⁶ Thus Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, ‘May the Lord seek out the enemies of David’. [McCarter’s rendering of v. 16: the name of Jonathan is cut off from the house of David, then may Yahweh call David to account!] ¹⁷ Jonathan made David swear again by his love for him; for he loved him as he loved his own life.

Textual notes to the translation⁷²

20:8. *with your servant* Reading ‘*m bdk* with LXX, Syr., Targ. MT has ‘*l bdk*, ‘upon your servant’.

in me So MT. LXX: ‘in your servant’.

20:14.-15. *If . . . but if . . . if* MT has *wělo’ . . . wělo’ . . . wělo’*, which might be retained and repointed *wělu . . . wělu . . . wělu* (deleting ‘*im* following the first *wělu*), as preferred by most critics (so LXX, Syr., Vulg.) Another ‘*l*’, which appears in MT in the second clause of v 14 (‘. . . and you do *not* deal loyally with me . . .’), may be omitted with LXX^B.

20:14. *deal loyally* Reading *wt ‘sh . . . hsd*, lit. ‘do loyalty’, with LXX^B. MT, LXX^{AL} have *hsd yhwh*, ‘the loyalty of Yahweh’.

but if I die So LXX (= *wl’* [see above] *mwt ‘mwt*). MT (*wl’ ‘mwt*) understands the clause as apodosis to the preceding (‘. . . and then I shall not die’).

20:16. *the name of Jonathan is cut off from* Reading *ykrt* (i.e., *yikkārēt*; cf. LXX^{AL} *exarthēnai*, *exarthēsetai*, of which LXX^B *heurethēnai*, ‘to be found’, is probably an inner-Greek corruption) *šm yhwntn m ‘m byt dwd* with LXX. MT *wykrt yhwntn ‘m byt dwd*, ‘and Jonathan cut (a covenant) with the house of David’, is clearly inferior.⁷³

then may Yahweh call David to account That is, *wbqš yhwh myd dwd*, lit. ‘then may Yahweh seek (it) from the hand of David’. In fact the witnesses

⁷² Ibid., 332-345.

⁷³ We will maintain the NRSV and NASB renderings, against this point.

reflect ‘. . . from the hand *of the enemies* of David’ (so MT; LXX^B has lost *ek cheiros*, ‘from the hand’, through an inner-Greek haplography caused by the similarity of the sequence to the following *echthrōn*, ‘of the enemies’), but *’yby*, ‘enemies’, is probably an addition ‘inserted to avoid an imprecation on David’ (Smith; cf. Dhorme).

20:17. *So again Jonathan swore to David* So LXX^L (cf. B). MT: ‘So again Jonathan caused David to swear . . .’ Cf. the first *Textual Note* at v 3 above. As Welhausen has explained, the reference here is to Jonathan’s oath in vv 12-13.

out of his love for him So MT (cf. LXX^{AL}): *b’hbtw ’tw*, which has fallen out of LXX^B before the following clause (MT: *ky ’hbt npšw ’hbw*), which also appears somewhat differently in LXX.

Summary of the Jonathan Texts

As Jonathan initiated both the ritual of 1 Sam 18:1-4 and other gift exchanges in the text, and we are not looking at the ‘erotic proof texts’ of David and Jonathan in this thesis, I have listed below relevant texts which mention the character Jonathan who is alleged to be the active homosexual partner or effeminised figure. We will explore, in depth, only some of these pericopes and leave the remaining for future study:

1 Sam 13:2-4 Jonathan defeats the Philistines.

13:16-23 Jonathan and Saul own swords and spears.

14:1-22 Jonathan and the armour-bearer defeat the Philistines.

14:42-46 The people (standing army) *redeemed* Saul's son from his father's execution sentence.

14:49 Jonathan is one of three of Saul's sons. Saul has two daughters.

18:1-4 Jonathan's *house* enters into a covenant with David's *house*. They use gifts which include a robe, armour, sword, bow and belt in the ritual. Saul does not permit David to return to the jurisdiction of his *other* father's 'house'.

19:1-7 Saul's son *redeemed* David from *their* father's execution sentence.

20 Jonathan's house enters another covenant with David's house. Saul is angry at Jonathan and persists in executing David. Jonathan reaffirms the covenant between both men's descendants, and David flees.

23:15-18 Jonathan reaffirms the covenant of his kingship upon David while David is still in exile. Jonathan and David make another covenant.

31:2 Jonathan is killed.

2 Sam 1:1-27 David hears the report of Jonathan's death and delivers a poetic elegy for Saul and his son Jonathan: the Song of the Bow.

4:4 Jonathan has a surviving son.

9:1-8 David fulfils his covenant with Jonathan's house by restoring Saul's property to Jonathan's son.

Intimacy

Among Christians and non-Christians it seems that the story and life of David are admired and often cited. Perhaps David's vulnerability, his susceptibility to sin, and propensity for victory and righteousness explain why humanity identifies with this biblical hero. One area to which much attention has been given is David's friendship with Jonathan. This friendship is the cause of both comfort and strife among some in our society. Some view this friendship as one to model or admire, while others fear it, and still others misunderstand the biblical text on this friendship by anachronistically misinterpreting the actions of the two friends. Although this topic has become controversial, an exploration into the culture of Early Israel and concepts of kinship, friendship and other social ties will serve as the basis for the remainder of this introductory chapter. In order to understand the material of Premonarchical Israel it becomes necessary for the reader to divorce oneself from current 'norms' and embrace alternate interpretations of intimacy in non-sexual settings, among others.

Intimacy has been defined as, '... the state of being close. It suggests private and personal interaction, commitment, and caring'.⁷⁴ Intimacy does not necessarily imply a sexual aspect. It is rather a sharing of innermost thoughts and secret emotions.⁷⁵ In order to understand the friendship and intimacy involved

⁷⁴ Michael E. McGill, *The McGill Report on Male Intimacy* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1985), 2.

⁷⁵ Hansen, 43.

with a David-Jonathan type relationship, an investigation into the literary context in 1 Samuel is in order. This study will then move to key aspects of the David-Jonathan text and a look at models of relationships through time and select cultures.

The Context

An investigation of the David-Jonathan story does not reveal any clear references to physical sexual activity between the two men. In fact Joshua-2 Kings is customarily, ‘. . . redacted to exemplify the theological principles set forth in Deuteronomy’; it would be far fetched to attach the promotion of an unlawful activity by the writer/editor, the ‘single Deuteronomistic compiler’ according to Martin Noth, or to Deuteronomistic thought, generally. Although other scholars such as Cross (1973) and Friedman (1981) provide emphatic evidence for at least two [sets of] editors, the point here is to contemplate another layer or layers to the David-Jonathan narrative.⁷⁷

The Deuteronomistic Historian

The term Deuteronomistic is used to ascribe Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings (the *Former Prophets*⁷⁸) to a final composition which was shaped in part by the themes of Deuteronomy. William Sanford LaSor, *et al*, contend that Deuteronomy, ‘. . . has been separated from the first four books (the ‘Tetrateuch’)

⁷⁶ Hansen uses the term ‘intimacy’ to describe Antebellum New England. In like manner, I use the term to describe Israel within the historical period of Early Israel.

⁷⁷ R. P. Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel*, ed. R.N. Whybray, Old Testament Guides (Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire: JSOT Press, 1984), 14, 15.

⁷⁸ See Gordon, 14.

and included with the Former Prophets to form the ‘Deuteronomistic history’.⁷⁹ One key element of the Deuteronomistic history is that the historical events are purposefully organized as acts of Yahweh.⁸⁰ LaSor punctuates the distinction coupled with Deuteronomic importance: ‘Deuteronomy in its final stage of composition must lie behind the completed version of the Former Prophets’.⁸¹

Furthermore, to label a phrase, verse, or section of Samuel ‘Deuteronomistic’, prominence must be given to the authority of Deuteronomic law, the determinative role of prophecy in history, the Davidic covenant, and the primacy of the Jerusalem temple.⁸² Although the *Former Prophets* is said to have not been completed until the Exile, its importance to Judah’s last days of political independence is essential.⁸³ In his commentary on *Samuel*, R.P. Gordon adds that Cross’ argument for dating the original Deuteronomistic History to Josiah’s reign is attractive.⁸⁴ Kyle McCarter, Jr. gives no specific opinion on whether the writer was exilic or Josianic (pre-exilic), but does stress the divine promises to David’s dynasty. ‘The presence of such a theme offers a note of hope and suggests that the Deuteronomistic history might have had a constructive function in an age when the house of David could still be appealed to as a source of confidence and an impetus

⁷⁹ William Sanford LaSor, David Allan Hubbard, and Frederic Wm Bush, *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), 117, 34, 135.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 135.

⁸¹ Most of the theological tenets of Joshua-Kings are derived from Deuteronomy: the struggle against pagan idolatry, the centralization of worship, the saving events of the Exodus and the related themes of covenant and election, a firm belief in monotheism, observance of the Torah as evidence of covenant loyalty, the land as God’s gift, retribution and material motivation for human conduct, the fulfillment of prophecy and the role of the king (See LaSor, Hubbard, Bush, 136).

⁸² Gordon, 18.

⁸³ LaSor, Hubbard, and Bush, 118.

⁸⁴ Gordon, 16.

to reform'. This means that the stories found in Samuel were edited from an earlier tradition to provide hope for the reader during or after the Exile. McCarter also explains that the *Deuteronomistic* editing in Samuel is sparse because most of the narratives already conformed to a *Deuteronomic* hope or law, i.e., the stories are compiled with the principles found in Deuteronomy. So then editing was not needed in order to interpret the story in a current exilic/Josianic context or as it related to God's principles.⁸⁵

McCarter proposes that the only Deuteronomistic editing to the David-Jonathan story points ahead to events in the succession narrative. The role of the king and the Davidic covenant operated as key Deuteronomistic themes. Interestingly, McCarter finds, '... explicit statements about David's future kingship on the mouth of Jonathan'. The relationship and events surrounding it are important because the existing complex David-Jonathan friendship has been amended to include a more complex kingly or royal relationship. McCarter states that the reason for this type of editing was to structure the narratives and the characters into a larger historical context.⁸⁶ For example, a movement is noted between Samuel and Saul/David as the period of the judges comes to a close and the age of the kings begin. McCarter emphasizes that the three characters, in particular, establish a crux in the whole Deuteronomistic history. He discusses both the 'retrospective and prospective' elements in these narratives. In retrospect, the story reissues the apostasy, punishment, repentance, and deliverance by God's agent cycle. In prospect, David's rise to kingship is foreshadowed.

⁸⁵ McCarter, 15.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 16-17.

The retrospective-prospective elements resemble the simultaneous past, present, and future characteristics of prophecy and prophetic hope in the Old Testament. It is fascinating then that McCarter develops a prophetic history of the Book of Samuel. He confirms that the book's purpose was to explain the origin of the monarchy, how the advent of kingship in Israel resulted in a concession to a wanton demand of the people, and the relationship of the prophet and king: 'The king would now be the head of the government, but he would be subject not only to the instruction and admonition of the prophet acting in his capacity as Yahweh's spokesman but also to prophetic election and rejection according to the pleasure of Yahweh'.⁸⁷ McCarter stipulates that this kind of writing originated in the Northern Kingdom, as the Southern Kingdom already adhered to Davidic succession and the prophetic role. The Deuteronomistic historian seems to have been a prophet of the north declaring the ways of Yahweh. McCarter reminds us that, '... a number of scholars have sought the origin of Deuteronomic law and theology in northern prophetic circles'. So the writer is addressing or convincing an audience who does not agree with or believe in this paradigm.⁸⁸

The reader should take note of the role of Yahweh and the political-legal emphasis of 1 and 2 Samuel in the context of the David-Jonathan story. The drama to unfold not only reflects the Deuteronomistic legal system and the importance of the law, but also the way the law was applied in narrative during the last days of political independence. Covenant, election, covenant loyalty, and the actions of and reactions to human conduct play integral roles in the story. Most importantly, one

⁸⁷ Ibid., 21.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 21-22.

would need to acknowledge Yahweh's activity in the formation and development of the story and the relationship within the corpus of the Old Testament.

Connectivity in the Old Testament

We stipulated in the methodology that we will accept the OT as a composite piece of classical literature for Israel who regard the final form as a definitive and normative work about Israelite culture. However, as this axiom may not be sufficient for some, we will discuss briefly the authoritative nature of the OT, the validity of the argument for a pre-/Exilic editor and composition (i.e., the DH), and the religious and historical bases of *Leviticus* on *Deuteronomy* and Deuteronomic works or the DH (e.g., *Samuel*).⁸⁹ In *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* entry for The Book of Deuteronomy, Moshe Weinfeld acknowledges a relationship between the Holiness Code in *Leviticus* and *Deuteronomy*. He combines the concepts of Israel being 'set apart' in *Leviticus* with being 'elect' in *Deuteronomy*. While the distinction of holiness in *Leviticus* refers to those who are loyal to the covenant, in *Deuteronomy* it serves as a motivator for Israel to keep the laws. Strikingly, Weinfeld and Jacob Milgrom agree that *Deuteronomy* is a fusion of both law covenant and vassalship covenant, whereas Milgrom identifies the Priestly Code (P) as a function which informs the DH in *Deuteronomy*. However, Weinfeld observes other harmonies between *Leviticus* and *Deuteronomy* which includes the idea that

⁸⁹ Apart from this section and those on Methodology, Deuteronomy 17:14-21 and 1 Samuel, Commentators and other Later Readers on the David-Jonathan 'Friendship', The Impact of OT Precepts on Israelite Society, and the Excursus: An editorial of I Samuel 16-18, the reader is advised to explore textual integrity and compositional issues with such scholars as McCarter (1980), Thenius (1896), Wellhausen (1871), Driver (1890), von Rad (1966), Weiser (1948), Noth (1981), Cross (1967), and Gottwald (1979), as there is not sufficient space in this thesis to cover this weighty topic in detail. Moreover, compositional issues are not one of the major goals of this thesis. Recall that we have decided to accept the *Samuel* text as classical for Israel.

the Holiness Code in *Leviticus* instructs the people to sanctify themselves in order to be holy, while *Deuteronomy* urges people not to contaminate themselves because they are already holy – by virtue of their relationship to Yahweh. As these ideas become developed over time, the student will recognize how one concept builds from the other, evolves, or is reinterpreted in the other. Whichever the case, the concept of holiness is a relevant factor which connects *Leviticus*, *Deuteronomy*, and the DH.

The *Leviticus* commentator, John E. Hartley, observes connectivity between *Leviticus* and *Deuteronomy* in the accounting of edible and inedible creatures. Despite some descriptive deviation, both books conclude similar textual pericopes with a double prohibition against eating the meat of unclean animals and touching their carcasses.^{90 91} Both books also share a penchant for expressing the same taboos and a seeming conclusion for the influence of Deuteronomistic codes and practices within Deuteronomistic History (e.g., *Samuel*). Following Weinfeld and Milgrom, Hartley also finds similarities between the Holiness Code and *Deuteronomy* in that they share the same sermon style and key terms in blocks of material, the same literary style of placing cultic laws at the beginning of legal material, the same pairing of the terms ‘law’ and ‘judgments’ with the term ‘decrees’ in the text of the priestly legislation (P), and the same act of situating the ‘blessing and curses’ genre at the end of the covenant and law codes material (Lev 10, Deut 28). More poignantly, the origin, prescription, and practice of important feasts (viz., booths; Lev 23, Deut 16) share mirrored explanations in *Leviticus*,

⁹⁰ See also R. Bulmer (*Man*, 1989) and R.K. Yerkes (*JQR*, 1923).

⁹¹ Note also the similarities in the unclean animals/birds in *Leviticus* and *Deuteronomy*.

Deuteronomy and other Deuteronomic books; and the sexual taboos of Lev 19:20-22 are repeated and explained in Deut 22:23-24. The evidence for an Israel in the time of Samuel and a DH which adheres to the levitical codes are clear – particularly in those proscriptions on sexual conduct.⁹²

In addition, Thomas Römer the OT Specialist in Switzerland comments in ‘Homosexualität in der Hebräischen Bibel? Einige Überlegungen zu Leviticus 18 und 20, Genesis 19 und der David-Jonathan-Erzählung’ that although the term ‘homosexuality’ did not exist in the OT, the language of love in the David and Jonathan relationship did. He observes the interconnectedness of the Holiness Code and *Leviticus* to the Books of Samuel and the OT, and further stipulates that the practice of male-male coitus was forbidden. Römer finds no support for sexual, physical penetration of either character in the *Samuel* text – an action which he observes that the Holiness Code considered taboo.

What's more, the rudiments of ritual and kinship are at the core of the composition of the *Samuel* narratives, *Deuteronomy*, and the levitical codes. In proving interconnectivity one observes the appearance of Yahweh or divine messengers, the making of covenants or vows, the sharing of meals or festivals, and the sacrifice rituals as similarities between *Deuteronomy*, *Leviticus* and *Samuel*. Following McCarter and Walter Brueggemann, Beth Alpert Nakhai the professor of Judaic Studies also sees the guilt offerings, water rites, worship/sacrifice on the high places (before the construction of the First Temple and its successive shift in

⁹² John E. Hartley, *Leviticus*, ed. David Allan Hubbard, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 4 (Dallas: Word, Inc., 2002), 155, 249-52, 282, 459, 381, 319.

importance),⁹³ and the close relationship of priests to kings as representations of new rituals and customs in the Samuel narratives which became important for the transition to statehood.⁹⁴ Precursors to statehood, and a new method of identifying kin and leaders began with the Samuel and David stories. When Eli's two sons presented an unholy sacrifice to Yahweh both men lost their designations as priests, and Samuel who was neither kin to Eli nor in the lineage of priesthood became identified as the next priest. Likewise, when Saul presented his unholy sacrifice to Yahweh, his designation as king was lost, and David who was neither a kinsman of Saul nor in the royal line became identified as the next king. The relevance of these new classifications, which developed from levitical and Deuteronomic ideas, serve as the 'new thing' which Yahweh is doing in Israel. No longer do two people need to be consanguineal or affinal kinsmen in order to be brothers, and through transitional relationships like that of David and Jonathan can an entire nation consider one another kinsmen. With the above common elements in *Deuteronomy*, *Leviticus*, and *Samuel*, we will explore the warriors' brotherhood relationship of David and Jonathan.

Deuteronomy 17:14-21 and 1 Samuel

An analysis of the DH and material in the *Former Prophets* reveal a relationship not only between Yahweh and Israel, but also between the books in the DH. For example, the warriors' brotherhood in 1 Sam 18 contains a kingly component and the role of the king in the *1 Samuel* text share commonalities with

⁹³ David Nirenberg, "The Politics of Love and Its Enemies," *Critical Inquiry* 33, no. 3 (2007).

⁹⁴ Beth Alpert Nakhai, *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel* (Boston, Mass.: American Schools of Oriental Research, 2001), 55-57.

Deuteronomy, the DH, and the History of David's Rise to kingship. The Divine discretion for a kingly office in Deuteronomy 17:14-2 follows an imperative to obey priests and judges (i.e., Samuel, the DH), is reflected throughout the book of 1 Samuel, and reaffirms the relationship between the two books. According to Deut 17:14-15, Yahweh Elohim himself will *choose* the king that Israel desires, once the people enter the promised land. The story in 1 Samuel addresses this too, for the people demand a king 'like other nations' (Deut 17:14, 1 Sam 8:5) and Yahweh reiterates that *he* will choose the king, as the people's choice will be unacceptable (1 Sam 8:18). God chooses Saul and David (9:15-17, 10:24-25, 16:11-13), who are from the regions of Benjamin (9:1-2) and Bethlehem (16:1), respectively; they both have Israelite fathers (Kish and Jesse) and do not seem to be foreigners (Deut 17:15). Samuel also responds to the people in using Deuteronomy to restate the king's need for horses from the people's own herds (17:16, 1 Sam 8:11). However he defers the Deut 17:17 proscriptions on polygamy and excessive wealth to the narrator who later discusses these topics in the Books of Samuel and Kings (e.g., 2 Sam 3:2-5, 5:13, 8:6-11). (At the risk of violating God and the DH's law, how does the mention of David's polygamy throughout the larger narrative relate to his masculinity in the midst of a close relationship with a male non-kinsman?) Perhaps it is more relevant to revisit these taboos in the Solomon narratives instead, as this period was the perilous time when there were abuses of the king's powers and the United Kingdom split. Nevertheless, the Deuteronomic imperatives digress and mirror the Book of Leviticus in describing how the levites and priests function independently and cooperatively with the king, in observing the laws, and in

describing Deuteronomic and Holiness Code taboos against child sacrifice (Deut 17:18 – Deut 18).

In Deut 17:20 one recalls the implicit reference to a long reign through to Josiah and how it relates to the David-Jonathan narratives in 1 Samuel. The impact and contrast of how the two royals follow God's laws and how Saul does not becomes apparent: David is a man after God's own heart but Saul exalts himself above other members of the community (i.e., the levites and priests; viz., Samuel), turns aside from the commandments, and loses his long reign over Israel during his own tenure, as well as that of his descendants (Deut 17:18-21) – while David's reign lasts through to Josiah's. Although Saul violates the Divine law for himself with repercussions extending to his progeny, Yahweh redeems Saul's lineage through Jonathan's ritualised kinship with David. As God intervenes in the social and cultural framework of humanity, he seems to establish a kinsman-redeemer (*go'el*) type relationship in that Jonathan's brother, David, must unite with the kingdom of Israel in Jonathan's stead and upon his death, in order to continue the Saulide family lineage – and as a result the dynasty through Jonathan's warrior-brotherhood to David. In this sense, Yahweh (or the DH) redeems his own first and original choice as king of Israel within both the religious (viz., divine) and social spheres. The use of the kinsman-redeemer social paradigm would have been well known in David and Jesse's ancestry as Boaz united with Ruth, after Elimelech's son died, in order to continue the family line. Moreover the theme of redemption not only appears in the David-Jonathan narrative as distinctive relative to other ANE societies, but also in the levitical laws, other works by the DH, and the composite work of the OT as a

whole and classical piece for Israel.⁹⁵ What is most interesting in the above Deuteronomistic relationships is that with the reality of the Divine influence, and the DH's tendency to instruct the reader in what one ought to do, the human response can be flawed (e.g., having multiple wives), but Israel's God still continues to relate with these 'sinners' and validate his choices for human redeemers (i.e., Israel, David) – that is up to a certain point such as in the unholy sacrifices by Eli's sons and Saul. More will be said about these matters and the importance of the DH/narrator using the kinsman-redeemer and warrior-brotherhood social structures to transition the macro-society of Israel to statehood, but for now it is important to affirm the historical, social, royal, militaristic, and religious links between *Deuteronomy, Leviticus, Ruth and Samuel*.^{96 97}

The Priestly Source

We speak of the DH in this thesis as the pre-Exilic/Exilic editors with whom we must contend. In fact there is at least one other late editor we must peel back in order to understand better the culture of Iron Age Israel: the Priestly Source (P). For Friedman, one of the Priestly edits occurred before that of the Deuteronomistic Historian's *Former Prophets* and is thus an earlier influence to at least the Josianic Reform. The other P edit occurs in the Exile.⁹⁸ These layers are said to follow a dual strata of the DH. However, Steven McKenzie stipulates that P was written

⁹⁵ David T. Lamb, *God Behaving Badly: Is the God of the Old Testament Angry, Sexist, and Racist?* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Books, 2011), 63.

⁹⁶ Patricia Dutcher-Walls, "The Circumscription of the King: Deuteronomy 17:16-17 in Its Ancient Social Context," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 121, no. 4 (Winter 2002).

⁹⁷ Antti Laato, "Second Samuel 7 and Ancient Near Eastern Royal Ideology," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 59 (1997).

⁹⁸ Richard Elliott Friedman, *The Exile and Biblical Narrative: The Formation of the Deuteronomistic and Priestly Works*, ed. Frank Moore Cross Jr, Harvard Semitic Monographs, vol. 22 (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1981), 45.

after the DH material, yet served as a kind of introduction to it.⁹⁹ According to Noth, Kaufmann, and Engnell the Priestly Writings are primarily that of the Tetrateuch (the Pentateuch less Deuteronomy).¹⁰⁰ Although McKenzie and others believe P has no bearing on the DH,¹⁰¹ at the least, P does influence the society, authors and editors of the Exile, and in turn earlier narratives to the Exile. The P's greatest impact to this thesis will arise in the material on the Holiness Code.

Cross locates the Priestly material or commentary in specific narratives.¹⁰² In Genesis, the creation account, the flood, the formulaic description of the covenant with Abraham, and the record of the purchase of the Cave of Machpela identify with P. Other covenants P is involved in are those of Adam, Noah, and Moses; along with the Abrahamic covenant, form the four divisions of history. Each covenant and period is ritually marked by the blessing from Yahweh to 'be fruitful and multiply'. The P tendency for order and detail is responsible for matters of law and ritual in the Tetrateuch, such as the emphasis of the Sabbath in the Creation Narrative(s) and the ritualistic blessing formula from Elohim (Yahweh in the DH): 'Be fruitful and multiply'.¹⁰³ The order and structure of P is seen in the DH and culture's desire to avoid matter out of place or the unclean. 'The conceptual categories of purity and pollution form one means by which the status of persons is

⁹⁹ Steven L. McKenzie, *Covenant, Understanding Biblical Themes*. (St. Louis, Mo.: Chalice Press, 2000), 51.

¹⁰⁰ Friedman, 46.

¹⁰¹ McKenzie, 41, n. 1.

¹⁰² Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1973), 294-95.

¹⁰³ McKenzie, 44-46.

classified and located with reference both to the cult and society', and offers another way to identify the worldview of P as decidedly religious in ethos and praxis.¹⁰⁴

Notable for order and structure is Elohim's creation or *bara'* in the Genesis narrative. God divides and classifies the light of day from the darkness of night, the water in the atmosphere from the water in the seas/oceans, and the dry land from the seas. 'Order is brought about through divisions, separations, and distinctions between one element and another'.¹⁰⁵ Thus, through order Elohim *makes space* for things and people, i.e., God *creates*. While the Deuteronomic editor equates rewards and punishments with keeping or breaking the Law, P specifies that the main reward for keeping the Law is Elohim's presence, and logically Elohim would abandon Israel as punishment for breaking the Law.¹⁰⁶ As spatial categories are considered, the tabernacle, the presence of God, or for one to occupy that same holy space are vital concepts in the P material. Other vital concepts include the spatial distinctions of being 'inside the camp' and being 'outside the camp' compared to ritual categories of clean and unclean.¹⁰⁷ So then for P, being inside the camp, in the tabernacle and in the presence of Elohim would be the epitome of ritual and social bliss – so much so that Moses, who had experienced all of the above, is awarded the highest honours in Israelite history. Friedman concurs: 'the growth of

¹⁰⁴ Frank H. Gorman Jr., *The Ideology of Ritual: Space, Time and Status in the Priestly Theology*, ed. David J.A. Clines and Philip R. Davies, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament. Supplement Series*, vol. 91. (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 10-17.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁰⁶ McKenzie, 51.

¹⁰⁷ Gorman Jr., 32.

the human role in the use of power culminates in the figure of Moses', and continues naturally from P into DH.¹⁰⁸

Thus one will surmise that considering the pre-existing influence of the Deuteronomic principles, the Deuteronomistic editing, the Priestly influence and God's intervention in humanity, today's reader might enjoy the David-Jonathan story as a composite representation of biblical principles and culture. A. A. Anderson cites Lev 18:22 and 20:13 as Old Testament contradictions to homosexual implications between David and Jonathan (especially with 2 Sam 1:26). He also observes the *poetic* nature of David's lament for Jonathan in 2 Sam 1:26 and that David's heterosexual relationships are well attested. But is David's or Jonathan's sexuality on trial? Is one's sexual preference important to understanding the story today? What are the modern and ancient implications? What are the potential issues or anachronisms for our interpretation of the narrative? This thesis will explore discussions implying a sexual nature to the narrative and consider cultural alternatives to the relationship rather than simply categorising it as friendship. In other words, we will investigate more than the two popular schools of thought in interpreting the relationship of David and Jonathan – those schools being either a definitive homosexual relationship or friendship.¹⁰⁹

Could it be that the David-Jonathan story is a microcosm of Deuteronomic and Israelite law in which Jonathan covenants with David and expects loyalty? How should the intricate David-Jonathan relationship be interpreted? Is this both a

¹⁰⁸ Friedman, 133-34.

¹⁰⁹ A. A. Anderson, *2 Samuel*, ed. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 11 (Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1989), 19.

special friendship and a means to David's ministry as king? The reader may observe some answers in the following study of select David-Jonathan biblical examples. These and other passages will provide guidance for how this sharing of thoughts and emotions occurred. Biblical citations will be taken from the New Revised Standard Version and the New American Standard Update with primary references to 1 Samuel and the David-Jonathan narrative.

The Story before the Text

As an overview, R. P. Gordon summarizes the story. David's progress was not achieved at any cost of Saulide blood. In fact, the plot thickens and the reader is engaged to find Saul's eldest son, Jonathan, more interested in David's success than his own. The reader should observe the introduction of Jonathan at a key juncture in the story. Seemingly, Jonathan is a 'kindly genie' who aids David in crisis. Further, ' . . . in a narrative which gives space to the theme of recognition, Jonathan is the first of the reigning house to acknowledge that David is destined for royal honours'.¹¹⁰

Gordon also observes a pro-monarchical (A) and anti-monarchical (B) structure to chapters 8-12:

Chapter 8	Anti-monarchical (B)
Chapter 9	Pro-monarchical (A)
Chapter 10	Anti-monarchical (B)

¹¹⁰ Gordon, 68.

Chapter 11	Pro-monarchical (A)
Chapter 12	Anti-monarchical (B)

The observation intensifies when the anti-monarchical material constitutes both centre and circumference of the section.¹¹¹ Considering the monarchical structure, the following is a proposal which approaches the introduction of the David and Jonathan characters:

Chapter 13	Monarchical -militaristic narrative of Saul
Chapter 14	Militaristic-monarchical narrative of Jonathan
Chapter 15	Monarchical retraction of Saul
Chapter 16	Monarchical anointing of David
Chapter 17	Militaristic narrative of David
Chapter 18	Monarchical -militaristic blending of Jonathan and David

The reader is introduced to Saul's exploits as king and warrior. Then a shift occurs to Jonathan's exploits which are successful because of Yahweh's endorsement. Saul's kingship is retracted perhaps as a contrast to how his son

¹¹¹ Ibid., 50.

operated earlier with Yahweh. Then a monarchical shift from Saul to David occurs with Jonathan being the bridge in chapter 14. David's exploits as warrior is highlighted in chapter 17 before a complex blending of king and warrior, and Jonathan and David takes place in chapter 18. Notice both the pro-monarchical attitude towards both Jonathan and David and the interchange of militaristic and monarchical themes.¹¹²

Chapter 13 and Peter Miscall's¹¹³ interpretation of the story now begins. King Saul has blundered. He has failed to comply with Yahweh's instructions. Now Saul's 'kingdom' will be taken from him, as opposed to his own kingship. This may imply that Saul's anointing is intact even though his appointment to a realm has been retracted. This raises the question of whether David inherits both the anointing and the realm. Previously, in 1 Sam 9:16, Yahweh had instructed Samuel to anoint Saul as 'commander' (*nagid*) (NKJV) over Israel in order to deliver the people from the Philistines.¹¹⁴ In any case, when Saul hesitates to complete the assignment from chapter 13 he is rebuked. Miscall sees Saul as a weak ruler being either ineffectual in relation to Samuel, Jonathan, and David, or overwhelmed by the three characters' strength.¹¹⁵

One such case may be exemplified in Jonathan's victory. If Jonathan's relationship with Saul is 'strained' because he resents his father's getting credit for his own deed, then perhaps this is the author's way of separating the monarchy in

¹¹² We will return to the significance of these themes later.

¹¹³ Peter D. Miscall, *1 Samuel: A Literary Reading*, ed. Herbert Marks and Robert Polzin, Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

¹¹⁴ Note, this resembles the latter part of the apostasy cycle, as a judge is being selected for a specific task.

¹¹⁵ Miscall, 81-125.

order to introduce David by Jonathan later. This may be so as Samuel is deliberately absent from chapter 14. The reader now detects a calculated presence or even replacement by Jonathan. Jonathan may represent Samuel as a prophet of God. In chapter 14, Jonathan's relationship with the Lord is clear, just as Samuel's was with Yahweh, and in contrast with Saul's. Jonathan, the monarch, later functions as the one to affirm/appoint David's kingship in chapter 18. The relationship with Yahweh and the ability to appoint resemble more characteristics of the prophet.¹¹⁶

The contrast with Saul's relationship to Yahweh expands. While in 14:20 a 'very great confusion' among the Philistines caused the victory; in 14:15 (NIV) a 'panic by God' Himself caused the victory, and Jonathan is the observed warrior-monarch against the Philistines. Miscall further stipulates that Saul had a problem with timing and the word of the Lord from chapter 13.¹¹⁷ Saul cannot get things right: '... Saul loses face in the episode by displaying a lack of knowledge, poor judgment, insecurity, rigidity, and a peculiar talent for painting himself into a corner'. '... Jonathan criticizes [Saul], the priests contradict him, God stonewalls him, and the army outmaneuvers [*sic*] him'. Saul's actions and character are unlike that of Jonathan.¹¹⁸

Jonathan is also unlike a modern homosexual man in this ancient occidental text. Instead of the narrator using terminology which alleges that Jonathan has been effeminised or active in a homosexual relationship, the themes observed in the

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 83, 89, 94.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 93.

¹¹⁸ Patricia K. Tull, "Jonathan's Gift of Friendship," *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 58, no. 2 (2004): 134.

Jonathan Texts include those of progeny and kinship, military victories and armament, covenant, gift exchange, and redemption. Progeny and kinship appear in the terms 'house', 'son' and 'brother' in 1 Sam 14:42-46; 14:49; 18:1-4; 19:1-7; ch. 20; 2 Sam 1:1-27; 4:4; and 9:1-8. Military victories and various militaristic armaments are referred to in 1 Sam 13:2-4; 13:16-23; 14:1-22; 18:1-4; and 2 Sam 1:1-27 (the elegy is both entitled 'the Song of the Bow' and can reflect the poetic metaphor of Jonathan as the bow). The themes of covenant, gift exchange, and redemption develop over the following pericopes: The gift cycle begins as the people redeem Jonathan's life from Saul's execution sentence (1 Sam 14:42-46). David's life is bound to Jonathan's in the 18:1-4 covenant ritual as Jonathan passes on his gifts of life, kinship, kingship, and militaristic heroism in the symbols of the tangible gifts: When Jonathan simultaneously redeems David's life from Saul's execution sentence, and gives to David the gift of life which he himself was given by his comrades in arms (14:42-46) in 1 Sam 19:1-7, the symbolic becomes manifest. This mutual covenant-making develops in chapters 20 and 23 before the denouement of the David-Jonathan story in 2 Samuel. In the first chapter, David both redeems Saul and Jonathan's horrible deaths and reputations in a loving national lament (see also 2 Sam 1:14-17 on the Amalekite's life exchanged for Saul's life), and pronounces his redemption or return on Jonathan's covenantal gifts in v. 26. Finally, the acts of covenant, gift exchange, and redemption are resolved in 9:1-8 as David's pronouncement of return from 1:26 is manifested in the act of redeeming Saul's property to Jonathan's son. Not only does David redeem the physical property to Jonathan's progeny, but he also redeems his part of the

(spiritual) covenant and completes the gift exchange. Strikingly, the ritual that I have identified in 1 Sam 18:1-4 incorporates the three themes of progeny and kinship; military victories and armament; and covenant, gift exchange, and redemption – in contrast to alleged sexualised themes. Clearly, if one observes the texts which mention Jonathan and his contact with others, rather than anachronistically imposing implied sexual ideas on the ancient text, then one will observe more liberal latent ideas, such as the DH emphasizing military and monarchy instead of modern presumptions of sexuality.

The distinction between the Saul and Jonathan characters in the preceding material and the *Samuel* text, not only sets up the transition to David, but also develops Jonathan's role(s) in David's life. Already the reader may note Jonathan's relationship with God, his success as a warrior, his relationship with the people, and his authority as a monarch. This forms a commonality or unity for the David-Jonathan relationship. The writer then foreshadows David's success over Goliath and David's own relationship with God which impacted upon that victory. The writer seems to be preparing Jonathan for future roles in David's life. What Jonathan will bring to his relationship with David includes an affirmation of kingship; while Saul, like Samson, acted on his own and is ruled by strong and violent emotions. Perhaps Jonathan recognized a break with his father early on and chose not to tell him about his venture against the Philistines and how he ate some honey when Saul had decreed against it in chapter 14. Interestingly, Jonathan's eyes are brightened when he eats the honey, despite his father's decree. Miscall mentions Samson who did not tell his parents he had killed a lion or that he had

eaten the honey from its carcass. It seems that when direction from the Lord is *clear*, certain discretion is applied.¹¹⁹

Saul is separated from David in the story. Later in 1 Samuel 25, David makes a vow to kill Nabal, but rescinds it at Abigail's prompting. David recognizes his error and corrects it; Saul does not. Then in chapter 14, Saul is also separated from the Lord. There is a decided absence of Yahweh from 14:47-52 and Saul is now on his own. The contrasts between Saul against Yahweh, Samuel, Jonathan, and the foreshadowing of David is evident. Further in chapter 15, as the reader breaks away from the Saul figure as king, 'The relationship between Samuel and Saul is replaced by those between Saul and David, and David and Jonathan'.¹²⁰

The final straw for Saul is his next blunder which separates him not only from his kingdom but also from his kingship too (15:23c). Saul has three charges against him: 1) not obeying the voice of the Lord, 2) rushing upon the spoil, and 3) doing evil in the sight of the Lord. Saul's mission was simple, to utterly destroy the Amalekites. Instead, the king was spared and the people took some spoils. Again, Saul rebelled against his office as king (15:1), for the king, not the intended priest/prophet, not only offered the sacrifice and confused his role, but recall Saul also offered an untimely sacrifice in chapter 13 and he intends to repeat the offence in chapter 15. Obedience for the priest is to offer sacrifices, but obedience for Saul, the king, is to utterly destroy Amalek. Now Samuel, the prophet, must do what Saul, the king, should have done: kill the king of Amalek. Finally, through

¹¹⁹ Miscall, 93, 94.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 94, 98.

Samuel's words, Yahweh rejects Saul's kingship and kingdom because of rebellion and disobedience.¹²¹

The tearing of the robe is a judgment symbol of the kingdom (kingship) being torn from Saul (q.v., a wider OT foundation to social scientific concepts on the robe in *The Robe of Kingship and Kinship*, and social scientific implications on the robe and other symbols in *Israel's Divine Champion*). Miscall comments that the robe can symbolize kingdom, judgment, and death. He alludes to Jonathan's stripping himself of his robe in chapter 18 and presenting it to David as a transfer of royal power. The Philistines strip Saul of his armour and cut his head off as Jonathan and Saul die on Mt. Gilboa (2 Sam 1). What began in 1 Samuel 13 has climaxed in chapter 15. It is interesting then that chapter 16 discusses how David becomes Saul's armour-bearer. The rent kingdom from Saul is now being entrusted to David as he bears the armour naturally (v. 21), and as he has been anointed supernaturally for kingship (vv. 1, 13). In contrast to Saul's going to Samuel to be anointed king, Samuel is the one being sent to David to anoint him as king. Curiously, Jonathan is later sent to David as well. What is similar between Saul's (10:1-8) and David's anointing is that both were private events. Perhaps Yahweh was the only official witness needed. Later, the reader observes a covenant between Jonathan and David also enacted in private. In any case, Samuel is given a commission without an explanation. The Lord Himself has 'seen' the king. Samuel

¹²¹ Ibid., 105, 07.

says nothing as he anoints David. Recall that Saul was anointed ‘commander’ to save Israel from the Philistines, but no purpose is given here for David.¹²²

With regard to *seeing* the king, Samuel was directed to look beyond the physical appearance. Just because Jesse’s eldest son looked ‘kingly’ does not mean he is the king the Lord had seen. The theme of seeing is used five times in 16:7 to emphasize this point. Regardless, the author uses another contrast to separate David from Saul. David was not chosen or affirmed king because of his appearance. David’s characteristics may not have been the reason he was chosen, but the author did mention them: ‘a skilful musician, a mighty man of valour, a warrior, one prudent in speech, a handsome man, and the LORD is with him’ (16:18b). Perhaps the author is establishing similar characteristics to Jonathan. The reader is aware of Jonathan’s earlier valour as a warrior. Most importantly, the Lord was with Jonathan too. Miscall points out that the Lord’s being with David is related to David’s military success and Saul’s fear of him.¹²³

These character roles are further complicated. Samuel as the central character is replaced by David as the central character. ‘The varied relation between Samuel and Saul gives way to the relationship between Saul and David. . . The relation between Saul and Jonathan is complicated by that between Jonathan and David’. The reader observing the shifts are important. One should be aware of Jonathan’s confirming what Samuel has commissioned over David, Saul’s being

¹²² Ibid., 111, 15, 24.

¹²³ Ibid., 118, 19.

replaced by David as king, Saul's misunderstanding of the relationship between Jonathan and David, and how Jonathan responds to the latter.¹²⁴

The Text

Immediately following David's victory against Goliath in chapter 17, Abner, the commander of the army, brought David before Saul. At the beginning of the discussion 1 Sam 18:1, 3 records: 'Now it came about when he had finished speaking to Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as himself. Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself'. It is interesting that the author chose to share such intense emotional responses (i.e., a knitting of souls, and a loving of another as one's self) at the initial meeting of the two men. Clearly the narrator intended to invoke a literary cue like a type-scene or paradigmatic scene which Israelite readers would understand and could relate to culturally. The hearer of this climactic event could envisage the two souls merging even though there is no blood relationship or sexual relationship between them.¹²⁵ This may have been an emotional response or an immediate bond based on similarities of two virtuous warriors. Within this context, the cue for the ancient reader might refer to a bond between warriors in that culture or a brotherhood which could easily be stronger than a bond between men and women.¹²⁶ In this case, it is not necessary for the narrator to elaborate beyond 18:1, for the elements and inferences of the paradigmatic scene are in effect. The reader

¹²⁴ Ibid., 121.

¹²⁵ Karl Barth, *Ethics*, ed. Dietrich Braun, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (New York: Seabury Press, 1981), 189.

¹²⁶ Robert Alter, *The David Story: A Translation with Commentary of 1 and 2 Samuel* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), 200-01.

and hearer know to consider the biographies of the two men, their militaristic accomplishments, and the recent military victory of David over Goliath. We will continue later to explore the emotional and militaristic elements of this bond. What is significant now is that the scene in 18:1-4 is the extraordinary circumstance which must be analysed contextually, historically,¹²⁷ and culturally.

Ralph Klein suggests that, ‘Jonathan felt *bound* to [David] both by affection and political loyalty. Jonathan’s love, similarly, was political and personal. . . . Jonathan’s covenant with David was based on his love for him’.¹²⁸ Dale Davis echoes this sentiment: ‘It is crucial, however, to remember that Jonathan’s covenant itself was the expression of love, initiated by love (18:1, 3)’.¹²⁹ Following Klein and Davis, F.B. Meyer suggests: ‘David was in all probability profoundly influenced by the character of Jonathan, who must have been considerably older than himself. It seems to have been a love at first sight’.¹³⁰ The age difference may be a factor in this response as Marti Williams places David around 15 or 16 years old when he killed Goliath.¹³¹

However, Meyer comments on the men’s biographies as, ‘In true friendship there must be a similarity of taste and interests. And the bond of a common manliness knit these twin souls from the first’. Meyer further adds that both David

¹²⁷ In Israelite culture, a previous emotional meeting between two men after a battle scene is that of Abram and Melchizedek in Gen 14:18-20.

¹²⁸ Ralph W. Klein, *1 Samuel*, ed. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 10 (Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1983), 182.

¹²⁹ Dale Ralph Davis, *Looking on the Heart: Expositor's Guide to the Historical Books*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 52-53, 65.

¹³⁰ F. B. Meyer, *David: Shepherd, Psalmist, King* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1895), 53-54.

¹³¹ Notes from Dr. Marti Williams’ *BOTB511 Rise of the Davidic Monarchy* class, [Wednesday, July 16, 2003], Regent University, Virginia Beach, VA.

and Jonathan were ‘distinctly religious’, specifically citing Jonathan’s familiarity with the ways of God (1 Samuel 14), his discernment of the Lord’s hand, and his propensity for worship (1 Sam 19:5).¹³² These are all characteristics which the biblical narrator earlier shared in 1 Samuel about David which Shimon Bakon adds:

It seems as though the biblical narrator meant to draw attention to some of Jonathan’s outstanding characteristics, while at the same time hinting at underlying tensions between father and son and the reason for that special bond between Jonathan and David. One can state unequivocally that Jonathan was closer spiritually to David than to Saul. . . It is quite obvious that when Jonathan met David he found in him a kindred spirit, leading to the immortal friendship between the two . . . David, on the strength of his trust in God, vanquished Goliath and put the Philistines to flight. This event resembled Jonathan’s earlier deed, and one need not wonder that he discovered in David a kindred spirit and *loved him as his own soul*.¹³³

According to Bakon, the two men’s individual relationships with Yahweh and their battle experiences forged this love at first sight – a love which seemed to have been initiated by Jonathan, the seemingly older prince, who saw an intimately familiar and virtuous character in David. Barry Jones adds that this: ‘Zeal for YHWH, which has characterized each on the battlefield, also appears to foster their mutual devotion. . . Such is the persistent, covenanted loyalty required for a committed relationship to endure’.¹³⁴ Now in reflecting on the narrative in context perhaps what one might state ‘unequivocally’ is that a close bond did exist between the two men and that a Yahwistic influence was evident. This bond and influence seemed to have contributed to the monarchical affirmation Jonathan bestows on David when he gives him his robe, among other things. Earlier, Samuel declared

¹³² Meyer, 54-57.

¹³³ Shimon Bakon, "Jonathan," *The Jewish Bible Quarterly* 23, no. 2 (1995): 145-46.

¹³⁴ Barry A. Jones, "Between Text & Sermon: 1 Samuel 20:1-17," *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 58, no. 2 (2004): 174.

Saul's kingdom rent from him when the robe was torn. Then David refused to wear Saul's armour into battle. Now Jonathan offers David his robe, which he accepts. 'Though David neither acts nor speaks, he apparently accepts from Jonathan what he refused from Saul, his armour and sword (cf., 1 Sam 17:38-39), as well as his belt and bow'.

Supporting an aspect of Bakon's theory on family tensions, one might consider 1 Sam 19:1 when Saul instructed Jonathan (among others) to put David to death. The author records Jonathan's hesitation because he, 'greatly delighted in David'. Phillip Culbertson¹³⁵ offers the suggestion that, 'Though the RSV's "delighted deeply" is an adequate English translation, the more accurate sense of the Hebrew is that David made Jonathan's eyes light up so that Jonathan's heart melted'.¹³⁶ Culbertson further cites 20:3 as another example of Jonathan's eyes lighting up. Gary Comstock attests to these references and emphasizes the 'attraction' and 'interpersonal love' between David and Jonathan in their attraction of virtue.¹³⁷ The story continues through 20:1-17 where a second mention of the word 'covenant' is itself repeated twice (vv. 8, 16) in this text.¹³⁸ Additionally, 'covenant' is coupled with two repetitions of 'lovingkindness' (vv. 14, 15), and recalling that in 18:3 the first mention of 'covenant' was paired with 'love'.

¹³⁵ Dr. Phillip Culbertson was a lecturer on men's spirituality, psychology, and Jewish-Christian relations. He was a Professor of Pastoral Theology at the University of the South in Tennessee.

¹³⁶ Philip Leroy Culbertson, *New Adam: The Future of Male Spirituality* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 85.

¹³⁷ Gary David Comstock, "Love, Power and Competition among Men in Hebrew Scripture: Jonathan as Unconventional Nurturer," in *Religion, Homosexuality, and Literature*, ed. Michael L. Stemmeler and J. Michael Clark (Las Colinas, Tex: Monument Press, 1992), 16.

¹³⁸ Additionally, David is made to 'vow' or covenant again with Jonathan in 20:17.

Another important observation is the English variant of ‘lovingkindness’ noted as ‘kindly’ in verse 8. So what is made clear is that despite the passion of Bakon’s, Jones’, Culbertson’s, and Comstock’s views on the David-Jonathan relationship, the unique connection between the two men conflicted with the family or royal status quo; such that the literary terms love, covenant and lovingkindness used to describe David and Jonathan’s relationship created a tension between Jonathan and his father and king.

Loyal Love or Friendship

The term ‘lovingkindness’ is *hesed* (also *chesed*) in the Hebrew. Other English translations of *hesed* include to deal kindly, show faithful love, mercy, steadfast love, lovingkindness, and love. Davis also adds that *hesed*, ‘carries ideas of love, compassion, affection, faithfulness (hence RSV’s ‘steadfast love’). [The term] *hesed* often has that flavour: it is not merely love, but loyal love; not merely kindness, but dependable kindness; not merely affection, but affection that has committed itself.’¹³⁹ More importantly, in order to translate and understand the term, *The Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* advises the reader to view *hesed* within the context of the specific biblical pericope. For *hesed*, the secular uses within the social context of interpersonal relationships are more relevant to understanding the term than any religious uses. Specifically in the David-Jonathan narrative the use of *hesed* paired with the ritual of covenant (*b^erit*) and the identity

¹³⁹ Davis, 65.

in kinship-type relations (*‘emet, mishpatim*) take precedence in comprehending the term before one incorporates a Yahwistic component.¹⁴⁰

As such the relational context and related actions are elemental for the modern reader to interpret the *hesed* in the culture of Premonarchical times. For Early Israel, the commitment and dependability of the Hebrew term, *hesed*, is not limited to the verbal vow; a resultant action is expected as indicated by Katharine Doob Sakenfeld:

. . . *hesed* is regularly used as object of the verb ‘to do’; [*sic*] hence the focus is on an *act of hesed* or loyalty. . . *hesed* is always requested and carried out within the context of some publicly identifiable relationship. It is an act of loyalty to the other party in the relationship, and it is generally an action or series of actions, not merely an abstract attitude or verbal promise of loyalty.¹⁴¹

The Bible, ‘frequently speaks of someone ‘doing’, ‘showing’, or ‘keeping’ *hesed*’. However, the term is, ‘not only a matter of obligation; it is also of generosity. It is not only a matter of loyalty, but also of mercy. . . [it] implies personal involvement and commitment in a relationship beyond the rule of law’.¹⁴² It appears that inseparable from the term *hesed* is the dual concept of loyalty and love. The term *hesed* is used in the context of relationship where a primary loyalty to the relationship or contract is expected followed by things being done to or for the other party based on the covenant.¹⁴³ ‘Covenant and *hesed* are corollaries . . . covenant

¹⁴⁰ Hans-Jurgen Zobel, "Hesed," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974).

¹⁴¹ Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, "Loyalty and Love: The Language of Human Interconnections in the Hebrew Bible," *Michigan Quarterly Review* 22, no. 3 (1983): 196-97.

¹⁴² "Loving-Kindness," in *Nelson's Expository Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. Merrill F. Unger and William White Jr. (Nashville: T. Nelson, 1980).

¹⁴³ Notes from Dr. Randall Pannell's *BOTB540 Biblical Hebrew I* class, [Wednesday, September 24, 2003], Regent University, Virginia Beach, VA.

has become the vehicle for uncommon faithfulness'.¹⁴⁴ Identity, kinship, doing *hesed*, loyalty, love, and faithfulness indicate a radical sociability and social context of the David-Jonathan interpersonal bond.

Love

Apart from the pairing of the terms 'covenant' and 'loyal love' is another clear coupling of 'covenant' and 'love' (18:3, 20:16-17). 'Love' or '*ahabh*', as a *qal* active participle, is used 36 times in the Old Testament usually with the meaning 'friend'.¹⁴⁵ As a contrast to 'hate', Wallis in the *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* explains the emotion of love: 'He who loves someone or something cleaves to him . . . runs after him . . . goes after him . . . seeks him . . . gains faithfulness . . . Behind this yearning to be near someone physically lie internal emotions: one is knit to another with his soul . . .'. Not only does love presuppose a concrete inner disposition based on experiences and events, but also it includes a conscious act in behalf of the person who is loved. Love has a sociological basis and is rooted in a divine command to action of love.¹⁴⁶ In the socio-religious law of Deuteronomy, love is, ' . . . a love that can be commanded . . . it is a love which must be expressed in loyalty, in service, and in unqualified obedience to the demands of the Law. . . It is, in brief, a love defined by and pledged in the covenant – a covenantal love'.¹⁴⁷ 'Love' between Yahweh and Israel arises out of the context of a covenant (*b^erit*). Specifically, in Deut 7:12-26, the terms covenant, loyalty, and

¹⁴⁴ Davis, 65, 68.

¹⁴⁵ Gerhard Wallis, "Ahabh," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974).

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 102, 05, 06.

¹⁴⁷ William L. Moran, "The Ancient near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy," *Catholic Bible Quarterly* 25 (1963): 78.

love are closely linked. The loyalty of love in covenant is also closely related in the David-Jonathan story.¹⁴⁸

An observed continuity of 'love' is first expressed in Jonathan's love for David at least five times in the David-Jonathan narrative (1 Sam 18:1, 3; 20:17 [3X]). In 18:1, 'The narrator uses the ambiguous word *love* 'ahab because it denoted more than natural affection however deep and genuine this may have been'.¹⁴⁹ The final observation summarizes this love as Jonathan loved David, 'as he loved his own life' (20:17). For Jonathan to love David 'as his own self' implies in both Hebrew and Greek cultures that David and Jonathan are 'alter egos'. Gustav Stälin in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* expresses this as, 'The friend is the *alter ego* of the friend';¹⁵⁰ Comstock interprets this as, 'Your friend who is as your own self';¹⁵¹ and Culbertson shares various expressions: 'Friends have one soul between them . . . A friend is another self . . . alter ego . . . A friend is an alternative self [Zeno's maxim]'.¹⁵²

Covenant

When Jonathan made this covenant with his alter ego, he entered *b^erit* which the KJV translates as, 'covenant' 260 times. The word is used of 'agreements between men'.¹⁵³ It is not an agreement or settlement between two parties, instead

¹⁴⁸ J.A. Thompson, "Israel's 'Lovers'," *Vetus Testamentum* 27, no. 4 (1977): 478.

¹⁴⁹ J.A. Thompson, "The Significance of the Verb Love in the David-Jonathan Narratives in 1 Samuel," *Vetus Testamentum* 24, no. 3 (1974): 336.

¹⁵⁰ Gustav Stälin, "Philia," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich and Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 151.

¹⁵¹ Comstock, 16.

¹⁵² Culbertson, 94-95.

¹⁵³ "Covenant," in *Nelson's Expository Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. Merrill F. Unger and William White Jr. (Nashville: T. Nelson, 1980).

it carries the notion of ‘imposition’, ‘liability’, or ‘obligation’ (e.g., ‘bond’). Weinfeld in the *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* explains that over time the two concepts of commitment and oath have merged in order to express the idea of pact (e.g., ‘cutting a covenant’ also means ‘cutting an oath’).¹⁵⁴ Dale Ralph Davis elaborates on the verb *b^erit* in 1 Sam 18:3. He explains that the covenant bond was inaugurated by severing an animal. When both parties passed between the pieces the understanding was: ‘If I am unfaithful to my word in this covenant, may I end up in pieces as this animal’.¹⁵⁵ So, in the complex David-Jonathan covenant a faithful relationship was essential. Oath and commitment, on the one hand, along with love and friendship, on the other serve as the two semantic fields for ‘covenant’.¹⁵⁶ Elmer B. Smick in the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* explains: ‘Apart from blood ties the covenant was the way people of the ancient world formed wider relationships with each other’. Relating to the David-Jonathan covenant, Smick elaborates that the ‘covenant of the Lord’ discussed here was witnessed and legally protected by the Lord.¹⁵⁷

Shimon Bakon argues for three covenants between these men: (1) in 1 Sam 18:3, a covenant of kindred spirits was made which elevated David’s status and promised unconditional friendship; (2) in 20:14-15, a mutual pact of protection between equal parties was agreed to; and (3) in 23:16-17, the second covenant was

¹⁵⁴ M. Weinfeld, "Berith," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 255-56.

¹⁵⁵ Davis, 52-53.

¹⁵⁶ Weinfeld, 256.

¹⁵⁷ Elmer B. Smick, "Berith," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr, and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody, 1980), 129.

renewed.¹⁵⁸ These agreements or covenants arose, ‘on the basis of a relationship the obligations are often deeper than the covenant. 1 Sam 20:17 shows that Jonathan’s love moved him to make the covenant.’¹⁵⁹ Francis Anderson stipulates that ‘the oaths and the use of covenant language are secondary; they made explicit and formalize [*sic*] a determination and an agreement to do *hesed* . . .’. (23:17).¹⁶⁰

So the two men entered a covenant based on their love or *hesed* for each other. As noted above, Jonathan’s love for David is explicit. However, David, as the alter ego, implicitly communicates his love for Jonathan in 20:41b where David, ‘. . . fell on his face to the ground, and bowed three times. And they kissed each other and wept together, *but David wept the more*’, as the two suspected they would not see each other again. Although David does not declare his loyal-love verbally, he seems to act on it. Later, in 2 Sam 1:26, David is more vocal in his love for Jonathan as being ‘very pleasant’ to him.

David’s love for Jonathan

However it is interesting to observe who initiates this love and who is the recipient of this love, for ‘[David’s] attention is not on his love for Jonathan, but on Jonathan’s love for him’. What of David’s love for his friend? In 1 Sam 20:17 David’s love for Jonathan is implied through Jonathan’s verbal declaration. Patricia Tull adds that the phrase ‘as he loved his own soul’ in verse 17 has already been

¹⁵⁸ Bakon: 148-49.

¹⁵⁹ R. Laird Harris, "698 (Hsd)," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr, and Bruce K. Waltke (Colorado Springs: Moody, 1980), 306.

¹⁶⁰ Francis I. Andersen, "Yahweh, the Kind and Sensitive God," in *God Who Is Rich in Mercy: Essays Presented to Dr. D. B. Know*, ed. Peter T. O’Brien and David G. Peterson (Homebush West NSW, Australia: Lancer Books, 1986), 61.

attributed to Jonathan's declaration in chapter 18.¹⁶¹ The writer does not give explicit clues as to David's reciprocal love for his covenant friend, with the exception of David calling Jonathan 'my brother'¹⁶² in 2 Sam 1:26. Even regarding the covenant, it was not until the third instance in chapter 23 that the writer explicitly states that the covenant was mutually made. Tull argues that the limited information inspires readers to critically reflect on the story and 'our own mixed motives'.¹⁶³

Is Jonathan's love for David more mature? The prince was older than the shepherd boy when they met. Jonathan did not even appear jealous in his appointing David. 'Neither does Jonathan show any of the calculation or dissembling that will be displayed more and more by David. . .'. Although 'David wept the more' (20:41b) near the end, Tull stipulates that it is Jonathan's grief that is distinctly unselfish. 'The sources of David's grief are less clear'. Jonathan is made of 'nobler stuff' and the reader must admit that, ' . . . he is the friend few of us deserve but most of us would dearly love to have'.¹⁶⁴ Is Jonathan to be a mentor of sorts to the young David as well? What is clear is Jonathan's mature loyalty for his new friend. Jonathan seems to be, ' . . . aware of a larger divine plan for David and shows him to be submissive both to YHWH's plan and to his oath to David without concern for his own position or interest. The two stories of Jonathan's friendship

¹⁶¹ Tull: 137, 32.

¹⁶² Alter, *The David Story: A Translation with Commentary of 1 and 2 Samuel*, 200.

¹⁶³ Tull: 135, 33.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*: 135, 36.

and YHWH's plan for David have merged in *Jonathan's response* of loyalty to David' [emphasis mine].¹⁶⁵

However, as the moral character we have come to expect from Jonathan, one observes his loyalties divided between his father-king and his friend. Although Jonathan's soul is bound to David's, he still follows his father into death.¹⁶⁶ Hence David's comment in 2 Sam 1:23: 'Saul and Jonathan, beloved and pleasant in their life, and in their death they were not parted'. Does Saul deserve the loyalty of his son-servant? After all, Saul attempts to spear his own son just as he attempted to spear David. Jonathan is also derided by his father as he attempts to support his friend. However, Jonathan returns to his father's palace which leads to Jonathan's death on the battlefield.

The comingling of the kinship, legal, and religious concepts of loyal love, covenant, and love also complicate Jonathan's relationship with his father and with his king. For when Jonathan expressed these three commitments to David he may have placed his own relationship with his father and with his regent in jural jeopardy. The DH certainly alludes to this in Saul's vehement rebuke of Jonathan in 1 Sam 20:30-34. 'Clearly, Jonathan gave all he could to David and expected a mutual commitment'. This reciprocal love is not clearly observed until 2 Samuel. In chapter 9, David repeats three times his intent '... to show kindness for Jonathan's sake (9:1, 3, 7)'. The reader also observes a four time repetition of Mephibosheth eating at David's table always. Tull compares these emphases with

¹⁶⁵ Jones: 174.

¹⁶⁶ Tull: 136.

the repetitions in chapter 18: Then it was Jonathon's love made vocal; now it is David's love for Jonathan that is being vocalised.¹⁶⁷

Still, David's love for Jonathan is unmatched to Jonathan's expressions earlier. Tull concludes, ' . . . it should be acknowledged that by revealing Jonathan's inner life, the narrator provides information that is never available in the real world. Omniscient disclosures reveal Jonathan's heart more directly than any of us will ever know the hearts of our intimate friends'. This is what causes the reader to think of one's own life. It took Jonathan's death for David to verbalise some inclination of loyal-love to Jonathan. Was David more interested in personal advancement over loyal-love to his friend? Was David mature enough to understand the nature of loyal-love?¹⁶⁸

In Exilic and post-Exilic times what is the DH saying? Is this another attempt at Israel's failure to reciprocate loyal-love to Yahweh even while God remains loyal to the covenant?¹⁶⁹ Jonathan's death seems to open David's eyes. Does death offer enlightenment or a type of knowledge to the living? Does death bring a realisation of what is lacking in life or friendship? David, in the above story, lacked the intimacy of a true friendship. King David lacked the understanding and perhaps reciprocal loyal-love of his existing covenantal friendship. How should we understand our friendship with God as Christ has died?

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.: 137, 38.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.: 141-42.

¹⁶⁹ Although an intriguing concept to explore further, we will discuss aspects of this later; but the details and complexities of such a topic must be treated in another paper.

Yahweh

A final observation in the David-Jonathan narrative is how YHWH is featured in both the *hesed* and the *b^erit*. ‘Jonathan does *hesed* for David in the context of a ‘covenant of Yahweh’ between them (1 Sam 20:8), made with promise and oath (vv. 3-4).¹⁷⁰ ‘David and Jonathan made a ‘covenant’ of mutual protection that would be binding on David’s descendants forever (1 Sam. 18:3; 20:8, 16-18, 42). In [this case], there was ‘mutual agreement confirmed by oath in the name of the Lord’.¹⁷¹ Furthermore, the *hesed* was customarily identified publicly. In this case not only was the friendship sworn verbally (20:42) but also the covenant was made in the presence of YHWH Himself. This was a covenant in which Yahweh was witness to and guardian of its promises.¹⁷² It was a ‘most sacred act, not to be trifled with’.¹⁷³ Barry Jones adds:

The basis on which each appeals to the other, and on which Jonathan declares that he will act, is the covenantal relationship they share with one another and with YHWH as witness and guarantor. Regardless of the emotional attraction or coincidence of circumstance that sparked their friendship, David and Jonathan have nevertheless solemnized their bond as a spiritual and religious pact, a ‘sacred covenant’ (v. 8; literally, a ‘covenant of YHWH’).¹⁷⁴

Definitively, the text reveals some key elements of the David-Jonathan friendship covenant: (1) an attraction of virtue¹⁷⁵ (knitting of souls; eyes lighting up; hearts melting), (2) a dual loyalty and love action (*hesed*), (3) a mutual love to the extent

¹⁷⁰ Andersen, 60.

¹⁷¹ "Covenant."

¹⁷² Davis, 64.

¹⁷³ Bakon: 149, n. 4.

¹⁷⁴ Jones: 174.

¹⁷⁵ See also ‘friendship of virtue’ below.

of creating an alter ego, (4) public covenants secondary to the *hesed*, and (5) a focus on and by YHWH.

Pre-modern Contexts

Friendship: A Greek Influence

A brief, initial consideration of elements of classical Western culture may be appropriate at this point for a background to understanding subsequent cultural influences on interpretation of biblical texts. In *The Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle discusses three types of male-male friendships.¹⁷⁶ The first two are characterized by some good which one gets from another. The emphases of these types of friendships are one's own motives and the incidental or temporary duration of the friendship. The rationale is that as one's *good* is met the relationship is then easily dissolved. The first type is the **friendship of utility** which can be likened today to situations where one assists another with problems, projects, tasks, counselling, or business.¹⁷⁷ Once the assistance or good is completed the friendship is terminated, at least until other assistance is desired.¹⁷⁸ Second, is the **friendship of pleasantness**, which ordinarily exists among young people and is aimed at fulfilling emotional pursuits. Today, this type of friendship is one where, 'young men simply "hang out"' together and enjoy each other's company so much that they do not need

¹⁷⁶ Aristotle, "Books 8 and 9 – Friendship," in *The Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. trans. David Ross (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 194-246.

¹⁷⁷ Culbertson, 92-94.

¹⁷⁸ The friendship of utility primarily exists between older people and those who are in their prime.

an external project or self-serving goal to justify spending time together'.¹⁷⁹ Western society may label this as 'going out' to eat, shop, play sports, or other forms of recreation and entertainment. Again, once the activity has concluded there is no need to interact with the other until the next activity. The third type of friendship is the **friendship of virtue**. A love like David's and Jonathan's, which does not depend on a transitory activity, is what Aristotle describes as a perfect friendship or a friendship of virtue. While containing some elements of the previous two friendships, both men in this friendship are said to be alike in virtue. With this common virtue both men are 'being the other's self' in benefiting from what is advantageous *to the other*, or simply being the 'alter ego' as Culbertson and Stälin suggested. Their mutual love is for the other's profit.

In Aristotle's work, we find him arguing that even distance cannot terminate the friendship between two friends of virtue, but will only diminish the 'activity' of the relationship. He stipulates a distinction between the emotion and commitment of such a friendship:

Now it looks as if love were a feeling, friendship a state of character; for love may be felt just as much towards lifeless things, but mutual love involves choice and choice springs from a state of character; and men wish well to those whom they love, for their sake, not as a result of feeling but as a result of a state of character.¹⁸⁰

Aristotle further advises that the *friendship of virtue* requires time and familiarity to develop love and trust, and time spent with the other – Aristotle indeed discusses

¹⁷⁹ Culbertson, 92-94.

¹⁸⁰ Barth, 200.

time ‘living’ with the other.¹⁸¹ This friendship is not practical for a man to form with many men either, because of the time factor involved. However, Aristotle does observe that a man may have many friends of utility or pleasantness.

2 Samuel 1:26

A second context to consider is the impact of religious commentary on the Bible and how it remains an influence on our late modern perception. Strikingly, the biblical commentary in *The Mishnah* also treats Aristotelian concepts of activity and transitory elements in friendship. As it comments on the narratives in The Books of Samuel, it contrasts love based on a transitory activity against love which does not depend on the activity:

If love depends on some [transitory] thing, and the [transitory] thing passes away, the love passes away too; but if it does not depend on some [transitory] thing it will never pass away. Which love depended on some [transitory] thing? This was the love of Amnon and Tamar (i.e., 2 Sam 13:1ff). And which did not depend on some [transitory] thing? This was the love of David and Jonathan (2 Sam 1:26). (Aboth 5:16)

This analysis specifically associates the love of David and Jonathan with a love which does not depend on a transitory thing. It is a love or friendship of virtue which benefits the other’s self. Also as Aboth 5:16 implies, it is a love which ‘passes the love of women’ (2 Sam 1:26) or a love which does not depend on transitory sexual activity, in this case. For Amnon’s ‘love’ for the woman Tamar subsided once the activity was complete, but the superlative or virtuous love of David and Jonathan requires no sexual activity. In fact this virtuous love supersedes

¹⁸¹ For friendship is a partnership, and as a man is to himself, so is he to his friend; now in his own case the consciousness of his being is desirable, and so therefore is the consciousness of his friend’s being, and the activity of this consciousness is produced when they live together, so that it is natural that they aim at this (Aristotle, p. 246).

both the physical aspect of love as well as the activity aspect like that of sport, recreation, or entertainment.

Far from being physical, sexual, or erotic in nature, Walter Brueggemann the Old Testament biblical scholar presents the wider elegy in 2 Samuel 1 within the context of grief, hyperbole, and the public sphere. David receives the crown and amulet as royal symbols (1:1-10), his semiotic kingship becomes complete, and the people begin lamenting Saul and Jonathan, the army of the Lord, and the house of Israel (v.12). David's grief and 'loyalty for Saul' (vv.14-16) are foremost on his mind from verses 11 to 27. His lament is a 'powerful passionate poetry' that is filled with both 'passion and innocence' which 'are reflective of a genuine grief not inappropriate to David' and 'not dishonest hyperbole'. Brueggemann mirrors the passion of chapter 1 in his own commentary as he highlights Saul's importance to David and David's innocence in the 'pathos-filled' eulogy. These characteristics do not set the tone for a pornographic public spectacle, which some assume in v.26, but 'within this moment of grief, however, David is able to get his mind off himself and instead to focus with and for his community on the public reality of loss'.¹⁸²

It is within this public nature and nationalistic virtue which Brueggemann observes the setting for the lament. Brueggemann emphasizes this national grief within the microcosm of the David-Jonathan relationship, not unlike the warriors' brotherhood which treats the personal nature of the relationship within the wider Israelite culture. Brueggemann suggests that David's 'passion in grief' for Saul,

¹⁸² Walter Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel*, ed. James Luther Mays and Patrick D. Miller Jr., Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching. (Louisville, Ky.: John Knox Press, 1990), 211-14, 217.

‘his king’, and Jonathan, ‘his brother and advocate’, serves as a model to process the ‘public hurt’ which also can advise our modern society in resolving the lingering, passion-filled hatred against black people since the Civil War, or even against the Jews since the Holocaust. The public setting, literary hyperbole, and passion in grieving within the poetic genre of David’s elegy supply the context and interpretation for David’s remarks in v.26 to his ritualised brother, and reveal the asexual, intimate nature of David and Jonathan’s grandiose and hyperbolic love.¹⁸³

Biblical Influences

Proverbs 27:17, 19

A superlative, virtuous, asexual, intimate and grandiose expression seems to be at the *heart* of the sage’s comments: ‘Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another’ (Prov 27:17); or ‘As in water face reflects face, so the heart of man reflects man’ (Prov 27:19). Both wisdom sayings *reflect* the mutual benefit of being the other’s self. Verse 17 prompts the individual to engage or educate¹⁸⁴ the other in a certain area of life. William McKane adds that it is by, ‘the sharpening of one mind on another (that) a man’s thinking becomes as keen as a razor blade’.¹⁸⁵ This education or sharpening could be either reassuring or corrective to the friend.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 214, 217-18.

¹⁸⁴ Duane A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, ed. E. Ray Clendenen, The New American Commentary, vol. 14 (Nashville: Broadman, 1993), 220.

¹⁸⁵ William McKane, *Proverbs: A New Approach*, Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970), 615.

Proverbs 27:5-6 synthesizes this contrast: ‘A true friend gives time and attention (v. 5) but is not always flattering (v. 6)’. While both verses contain a common root word of ‘love’, both also discuss genuine friendship. Verse 5 prepares the reader by expressing the need for honest communication between friends, while verse 6 contrasts, ‘. . .genuine and phony expressions of friendship. One must distinguish between salutary rebukes that spring from honest love and hollow displays of affection where no true love exists’.¹⁸⁶ In any case, both men are benefited from honesty in reassurance and rebuke. This open communication theme is reiterated in verse 19 when your friend or, ‘. . . fellow man confronts you with the shape in which thoughts and habits like your own have grouped themselves into a character’.¹⁸⁷ Here one sees the inner self reflected in the face of the companion or the alter ego (i.e., the other’s self).¹⁸⁸ McKane concludes: ‘This is an expression of the transparency of true love, and the enhancement of self-understanding which is produced by the interpretation of kindred spirits,’¹⁸⁹ or the other’s self.

Proverbs 27:7-10

Like Aristotle earlier, Duane Garrett includes a space-time element in his commentary on Prov 27:7-10, for he suggests that: ‘The four verses together teach that one should seek solid, meaningful relationships among one’s neighbours and family, but not focus on people who are fun but lack substance and not turn exclusively to relatives, however distant they may be’.¹⁹⁰ Notice specifically Prov

¹⁸⁶ Garrett, 216-17.

¹⁸⁷ Derek Kidner, *The Proverbs: An Introduction and Commentary*, ed. D.J. Wiseman, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1974), 167.

¹⁸⁸ Garrett, 220.

¹⁸⁹ McKane, 616.

¹⁹⁰ Garrett, 217-18.

27:10: ‘Do not forsake your own friend or your father’s friend, and do not go to your brother’s house in the day of calamity; better is a neighbour who is near than a brother far away’. Verse 8 introduces the above conclusion to the reader with the motif of a man who wanders from his home. The warning is accentuated by the thought that, ‘. . . when an individual cuts himself off from his family and community, he diminishes his own life . . . and suffers a loss of identity’.¹⁹¹ The responsibility and consequences then are felt by the case of the wanderer. Andreas Scherer adds that the wanderer or one who abandons his friend just because he has ‘lost in value’ is comparable to the ‘sinner’.¹⁹² Scherer cites Prov 14:20 to support his view and concludes that, ‘. . . a person has to consider the consequences of one’s actions and in this way is responsible for one’s own destination’.¹⁹³ However, the sage adds in verse 9 that a responsible friend’s advice and counsel is sweet: ‘[T]he *physical* well-being associated with anointing and the smell of incense to which v. 9a alludes [is compared with the] friendship which produces a sense of *spiritual* well-being [emphases mine].¹⁹⁴ So then in relation to the conclusion of verse 10, verse 9 adds how spiritually important or sweet the friend’s advice is, especially in a day of calamity.

A consideration in Job

Now Job 6:14 reminds us: ‘For the despairing man there should be kindness from his friend; so that he does not forsake the fear of the Almighty’. A benefit of

¹⁹¹ McKane, 612.

¹⁹² Andreas Scherer, "Is the Selfish Man Wise? Considerations of Context in Proverbs 10:1-22:16 with Special Regard to Surety, Bribery and Friendship," *Journal for the Study of Old Testament* 76 (1997): 68.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*: 69.

¹⁹⁴ McKane, 613.

providing sweet advice to one's friend, especially in despair or calamity, results in a maintaining of the friend's relationship with God. The element of loyal-love reappears as 'kindness' in verse 14 in the Hebrew term *hesed*. Job has a right to expect loyalty not unkindness from his friends during his calamity. Instead, Eliphaz comes closest here as he emphasizes Job's goodness while delicately mentioning that even the righteous are not perfect.¹⁹⁵

A friend must be able to communicate love in both praise and rebuke. In a perfect friendship of appreciative love, each is humbled before the other in his heart. Each can share his greatest and most 'secret evil'.¹⁹⁶ Each man can be judged by the other, by the man after his own heart. Each can covet the praise of the other and dread the blame by the other.

This love, free from instinct, free from all duties but those which love has freely assumed, almost wholly free from jealousy, and free without qualification from the need to be needed [as in Affection and Eros], is eminently spiritual. It is the sort of love one can imagine between angels. Have we here found a natural love which is Love itself?¹⁹⁷

And Clines stipulates, 'that anyone who trusts in human goodness shows a lack of faith in God'.¹⁹⁸ Loyalty to one's friend, during both good and bad times, is correlated with faith in God. So from this socio-religious perspective, the mutual benefit of friendship comes from a mutual loyal-love which stems from a relationship or faith in God. In this case we observe the sacredness of the mutual benefit of friendship. The covenant of friendship itself is so valuable or virtuous

¹⁹⁵ David Clines, *Job 1-20*, ed. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 17 (Dallas: Word, 1989), 176-77.

¹⁹⁶ C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (New York: Harcourt, 1988), 71-72, 79.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 77.

¹⁹⁸ Clines, 178.

that even when one's friend has lost value, whether financially or in crisis like David was against Saul, the covenant still remains. The friends then take responsibility for adhering to the friendship and supporting the other. The lesser option would be abandoning your friend and causing her or him to rely on a *distant* family member. In this sense their mutual loyal-love or covenant is their mutual benefit.

Proverbs 17:17

In his commentary of Prov 17:17, William McKane adds to this discussion of friends over family relations:

. . . friendship is to be distinguished from a blood relationship. Friends are chosen for their personal qualities and a man spends his life with his friends because their company is congenial to him. On the other hand, brothers may not be naturally drawn to each other and may not see a great deal of each other, but yet there is a bond of kinship which they feel, and it creates peculiar obligations which they acknowledge.¹⁹⁹

Barth agrees that friendship does not rest on blood relationship, but on relationship of *soul* and *spirit*.²⁰⁰ 'Genuine love and friendship remain true especially in times of adversity (17:17) because of their unselfishness . . . In light of this, it should be clear that love cannot be determined on the basis of one's emotions, but on the basis of ethical responsibility for one's actions, which sets severe limits on one subjectively living as he feels and desires'.²⁰¹ This becomes clear in the biblical reading: 'A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity' (Prov 17:17).

¹⁹⁹ McKane, 505-06.

²⁰⁰ Barth, 188.

²⁰¹ Wallis, 110.

Proverbs 18:24

Aristotle's philosophy could also be explained by McKane's explanation of Prov 18:24: 'The contrast of v. 24 would then be between the person who is adept at social chatter – who has innumerable acquaintances but not friends – and the very different kind of person who is not a social success in this sense, but who is capable of a deep spiritual engagement with another and who makes his friends for life'.²⁰² Kidner also makes this clear: '... Proverbs itself is emphatic that a few close friends are better than a host of acquaintances, and stand in a class by themselves. (Our Lord's relationship with the 'beloved disciple' endorses the point)'.²⁰³ As the sage emphasizes: 'A man of too many friends comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother' (Prov 18:24).

Influences on Modern Friendship

Karl Barth also discusses a deep spiritual engagement or ego/alter-ego between friends as he explains that when two souls have come together in a friendship without blood relationship or sexual relationship the friends see themselves in each other. Furthermore, in the friend, 'my own *I* encounters *me* . . . so that to some degree his existence means mine and his nonexistence would also mean mine [emphases mine].²⁰⁴ Barth's description seems to be in accord with the knitting of souls between friends, not unlike David and Jonathan at their first encounter.

²⁰² McKane, 518-19.

²⁰³ Kidner, 44.

²⁰⁴ Barth, 189.

Conversely there are warnings to those whose friends may not be available in a time of need. Contrary to the Prov 17:17 rendering on friendship, Prov 25:19 explains: 'Like a bad tooth and an unsteady foot is confidence in a faithless man in time of trouble' (Prov 25:19). While one can rely on a faithful friend, one should beware of those who are faithless. McKane mentions that retribution will fall on these evildoers.²⁰⁵ One is reminded of not merely forsaking a friend, but betraying that friend and the consequences of doing him evil in Ps 55:12-15:

For it is not an enemy who reproaches me, then I could bear it; nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me, then I could hide myself from him. But it is you, a man my equal, my companion and my familiar friend; we who had sweet fellowship together, walked in the house of God in the throng. Let death come deceitfully upon them; let them go down alive to Sheol, for evil is in their dwelling, in their midst.

The Psalmist is deeply hurt by the intimate friend's betrayal over the enemy's wounds: 'The suppliant's distress is greatly increased because of the unfaithfulness of a trusted friend. The taunts of an enemy would be expected and could be borne with relative ease'. Notice the friend was described as an equal, a companion, familiar, and a fellow worshipper. Although these are indications of a friend and 'deep spiritual engagement', the one who betrays or violates that covenant (v. 20) seems to be judged similarly to the evildoer (v. 15). Marvin Tate adds that violating the covenant equates to profaning the covenant or making it unholy. Such an action

²⁰⁵ McKane, 586.

would be a grave offence and cause great pain and hurt to the righteous – especially if the covenant was a personal one like that in 1 Sam 18:3.²⁰⁶

Interestingly, the strongest Hebrew term for friend (i.e., bosom companion) occurs in Old Testament instances of betrayal (Prov 2:17) or estrangement (16:28; 17:9). Derek Kidner suggests that Proverbs reminds us that, ‘. . . the closest friendship needs guarding’.²⁰⁷ Friends must first guard against the outsider who neither understands the friendship nor desires to make friends. For McKane the goal of the outsider in Prov 16:27 is to use his language strategically in order to hurt his fellows. He has no desire to enlarge his own sphere of friendship. Instead, according to verse 28, ‘it is his deliberate policy to destroy other men’s friendships by creating discord and poisoning trust’.²⁰⁸

It is perhaps this discord that must be considered in Saul’s divisive role between Jonathan and David. Saul’s harsh words to his son regarding his friendship and causing Jonathan *to choose* death in the end, would seem to emulate the sobering wisdom of Prov 16:28: ‘A perverse man spreads strife, and a slanderer separates intimate friends’. Consequently, just as the untrustworthy friend was judged, so the individual who destroys a friendship is regarded as a perverse person.²⁰⁹ In Saul’s attempt to separate Jonathan and David, Saul was also separating an intimate or covenant bond.

²⁰⁶ Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, ed. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 20 (Dallas: Word, 1990), 52, n. 14.b, 57, 58.

²⁰⁷ Kidner, 46.

²⁰⁸ McKane, 493-94.

²⁰⁹ Scherer: 67.

Additionally, Prov 17:9 emphasizes forgiveness and discretion within the friendship as a means for friends to guard their relationship:

[I]f a discreet silence is not practiced where appropriate, the atmosphere of trust and mutual love quickly breaks down. The opposite extreme of a forgiving spirit is to take offense and retaliate against those who are only doing good (v. 13). Such a person will not only be friendless but will bring all manner of troubles on his or her head.²¹⁰

We again observe the physical and spiritual corollaries in friendship as: ‘The integrity of a friendship depends as much on spiritual resources as does that of an individual’.²¹¹ Apart from a spiritual well-being between the kindred spirits, which Kidner and the biblical author sees sourced in the Divine, friends must also partner with God in the natural to preserve the friendship through loyal-love.

Finally, the *friendship of virtue* also involves the Prov 18:24 motif of ‘being steadfast within oneself’ as this is key to being steadfast to the friend. These friends are also of one accord, of one mind, and of common endeavour. Goodwill for ‘the other’ is another key and will be revisited in later discussions:

Goodwill seems, then, to be a beginning of friendship, as the pleasure of the eye is the beginning of love. For no one loves if he has not first been delighted by the form of the beloved, but he who delights in the form of another does not, for all that, love him, but only does so when he also longs for him when absent and craves for his presence; so too it is not possible for people to be friends if they have not come to feel goodwill for each other, but those who feel goodwill are not for all that friends; for they only *wish* well to those for whom they feel goodwill, and would not do anything with them or take trouble for them. And so one might by an extension of the term ‘friendship’ say that goodwill is inactive friendship, though when it is prolonged and reaches the point of intimacy it becomes

²¹⁰ Garrett, 161.

²¹¹ Kidner, 46.

friendship – not the friendship based on utility nor that based on pleasure; for goodwill too does not arise on those terms. The man who has received a benefit bestows goodwill in return for what has been done to him, but in doing so is only doing what is just; while he who wishes someone to prosper because he hopes for enrichment through him seems to have goodwill not to him but rather to himself, just as a man is not a friend to another if he cherishes him for the sake of some use to be made of him. In general, goodwill arises on account of some excellence and worth, when one man seems to another beautiful or brave or something of the sort, as we pointed out in the case of competitors in a contest.²¹²

And so the Preacher in Ecclesiastes reminds us of the goodwill one friend can provide another: ‘Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labour. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up’ (Eccl 4:9-10; also Prov 25:19).

Strikingly familiar, in the *friendship of virtue*, Aristotle outlines similar observations of the David-Jonathan friendship: an attraction of virtue; a mutual love benefiting the other; a loyalty of character which involves choice and produces the feeling of love; a steadfastness; a being in one accord, having the consciousness of his friend’s being, or a knitting of souls; and a focus on goodwill, excellence, and worth.

A Western Context

In what became a widely known book, C. S. Lewis discusses Friendship as one of *The Four Loves* – the others being Affection, Eros, and Charity. Essentially, Affection is familial love, Eros is sexual love, and Charity is divine love.

²¹² Ibid., 230-31.

Friendship, however, is not often viewed as love by modern standards and is often ignored. Contrary to the ancients, for Lewis, friendship seemed to be the happiest and most fully human of all loves. Lewis contends that few value it today because few have experienced it or are threatened by it. This we have seen with Saul. To many, Friendship is the ‘least natural’ of the loves as both Affection and Eros are both widespread and expressed by most westerners. Following J. Pitt-Rivers and James G. Carrier, anthropologists, Sandra Bell and Simon Coleman observe that western societies, such as Europe and North America, have different notions of intimacy in friendship which tends to ‘individualism’ rather than a practice of transferring selfhood to the other²¹³ – which one might even find in the loves of family and spouse. What is it about (choice-driven) western relationships, outside of affinal and consanguineal kinship bonds, which threaten us? How many instances of Lewis’ true friendship-love does one observe?²¹⁴

Far from being the ‘least natural’ of the loves, Barth affirms same sex friendships in that, ‘. . . man was created neither for loneliness nor for general fellowship’.²¹⁵ To Barth, friendship can be defined as an affinity or proximity of one person to another of the same sex.²¹⁶ ‘This affinity is more or less native to man, stands out within our general solidarity with all men, and takes place by free choice’.²¹⁷ Separating from general fellowship and engaging in a friendship of two or three is perhaps alien to westerners. Further, it would appear as a *threat* to

²¹³ Sandra Bell and Simon Coleman, "The Anthropology of Friendship: Enduring Themes and Future Possibilities," in *The Anthropology of Friendship*, ed. Sandra Bell and Simon Coleman (Oxford: Berg, 1999), 3.

²¹⁴ Lewis, 57, 58.

²¹⁵ Barth, 188.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 187.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

authority, for the smaller group is no longer entrenched in complying with the general population. Lewis suggests that this can be both a benefit and a danger. A beneficial example is seen in the group of friends Jesus gathered under the truth of the Kingdom of God. The danger is the perceived threat these friends were to the kingdoms of man, authority, and government. Even so, friendship is extremely useful and perhaps necessary for individual survival. Lewis defines this usefulness not in the occasions or interruptions of friendship but in the nature of ‘kingliness’ of friendship. The occasions stem from our friend being an ally: lending, giving, caretaking, defending, and charity. But, ‘The mark of perfect Friendship is not that help will be given when the pinch comes (of course it will) but that, having been given, it makes no difference at all’. This love does not care about what should be done or what history one’s friend has. The love of close friends is not superficial, physical, or prejudicial. ‘[Friendship] is an affair of disentangled, or stripped, minds. Eros will have naked bodies; Friendship naked personalities’. This seems to be the essence of intimate friendship: When a friend can be bare, in this regard, before his friend and still remain loyal to him. How often do men hesitate to expose his deepest thoughts and even challenges to another man without fear of retribution or alienation?²¹⁸

But vulnerable personalities must first share some commonality: Would you trust someone unless you first shared a common bond? David and Jonathan seemed to share a common truth in Yahweh, courage, and virtue. Common truth is often found in companionship and companionship is often confused with friendship,

²¹⁸ Lewis, 60, 80, 69, 70-71.

though it is through companionship where friendship can arise:²¹⁹ ‘[T]he friend does not simply belong to someone’s sphere of life, but is to be regarded as a personal intimate’.²²⁰ But, companionship is found in the cooperation of a group of men. This group would share the same interest(s). Today we might call it talking shop or hanging out. Aristotle might label it friendships of utility or pleasantness. In any case, this matrix of friendship supplies the companion pool from which men may develop friendships.

Then when two men from his background discover they share a common insight, interest, or taste which the others do not share, a friendship arises:

The typical expression of opening Friendship would be something like, ‘What? You too? I thought I was the only one’. We can imagine that among those early hunters and warriors single individuals – one in a century? one in a thousand years? – saw what others did not; saw that the deer was beautiful as well as edible, that hunting was fun as well as necessary, dreamed that his gods might not be not only powerful but holy. But as long as each of these percipient persons dies without finding a kindred soul, nothing (I suspect) will come of it; art or sport or spiritual religion will not be born. It is when two such persons discover one another, when, whether with immense difficulties and semi-articulate fumbings or with what would seem to us amazing and elliptical speed, they share their vision – it is then that friendship is born. And instantly they stand together in an immense solitude [*sic*] [emphasis mine].²²¹

‘Theological friendships, therefore, are the fruit of a common interest which begins with the discovery of convictions shared’.²²² These close friends now see or even care about the same truth.²²³ Lewis implies that those who resist seeking the same

²¹⁹ Ibid., 63-65.

²²⁰ Scherer: 67.

²²¹ Lewis, 65.

²²² Thomas W. Gillespie, "Theological Friendships," *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 19, no. 1 (1998): 4.

²²³ Lewis, 66.

truth cannot be categorised as Friends or may even fear Friendship. Friendships are selfless in that the care is for the truth and the other friend, rather than care for oneself or care towards just *wanting* a friend. For David and Jonathan, their friendship seemed to encircle Yahweh's plan²²⁴ or that *same* truth. Simultaneously, Yahweh's plan often counters our culture: Selflessly, Jonathan rejected Saul's kingdom for Yahweh's plan of David's kingdom. Theirs was a friendship and covenant of uncommon faithfulness. Could it have been said that Jonathan believed in Yahweh and his plan for David?

One could say Jonathan 'emptied himself' (Phil 2:7); he was willing to suffer the 'loss of all things' and to count them rubbish (Phil 3:8). . . . Jonathan had acknowledged that the kingdom was Yahweh's and therefore David's, so his life did not need to be centered [*sic*] in his ambition (what can I get) but in God's providence (what Yahweh has given).²²⁵

Regardless, it is a common quest or vision which unites Friends and develops their 'mutual love and knowledge'.²²⁶ At least from the perspective of theological friendships, 'Friends believe in each other, not because of their respective achievements but out of respect for their individual destinies before God'.²²⁷ This quest takes close friends on a common journey where each step tests the other, as some have described the circumstances in the David-Jonathan narrative: Through this reliance, respect, and admiration, ' . . . blossom into an appreciative love of a singularly robust and well-informed kind . . . You will not find the warrior, the poet, the philosopher or the Christian by staring in his eyes as if

²²⁴ Or the DH's plan reflected through the Yahweh character in the narrative.

²²⁵ Davis, 70.

²²⁶ Lewis, 71.

²²⁷ Gillespie: 7.

he were your mistress: better fight beside him, read with him, argue with him, pray with him'.²²⁸ Is this the love in 2 Samuel 1:26 which surpasses that of women that existed between David and Jonathan? For beyond the sexual gaze, Lewis suggests a list of 'higher order' activities which are employed to develop the Friendship.

A second hindrance to friendship seems to be pride. Lewis urges men not to become like those authorities who misunderstand or despise friendship. Instead, ' . . . because [friendship] is spiritual and therefore faces a subtler enemy, it must, even more wholeheartedly than [the other natural loves],²²⁹ invoke the divine protection if it hopes to remain sweet'.

The Friendship is not a reward for our discrimination and good taste in finding one another out. It is the *instrument* by which God reveals to each the beauties of all the others. They are no greater than the beauties of a thousand other men; by Friendship God opens our eyes to them. They are, like all beauties, derived *from Him*, and then, in a good Friendship, increased *by Him* through the Friendship itself, so that it is *His instrument* for *creating* as well as for *revealing*.²³⁰

Conservative religious traditions seem to correspond to Aristotelian views on sexuality. In *The Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle categorises men's mutual sexual behaviour as 'not naturally pleasant'. Aristotle is also clear on his disapproval of learned homosexuality; and Plato viewed sexual activity for procreation only, and, 'had in his mind a 'higher', nonphysical love in which carnal

²²⁸ Lewis, 71.

²²⁹ i.e., Affection and Eros.

²³⁰ Lewis, 88, 89-90.

needs are sublimated to a spiritual level so that the thoughts are turned from [the beloved] to love itself.²³¹

Same-sex friendship between men was highly revered in ancient Greece and during the European Renaissance. . . . Physically affectionate relationships between men and even the sharing of beds were not uncommon between young men. Since the desire to engage in sexual acts between two men was seen as something beyond human nature, as sexual connection was not made with physical touch or sleeping together [*sic*]. Furthermore, when homosexuality was thought about, it was almost always in terms of a particular sexual act, not an identity or personal characteristic.²³²

Additionally in 19th century in the United States adult men sharing their beds with visitors was not uncommon as there was a lack of space in most homes.²³³ Clearly views on sexuality were perceived through different lenses than today. Today the type of touching mentioned above and sleeping in the same bed would constitute (homo) sexual acts whereas historically sexual images were not even considered. Moreover, where one today may choose to identify as a homosexual for various reasons, historically one would engage in a specific act and be considered homosexual. If views on sexuality can differ between the 19th century and today, then how diverse can views on sexuality be between 1000 BC Israel and the West today? Evidently, care must be taken in reading historical events and attitudes to sexuality as various interpretations based on anachronistic attitudes might arise.

Through his comparative studies of Papua New Guinean, Melanesian and middle-class women in American societies, Carrier observes that a possible

²³¹ Martti Nissinen, *Homoeroticism in the Biblical World: A Historical Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 80-82, 59-60.

²³² Peter M. Nardi, "Seamless Souls: An Introduction to Men's Friendships," in *Men's Friendships: Research on Men and Masculinities*, ed. Peter M. Nardi (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1992), 2-3.

²³³ Hansen, 35.

rationale for the change in modern social perspectives is an economic one.

Following Marcel Mauss' ideas of gift exchange, Carrier points to the development of capitalism in early modernity which shifted the concept of spontaneous affection in friendship away from a collective ideal, in which the self is situated in a web of relations, to a more autonomous individualistic self:

No longer was it expected that one would consort with those appropriate to one's social location. Instead, people were expected to consort with those who appealed to their innate sense of good, those for whom they felt a natural sympathy; in short, those for whom they felt spontaneous affection.²³⁴

Some other plausible causes to the change in social perspectives include industrialisation and urbanisation, the Civil War, and Freudian psychology.²³⁵ Industrialisation caused men to leave their communities and friends in the rural area in order to travel to the city to work; the Civil War divided a nation formerly committed to honour and virtue among men; and Freud injected seeds of sexual innuendo into every area of Western thought. In certain nations before the 19th century, 'manhood was not threatened by physical intimacy because the word *homosexual* was not in the nineteenth-century vocabulary. Individuals did not self-consciously worry about their behaviour. They did not fear same-sex relationships'.

Karen Hansen warns:

There is great difficulty in studying same-sex relationships in a heterosexist and homophobic society because of the tendency to distort innocent relations, to read consummated sexual activity into passionate innuendos, or because of an inability to put aside

²³⁴ James G. Carrier, "People Who Can Be Friends: Selves and Social Relationships," in *The Anthropology of Friendship*, ed. Sandra Bell and Simon Coleman (Oxford: Berg, 1999), 26.

²³⁵ Hansen, 35-43, 54.

twentieth-century biases in order to be sensitive to a pre-Freudian epoch.²³⁶

‘Those who cannot conceive Friendship as a substantive love but only as a disguise or elaboration of Eros betray the fact that they have never had a friend’. Lewis adds that unfortunately, friendship and ‘abnormal Eros’ have been combined before and the contamination of homosexual practices has existed in certain cultures at certain periods. For Lewis, the homosexual theory does not seem to be plausible.²³⁷

However, our modern and western understanding of homosexuality seems to be one reason for the chasm between the ancients and modern man: for ‘Kisses, tears and embraces are not in themselves evidence of homosexuality’. In his study on friendship, as a culturally specific notion within pastoral societies in East Africa, Mario I. Aguilar argues that, ‘friendship as a social and human process is culturally and contextually constructed, and cannot be equated with relations (of self-conscious individualism), mostly predominant in Western societies, such as [in parts of] Western Europe and the United States’.²³⁸ Extending his argument to our current discussion, I advocate that what appears as acts of homosexuality in our own culture cannot always be applied, anachronistically, to other societies: so that in observing kisses, tears or embraces between men in Early Israel might simply be customary homosocial gestures and sentiments which are not associated with homosexual practices as observed in the late modern West. In fact, ‘On a broad historical view it is, of course, not the demonstrative gestures of Friendship among

²³⁶ Ibid., 44-45, 43.

²³⁷ Lewis, 61-62.

²³⁸ Mario I. Aguilar, "Localized Kin and Globalized Friends: Religious Modernity and the 'Educated Self' in East Africa," in *The Anthropology of Friendship*, ed. Sandra Bell and Simon Coleman (Oxford: Berg, 1999), 170.

our ancestors but the absence of such gestures in our own society that calls for some special explanation'.²³⁹ In other words, one's focus might be better attuned to discovering why gestures of friendship like an embrace or tear are resisted in a late modern western context, rather than inferring modern meanings and intentions, ethnocentrically, from demonstrative gestures of friendship in the past, or in another culture.

Furthermore, public displays of homosocial affection in modern non-Western cultures might offer clarification to Western (mis)understandings of friendship. Within research, studies, and in the media one may observe men embracing, kissing each other, walking arm in arm, and holding each other's hands in Russia, Middle Eastern cultures, and other European cultures.²⁴⁰ Such actions are not uncommon in some biblical stories as friends shared meals together, spent time together, shared an affectionate embrace or kiss, wept together, and ultimately shared confidences with one another.²⁴¹ So it would not be farfetched to observe seemingly homosexual practices in non-Western cultures, such as in certain people in southern Ghana, or other locales, where male friends engage in what Westerners would equate to a marriage ceremony.²⁴²

'Before marriage, people spend most of their time with same-sex friends rather than in heterosexual dating . . . Marriage relationships between husbands and

²³⁹ Lewis, 62, 63.

²⁴⁰ Walter L. Williams, "The Relationship between Male-Male Friendship and Male-Female Marriage: American Indian and Asian Comparisons.," in *Men's Friendships: Research on Men and Masculinities*, ed. Peter M. Nardi (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1992), 187.

²⁴¹ "Friendship," in *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, ed. Leland Ryken *et al.* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1998).

²⁴² Williams, 188.

wives are close, but are not expected to answer one's personal intimacy needs, which are met by one's same-sex friends'.²⁴³ Further:

. . . marriage should not be too intimate. To them, a person's intimacies are best kept where they were already located before two people got married: with their same-sex friends. A man continues to have his relatives and male age-mates as his most intimate friends, and a woman does likewise with her female friends and relatives. They do not expect that their spouse will be either some knight in shining armour or a princess in perpetual beauty, and so they are not disappointed later . . . friendship is not antipathetic to the marriage bond, but they are complementary to each other. One's sexual partner is not expected to also be one's best friend.²⁴⁴

In this account, the American male seems to be devastated when crisis occurs and his wife cannot be *his* knight in shining armour. For example, during personal trauma – death of a spouse, infidelity, or divorce – men discover they have no one to talk it out with.²⁴⁵ Imagine the typical man who lacks the support and intimacy of a same-sex friend. He usually places the need of that emotional void on his wife – along with all the other responsibilities a wife contributes to the marriage. His wife dies or divorces him. Who do men turn to? He is either devastated because his sole relationship has been eliminated or he isolates himself in despair and resorts to unhealthy behaviours to fix the problem.

Walter Williams adds that the 'problem is not the breakdown of marriage as much as it is the need to develop wider distributions of individuals to whom we can express our intimacy'.²⁴⁶

²⁴³ Ibid., 192-93.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 195.

²⁴⁵ McGill, 171.

²⁴⁶ Williams, 199.

One man in ten has a friend with whom he discusses work, money, marriage; only one in more than *twenty* has a friendship where he discloses his feelings about himself or his sexual feelings . . . The most common male friendship pattern is for a man to have many ‘friends’, each of whom knows something of the man’s public self and therefore a little about him, but not one of whom knows more than a small pieces of the whole. . . Men, who neither bare themselves nor bear one another, are buddies in name only.²⁴⁷

Rather than focusing on ‘the problem’ of homophobia or of homosexuality perhaps members of the culture can learn from one another. For example, those labelled as homophobic might be advised to peel the onion of certain practices of men who engage in homosexual activity in order to discover an apparent fulfilment these men experience in having multiple ‘buddies’ with whom one can discuss a wide range of topics including sexual ones. In the end Williams and others today would consider this practice as being *intimate*. Perhaps there is a need to observe and to adapt other homosocial behaviour with which those who practise homosexuality engage in. And perhaps there is a need for a new category of male-male intimate relations which does not include a sexual physicality: a new intimacy.

In fact, in his discussion on ‘Self and Society in the Late Modern Age’, the influential sociologist, Anthony Giddens, distinguishes friendship from ‘established sexual relationships’ in his discussion on intimacy. Although individuals involved in both friendships and sexual relations strive for intimacy, Giddens warns that, ‘intimacy obviously is not to be confused with sexual ties [and that] [d]eveloped intimacy is possible in non-sexual relationships or friendships. . .’. Further, he observes that over time sexuality became linked to one’s own identity, which then changed how society and individual selves viewed intimacy, and that sexuality

²⁴⁷ McGill, 157-58.

became separated from notions of life, death and procreation (q.v., *The Impact of OT Precepts on Israelite Society*).²⁴⁸ Although I cannot delve into all of Giddens' observations in this thesis, I am encouraged that Giddens does offer a comprehensive discussion on my proposed 'new intimacy', which he covers in his ideas on 'pure relationships'. Moreover, his clarification on intimacy helps to focus the work of this thesis, which is less about sexuality, and more about an intimate male relationship I label as a warriors' brotherhood.²⁴⁹

In this chapter we have used a traditional, inductive method of exegesis to observe that 1 Samuel 18:1-4, the surrounding material, and the context of the DH and P tend to an asexual narrative of Yahweh, and how his people interact with underlying concepts of military-monarchy and kingship-kinship in the meta-narrative of DH. Even in the 'Jonathan texts', one does not see sexuality, but the narrator's focus on these key themes instead, which gives way to the proposition of a warriors' brotherhood for the David-Jonathan relationship. We have begun to see Yahweh as the hero and warrior for Israel and how these concepts intersect human agency and social structure in the stories of the OT – to the extent that literary or socio-religious layers of the Divine, the society, and the individual begin to emerge and become visible. In one example is our proposal of the phenomenon of the warriors' brotherhood which is intertwined in the actions of Yahweh who shares with Israel, Israel who shares with one another in a national identity, and David and Jonathan who share in their micro-relationship. The *intimacy* which each character shares with the other does not seem to conform to our modern understanding of this

²⁴⁸ The reader might also like to review Freud's work on 'The Pleasure Principle' here.

²⁴⁹ Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, 94-96, 162-64, 205-06.

term. In fact, some see this intimacy as a validation of homosexual coitus in the Bible, but in which other parts of the OT and Israelite culture do not subscribe to. Susan Ackerman also believes that the David-Jonathan relationship would not violate the connectedness of the OT and the taboo on the male lying with the male, and she develops a proposal of liminality for their relationship instead, which will be discussed later. For now it is important to note that the David-Jonathan relationship, especially in light of the figure of David in Israelite socio-religious history, serves as a microcosm of Israelite law, and to deconstruct this relationship by applying anachronistic and ethnocentric terms and methods do not do justice to the meta-narrative of Yahweh as king, Yahweh as hero, and his love for humanity. But what of the love, loyal love, covenant, and kinship elements of the human relationship, and how do these elements figure into concepts of progeny and kinship, military victories and armament, gift exchange, and redemption? How does the symbolism of the robe in the covenantal exchange affect the relationship? And what of 'friendship'? We have observed a certain type of selfless friendship which Lewis identifies as perfect and Aristotle as virtuous, and which exhibits a grandiose love unlike homo/hetero-sexual coital love. Such selfless love was not unknown to modern western civilisation in the late 19th century as asexual male-male relationships existed without the fears that accompany such concepts and practices today. Perhaps a new understanding of intimacy is needed to identify this selfless same-gendered relationship. Perhaps it should be an intimacy which cannot be confused with sexuality and beyond our generic concept of 'friendship' or homosexual-love, which both seem inadequate to describe this grandiose love, and

the love which David and Jonathan possessed. It is at this point which the ritualised brotherhood of two warriors and the affective and amiable nature of such a relationship might provide a glimpse into this new intimacy and begin to fill the void of our contemporary understanding. In the next chapter we will look at other historical narratives, used within anthropology, as a means to understand male-male relationships. We will survey select asexual male relationships and hear from Bible commentators and other later readers to the *Samuel* text. We will again discuss the seemingly *troublesome* 2 Sam 1:26 and revisit the concepts of selfhood and otherness in more detail.

Chapter 4 – Cultural Classifications

Early discussions expanded concepts of emic, etic, ritual, and symbol in social anthropology. In this chapter we will introduce to the biblical scholar other social scientific concepts such as ‘structure’ and cultural classifications, the habitus; kinship concepts such as descent theory, ritualised kinship, domestic groups, and exchange and reciprocity theory which are necessary to build our cultural hermeneutic of the David-Jonathan relationship. As we will advance the theory that the David-Jonathan relationship is that of a warriors’ brotherhood, it becomes necessary in this chapter, and in the next, to orient the reader, who is not acquainted with social scientific theory, with examples of kinship structures as it relates to the thesis’ conclusion. Therefore, we will provide a survey of ethnographic data to ease the novice reader into unknown areas of ‘ritualised kinship’. Finally, we will incorporate our knowledge of social science into a review of select biblical commentators’ views on ‘ritualised kinship’, and of other later readers to the David-Jonathan narrative.

We now further the discussion with a focus on cultural classifications. Cultural classification is the organisation of values, expressed in motifs that characterise the way of life for a group. But first we pose the question, how does one *see* the world? From one perspective, black people should sit in the back of the bus. Male children must be circumcised. One must wash hands regularly. A ring is used to symbolise a marital union. Prayer is said before a meal or at bedtime. This perspective alerts us to the fact that customs and practices foreign to us are not so

for people in another place and/or another time. We see the world through our rituals and symbols and communicate with others accordingly, and so do others. Similar distinctions exist in the ritual world, in worldviews, in orthodoxy or orthopraxy, in traditional or secular, in oral or literate, or in church, sect, or cult views.²⁵⁰ This will be discussed in the next chapter. We perceive the world through our kinsmen or what has been taught to us in our early years, for example; so that a culturally and/or religiously identified 'Christian' family perceives the world through that worldview. We *see* the world through our identity or how we identify ourselves; so that as a self-identified 'homosexual' one would see the world through that worldview. Such interpretations and perceptions will be discussed further in this chapter.

Attempting to interpret kinship relations and cultural classification in today's societies means one must take on varied concepts. Of import are the differences between comprehensive cultures in Western societies such as Western Europe and North America in contrast to Non-Western societies such as Eastern Europe and parts of Africa and Asia. Then social class plays a role in this matrix as one could be in the peerage, warrior class, priestly class, working class, or a white-collar group. Social groupings become important, particularly when one identifies with co-workers, members of the military, an athletic club or sports team, a fan club, a political philosophy, a charitable organisation, an educational institution, or even a support group like Alcoholics Anonymous. Or, simply, peer groups based on age can be used to identify a cultural classification in society.

²⁵⁰ Catherine M. Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), Ch. 6.

To Structure and Classify

In order to structure and classify these differences and identities we will review the concept of classifications from the perspectives of select social scientists. Although riddled with modern criticism, *Primitive Classification* is fundamental in ‘understanding human thought and social life’.²⁵¹ In it, Émile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss discuss ways in which we classify the world; not based on the individual perspective but on a social influence.²⁵² In other words, one’s world view is fashioned by or learned from society: We are taught that marital love is an eternal concept and that the symbolic ring and its eternal circumference reflect this cosmological philosophy. Although Durkheim and Mauss did not connect the social with the symbolic,²⁵³ the pairing of the two concepts is necessary for our study. Neither one’s mind, nor the tangible world, contain within it an elementary framework for classification to form groups and then to arrange the groups according to certain relations.²⁵⁴ Certainly A.R. Radcliffe-Brown the first self-identified social anthropologist who developed the method we term structural functionalism might have agreed with Durkheim and Mauss, but Claude Lévi-Strauss the structuralist based his theory on the idea that such a framework does exist in the mind and consequently the tangible world:

‘. . . the unconscious activity of the mind consists in imposing forms upon content, and if these forms are fundamentally the same for all minds – ancient and modern, primitive and civilized (as the study of the symbolic function, expressed in language, so strikingly indicates)

²⁵¹ Émile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss, *Primitive Classification*, trans. Rodney Needham (London: Cohen & West, 1963), xxxiv.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 86-87.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, xxv-xxvi.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 6-9.

– it is necessary and sufficient to grasp the unconscious structure underlying each institution and each custom²⁵⁵

His idea of structure from the unconscious can be helpful when determining the origins of human institutions as an incidental or intentional action. Do Israel's theologians and literary editors like the DH and P tend to the latter interpretation of the text and subsequent Divine intervention as it applies to their perception of a Yahwistic (and Elohist) society?²⁵⁶

Gift theory

In *An Introduction to the Work of Marcel Mauss* (1987), Lévi-Strauss argues for applying a structuralist's perspective to Mauss' work. Although it would be difficult to gather consensus on this, Mauss did produce some social scientific laws from his observations of societies, their institutions, and operations: of note are his ideas of *total prestations* and gift exchange from studying the *total social phenomena*.²⁵⁷ Not unlike his own background, the total social phenomena encompass all elements of life within its precepts: economic, social, religious and legal.²⁵⁸ His background as a French Jew, nephew of Durkheim, socialist; and student of philosophy, linguistics, law, the Hebrew Talmud and Christian liturgy was instrumental as he devised socially broad concepts in rituals, economies, and religion by means of comparing societies, and developing elementary or fundamental principles. A variant of the gift-exchange (i.e., total prestations) in gift

²⁵⁵ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, trans. Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf (London: Allen Lane the Penguin Press, 1968), 21.

²⁵⁶ See also the discussion on P in the creation account.

²⁵⁷ Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. Ian Cunnison (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), 76-78.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 36.

theory is the *potlatch* which is practised by Native American Indians off the northwest coast of America, and which combines economic, religious, and social institutions into this formalised gift-giving ceremony. Not unlike Geertz, Mauss supports research into this total social phenomena in which social themes such as morality and honour, institutions, law, economies, religion, and the *whole* of society must be considered relative to its individual and collective members.²⁵⁹ In this total scheme he observes a ‘system of total prestations’²⁶⁰ in society where the seemingly voluntary exchange of goods, services, courtesies, entertainments, ritual, military assistance, women, children, etc., are in fact obligatory acts in which, ‘the market is but one element and the circulation of wealth but one part of a wide and enduring contract’.²⁶¹ Although it is logistically difficult to survey all of society, Mauss’ proposal warns the social scientist against any myopic views of culture. Of note are obligations, promotion, and sacrifice in an ‘archaic’ society where most exchanges include the three obligations: to give, to receive, and to repay.²⁶² A group or an individual would lose honour or status in society and even incur some religious or social consequence if any of these obligations were interrupted. Conversely, one would be would promoted within his social sphere if s/he practiced giving, receiving, and repaying. In societies where an intermediary (e.g., the Levites within Israel) is involved in the exchange within a ritual sacrifice, some deity or spiritual element would feature in its contractual and economic sense.²⁶³ Whether through editorial accounting or actual events in this theatre, historically, gift

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 76-78.

²⁶⁰ This includes the potlatch and gift.

²⁶¹ Mauss, 3.

²⁶² Ibid., 37-41.

²⁶³ Ibid., 12-15.

exchange is a practice which has been established in Israel and used throughout the OT: Of note is the 1 Samuel 18 account of David and Jonathan. In the narrative we learn that Jonathan and his father *possess* weapons, goods, and resources (8:11-17; 9:1-2; 13:22); and with these possessions Jonathan gives David gifts of resources, relationship, and status in this ritualistic alliance. Curiously, this is not unlike the story of God giving gifts and resources to Abram in exchange for relationship (q.v., A Divine-human relationship). The divine and human actors, the gift and its spiritual component, and the relations formed are some of the key aspects of Mauss' theory.

We will consider how gift theory plays a role in the life of Early Israel, David and Jonathan, the warriors' brotherhood, and Melchizedek as patron or possessor of resources who gives gifts to Abram. We will study the robe ritual of 1 Sam 18:1-4 as a formal gift-giving ceremony whereby the patron (i.e., someone of superior status) gives a potlatch to another after we analyse certain customs within the History of David's Rise (HDR) – such as the association with the 'de-robing' scenario in ch.15 to the rite of passage with David's royal anointing in ch.16. We will examine how the religious patron *gives* the oil to David in v.13 (see also v.1), while Israel's Deity affirms the promotion and compare this phenomenon to one with Native American Indians. In 1 Samuel 17 we will observe David's initiation into the warriors' brotherhood through his victory over the enemy and a corresponding social ceremony in ch.18, which resembles the one from ch.16. Then the evolution of the gift exchange will become apparent as King Saul's de-robing from ch.15 is connected to the king's son robing David in the 1 Sam 18 ritual.

The habitus

For now we will return to this chapter's opening discussion on the ring symbolism: When the giver performs the marriage proposal by gifting a ring to the betrothed, then the values of their culture *become* embodied and practised in the act. The one who studies this action observes what is referred to as the 'third-order' *habitus* which is comprised of the actor(s), the historical precedent or scheme, and the observer's own culture.²⁶⁴ Pierre Bourdieu who is responsible for the habitus theory furthers our discussion on cultural classification from the *what* of thinking the world into the *how* of being the world, in his book an *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. The habitus is a structure used by Bourdieu to describe how one sees the world as one inhabits it. Simplistically speaking, the concept of habitus would tend to the popular understanding of *nurture* over *nature* in that it is not developed as a genetic predisposition. Instead the habitus is learnt and practised as a child grows and is trained in the parents' home, is educated at school, and develops a sense of her/his socio-economic status relative to others. In life, the person (or group) then practises the habitus unconsciously while performing in various facets of the actor's world and that of the other.

As he applies the concept of the habitus to a 'storied self', Peter Collins the anthropologist describes the phenomenon as negotiating one's identity, and focuses on the embodied nature of the habitus – which he describes as a set of embodied dispositions or 'a propensity to do things in certain ways [and] in particular contexts

²⁶⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, ed. Jack Goody, trans. Richard Nice, Cambridge Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology, vol. 16 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 1-8, 22-27.

(or *fields*)'. Collins discusses the nature of identity as being, 'based primarily, although not entirely, on a social constructionist understanding of the self. From this point of view, the self is not fixed and static, pre-ordained or pre-determined, but fluid and changing and emergent in social interaction'.²⁶⁵

Although flawed, Collins believes that Bourdieu's idea of the habitus is useful for 'interrogating the nature of social and personal identity' of the individual or group which in itself is rooted in what one does, how one does it, and how it is caught or taught within a social class-based context that reproduces itself over generations. Addressing the criticism that Bourdieu's habitus can be implicitly deterministic, Collins suggests that the notion of human agency be considered in the discussion in order to repair the deterministic breach.²⁶⁶

Returning to his ideas of the habitus and the 'storied self', Collins explains that the narrative function is needed in late modernity to unite the multiple fractured selves as a result of increasingly multiple and separate fields of experiences. Whether he feels this is a result of a smaller global community or a return to the regrouping of multiple disciplines under fewer and broader categories is unclear, but what is clear to him is that the self 'is not a simple, unitary thing, but rather a dynamic, perpetually changing and profoundly mutable store of interactions and relationships'. It is these interactions, relationships, and dispositions of the habitus which create the picture of the storied self.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁵ Peter J Collins, "Habitus and the Storied Self: Religious Faith and Practice as a Dynamic Means of Consolidating Identities," *Culture and Religion* 3, no. 2 (2002): 147-49.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*: 149.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*: 152-53.

Bourdieu's habitus is the, 'endless capacity to engender products – thoughts, perception, expressions, actions – whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production . . .'. As these schemes of thought or 'habitus' of the social world intersect the natural world it creates an implicitly political element known as the *doxa* – which is distinct from the orthodoxy and heterodoxy discourse (i.e., differing doctrines) – and when practised with the habitus develops the aforementioned embodiment theory of *being* the world. How do these concepts fit into this thesis? As we explore cultural classifications below, we will begin to discuss the behaviour of people groups relative to concepts in kinship, relationship, and exchange.²⁶⁸

Kinship Concepts in Social Anthropology

A friend loves at all times and a brother is born for adversity (Pro 17:17, NIV).

Friendship or brotherhood; friendship and brotherhood; lover or acquaintance; how do we understand male relationships in the West? With kinship structures expanding to include a diversity of relationships in the late modern world, how should we classify the continuum of friendships and male-male relationships today? To some the David-Jonathan pairing represents a homosocial relationship, such as friendship, while to others it is an erotic example of homosexuality. Clearly social customs across the world include an assortment of male-male relationships: from the sexual to the non-sexual; from the superficial to the genuine; from pairs to

²⁶⁸ Bourdieu, 95, 164-65.

brotherhoods. Whether it is a British mate, buddy, or friend, in this chapter we will explore the cultural classification of male-male friendships in the modern world.

As we begin, the term ‘culture’ can be very ambiguous. It implies many things to many people, and is further complicated by its connotative and denotative evolution through time. Some definitions of culture relevant to this discussion are:

‘The distinctive patterns of sorts, action, and value that characterize the members of a society or social group; in social anthropology, the arrangements of belief and custom through which social relations are expressed; in ethnoscience²⁶⁹, a set of standards for behavior considered authoritative within a society; in symbolic studies, a system of meanings through which social life is interpreted [*sic*].’²⁷⁰

In determining a specific definition, anthropologists tend to study a unity within humanity, while balancing the notion of human diversity. Some other tensions which exist are those between Enlightenment and Romantic assumptions: ‘The first seeks to analyze the development of human societies in terms of certain progressive tendencies or universal principles; the second, to understand the characteristic genius, the distinctive configurations of meaning and value of particular societies’. After the Second World War a trend to reject culture as a prime mover became widespread, and social scientists searched for other ways through which to interpret the data from ethnographies. Some have even eliminated the concept of culture altogether in favour of other conceptual schemes such as the social structure.²⁷¹

²⁶⁹ See definition below.

²⁷⁰ "Culture," in *Dictionary of Concepts in Cultural Anthropology*, ed. Robert H. Winthrop (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 50.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 50-53, 55.

The term cultural classification can be misleading for some. The ambiguity can be enhanced by those not studying anthropology. While classification is one of three coexisting analytical aspects of kinship,²⁷² leading anthropologist, Roy Ellen, defines classification as, ‘that activity in which objects, concepts and relations are assigned to categories; “classifying” refers to the cognitive and cultural mechanisms by which this is achieved; and “classifications” are the linguistic, mental, and other cultural representations which result’.²⁷³ Eleanor Rosch explains that in our world of a virtually infinite number of different stimuli, organisms unable to cope with such diversity, cut up the environment into classifications by which non-identical stimuli can be treated as equivalent.²⁷⁴

Whatever the motivation, Ellen deduces that, ‘Humans classify the world about them by matching perceptual images, words and concepts’. This process may not be intentional as the subject is not necessarily cognisant of the thought process. The mundane scheme of matching is a more formal analysis of semantic domains which can be technical and/or descriptive. The symbolic scheme is more explanatory and can pertain to ritual or divination. ‘Symbolic classification occurs when we use some things as a means of saying something about other things’. ‘Classifications of all kinds connect culture, psychology and perceptual discontinuities of the concrete world’.²⁷⁵

²⁷² The other two are the jural and the behavioural levels (See ‘kinship’ in *Encyclopaedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology*).

²⁷³ Roy Ellen, "Classification," in *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, ed. Alan Barnard and Jonathan Spencer (London: Routledge, 1996), 103.

²⁷⁴ Eleanor Rosch, "Human Categorization," *Studies in Cross-cultural Psychology* 1 (1977): 1-2.

²⁷⁵ Ellen, 103-06.

Social anthropologists commonly classify kinship structures in order to comprehend better the existing culture – as we will see with Early Israel, later. Although this author may interchange the term ‘family’ for other units of association, it is best to clarify some concepts. Meyer Fortes’ work on the developmental cycle of domestic groups assigns specific definitions to various ‘family’ groupings.²⁷⁶ The most basic unit, at the earliest phase of the group, is the mother-child dyad. From this, another basic unit of the conjugal or nuclear family would include the father/husband and perhaps other offspring. It is at this phase and level which Fortes and others comfortably refer to as ‘family’.

Now a family can form part of the domestic group or be the domestic group. Where a domestic group is, ‘a householding and housekeeping unit organized to provide the material and cultural resources needed to maintain and bring up its members [*sic*]’; this unit can include other generations like grandparents or even other conjugal units. In fact, ‘the domestic domain is the system of social relations through which the reproductive nucleus is integrated with the environment and with the structure of the total society’. More on the domestic group and family household, particularly as it relates to Early Israel, will be explored in the next chapter.²⁷⁷

Following Fortes, Claude Lévi-Strauss concurs that the family is at the centre of society. Although for Lévi-Strauss the conjugal pair, specifically the male-female union, takes precedence over the reproductive aspects of the embryonic

²⁷⁶ Meyer Fortes, "Introduction," in *The Developmental Cycle in Domestic Groups*, ed. Jack Goody, Cambridge Papers in Social Anthropology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 1-14.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

family. In his seminal work on classifying cultures and how societies communicate introspectively, Lévi-Strauss postulates in *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* that human institutions originate either incidentally or intentionally.²⁷⁸ Would Israel's theologians and literary editors, like the DH and P, tend to the latter interpretation of the biblical text and Divine intervention, as it applies to a Yahwistic (and Elohist) society?²⁷⁹

More important to our discussion on kinship systems and following Fortes' (and Jack Goody's) focus on the mother-child dyad, is A.R. Radcliffe-Brown's Descent Theory, which also focuses on parents and their children. Radcliffe-Brown's theories on kinship stem from his foundational work in comparative studies and social anthropology, whereby he believed it important to observe regularities, general characteristics (viz., nomothetic study), and other social phenomena across cultures and societies. In distinguishing social anthropology and its comparative methods from the pre-existing exercise of ethnology, Radcliffe-Brown associated social anthropology with comparative sociology – a discipline that can be traced to Émile Durkheim.²⁸⁰

Excursus: Émile Durkheim

Durkheim with his nephew and successor, Marcel Mauss, created and edited the first sociology journal in France entitled, *L'Année Sociologique*, exploring

²⁷⁸ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (*Les Structures Élémentaires De La Parenté*), trans. James Harle Bell, John Richard Von Sturmer, and Rodney Needham (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1969), 100-01.

²⁷⁹ See also the discussion on P in the creation account

²⁸⁰ A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, "The Comparative Method in Social Anthropology," in *The Social Anthropology of Radcliffe-Brown*, ed. Adam Kuper (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977).

matters in economic²⁸¹ and religious sociology. Durkheim's initial publications have become the source of much disagreement among modern sociologists. Including the content of one such publication on the issue over whether an influential group consciousness exists outside the individual.²⁸²

Durkheim's seminal work *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* proposes an association between the religious and the moral in a unified society and concludes, 'that religion is something eminently social'.²⁸³ This premise became the core of his research on the relation between the profane and sacred in religious life and society. For him the two concepts should not be mixed or confused.

Since the idea of the sacred is always and everywhere separated from the idea of the profane in the thought of men, and since we picture a sort of logical chasm between the two, the mind irresistibly refuses to allow the two corresponding things to be confounded, or even to be merely put in contact with each other; for such a promiscuity or even too direct a contiguity, would contradict too violently the disassociation of these ideas in the mind.²⁸⁴

So, too, as remote as we are from the Deuteronomistic Historian's (DH's) world and that of the Holiness Code, Early Israel's religious practices would not permit the mixing or confusing of the profane with the sacred both within its culture and inter-culturally. Logically then, the DH, while editing 1 Samuel 18 would not have confused or mixed the David-Jonathan relationship and covenant ritual for something other than a new association or alliance.

²⁸¹ In *The Division of Labor in Society*, Durkheim based his theories on Adam Smith's work and called the division of labour a natural law. Thus began his morality-law discussion in culture.

²⁸² In contrast, Max Weber, a contemporary, purports that one influential group exerts control over another less influential. The personal subjective standards by which the first judges the behaviour of the second renders it consequential. Durkheim contrasts the individual to one collective consciousness.

²⁸³ Durkheim, *Religious Life*, 10.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 40.

In addition to maintaining the sacred and profane in their place, Durkheim postulated that rites and beliefs constitute religion. As such religion is ‘inseparable from the idea of a Church’ which is by his definition a ‘moral community formed by *all* the believers in a single faith’ [emphasis mine] and not simply a priestly fraternity.²⁸⁵ It is the beliefs and rites of Early Israel’s Yahweh Religion or their moral community of believers which we will *attempt* to decouple. But can such an analysis be possible if Durkheim argued that religious forces are human forces and moral forces? Can one truly deconstruct morality from humanity; beliefs from rites?

Even though anthropology will aid us in distinguishing the social customs, in the end we too must postulate like Durkheim and Mary Douglas (British Social Anthropologist; b. 1921, d. 2007) that the Bible’s construct of Israel and Yahweh are inseparable. So, as the Complementarity Model²⁸⁶ proposes, we too can review the available component parts of Israel’s social and religious life and reinsert our findings into the greater discussion while simultaneously utilising certain social scientific tools and theological tools.

According to Deuteronomic tradition Israel is a people set apart from the other nations and as such is consecrated to her God or her source. Durkheim calls rites, and this one of consecration in particular, ‘mystic mechanics’ which are the ‘external envelope under which the mental operations are hidden’. The idea is not to deconstruct Early Israel, David and Jonathan, *per se*, but to look *beneath* at the

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 45, 419.

²⁸⁶ See above.

‘spiritual powers’ which act on her moral life: ‘Thus it is seen that whatever has been done in the name of religion cannot have been done in vain: for it is necessarily the society that did it, and it is humanity that has reaped the fruits’. For Israel, religion and society are one in the same and as she follows Yahweh her people are ‘blessed’.²⁸⁷

As a microcosm of Early Israel, the writer and/or editor have employed a mystic mechanic in setting apart the David-Jonathan relationship as a model. Just as Israel has been set apart from other nations for a purpose, so their relationship has been set apart from others for a purpose, and David has been set apart for a purpose. The purpose of their association will fuel this thesis’ investigation. In Durkheimian terms, the David-Jonathan relationship has been set apart as sacred by socio-religious rituals. The task is then to look beneath the ritual covenant or customs, compare them to other societies, and discover more about historical Israel.

The mother’s brother

Radcliffe-Brown’s emphasis on the comparative method led to what is known today as structural-functionalism, and is from where he developed his ideas on descent structures and alliance theory. For him, social structures or the interpersonal relations between individuals as actors (q.v., habitus), both on a macro and micro level, form a complex network based, not on abstractions in ‘culture’, but on a *concrete reality* which can be observed and learnt from in an empirical

²⁸⁷ Durkheim, *Religious Life*, 419, 420.

scientific fashion.²⁸⁸ Contrasting Lévi-Strauss and structuralism is Radcliffe-Brown who believed that his own use of an empirical reality distinguished his theories from the structuralist's use of models.²⁸⁹ In this view the observer identifies certain social structures, such as marriage or friendship, compares them to other societies, and discovers phenomena which lie beneath the structure or society. As a result one might identify the *function* of a social structure and how the function plays a role in maintaining the social life of a community.²⁹⁰

In a social structure which tends to patriliney one might observe the significance of the mother-child dyad and the child's relatedness to his/her mother's family and ancestors. But structures can be blurred, especially when cross-relations and other variations are created *incidentally*; one example is our modern view of patriarchal societies. Closely allied with modern feminist thought, the patriarchal structure is said to subjugate women unjustly in the kin group. Supreme male dominance, an apparent misreading of the Ephesians 5:22 text and culture, and a certain perception of the marriage vows for wives to love, honour, and *obey* their husbands are clues to what is termed popularly, or perhaps colloquially, a patriarchal society. In fact, a denotative patriarchal system could contain patrilineal descent structures with authority over the family resting in the mother's relatives, or marriage customs tending matrilocally – in which the male relocates to the home of his bride. Strict definitions of patriarchy in the social sciences are often differentiated from connotative definitions within popular culture, and should be

²⁸⁸ A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society: Essays and Addresses* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952).

²⁸⁹ A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, "Letter to Lévi-Strauss" in *The Social Anthropology of Radcliffe-Brown*, ed. Adam Kuper (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977).

²⁹⁰ Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*.

addressed carefully, especially when labelling a society as an ‘oppressive patriarchy’ or ‘colonial patriarchy’, for example. Likewise, in certain patrilineal societies, a woman’s offspring gives their mother’s brother an honour which can be greater than that of the children’s own father. This avuncular relationship stems from the cognatic kinship system whereby obedience and respect is given to one’s father and care and indulgence is expected from one’s mother. In the case of these societies, aspects of care and indulgence are extended to all of the mother’s family, including the mother’s brother. The dilemma lies in the fact that men are given a certain respect in society, so that in the above case, a mother’s brother retains a certain respect from his nephew and nieces whilst being expected to care for and indulge these children more than would be expected from the children’s father. Interestingly a strict sense of obedience normally given to one’s father would not necessarily apply to the maternal uncle. This opens the door for certain liberties and a familiarity that a child may exercise with one’s maternal uncle, which would never apply to one’s father or even his family (viz., his siblings and parents).²⁹¹

Modern anthropologists (at least in Great Britain) tend to explore definitive classifications and descent systems such as patriliney and matriliney. For example a matrilineal descent group, with a focus on the woman like the avunculate, can be a means to connect the mother’s offspring to her brother(s) and father for generational and political purposes, while still maintaining that her husband is the primary leader of the family. As we noted earlier, another more appropriate classification for what can be confused as patriarchy is the patrilineal society where an inheritance of

²⁹¹ A more detailed discussion on this phenomenon can be found in Radcliffe-Brown’s essay on The Mother’s Brother in South Africa (in *Structure and Function in a Primitive Society*, 1977)

goods, services, property, circumcision right, or [sur]name is passed from the father to his offspring. Our own confusion can be generated from a patrilineal clan in which a strong focus on the wife and mother is necessary for the husband and father's power in the family and society. If the woman cannot care for her husband and children appropriately then the family is of lesser significance in the community. If the woman is infertile she cannot sanguinely blend the power of her husband with that of her father for the child's benefit and inheritance.

An interesting example of what a novice may consider a blend of social patriliney with the power of the woman as presupposed in matriliney is in fact a patrilineal society in rural Greece. Michael Herzfeld researched 'The Problem of Patriliney in Rural Greece' from a neosurvivalist perspective, in which previous 'younger' periods of the society were taken into account. Within the Pefko society (near Rhodes, Greece), a traditional proverb describes a child's Ego as one that 'breathes forth' from seven patriliney; and that this *yenia* contributes to the offspring's character.²⁹² Although the first of seven yemies is from the father's side, it is through the agency of the woman who joins the blood of up to six more yemies from her father's family with that of her husband's patriline. The woman is very significant in this society where patriliney is prominent. This dialectic serves the community in that only women of repute (i.e., one who is fertile and avoids the taboos) have the power in procreation, to pass on to the child, ancestry and paternity, while respecting the male line and the male power: without the woman, the man and his lineage lack significance. On the surface one might confuse the

²⁹² Michael Herzfeld, "Interpreting Kinship Terminology: The Problem of Patriliney in Rural Greece," *Anthropological Quarterly* 56, no. 4 (1983): 161-62.

Pefkoan descent structure with popular terminology as patriarchy, when in fact it is the technical patriliney that is observed, even though women exhibit a good deal of power there.

If Israel can be described as a patriliney with powerful women then homosexual relations can appear to threaten the power structure of their family relations. The father and husband would have to divide authority with another male leader in the household – a contentious and even dubious scenario for less industrialised cultures. Moreover the agnatic line or patriliney would be unclear to the family unit, progeny and the community/society. Who would establish the next power base? Following that query literally, biological procreation would be difficult for the dual agnate and ‘the power behind the man’ would not exist. The power of the wife and mother to sanguinely unite her father’s power with her husband’s power and imbue this in their offspring would be lost.

However, in some cultures, adultery taboos do not address the promiscuity of men outside the marriage. Husbands may be *permitted* or even encouraged to exercise their virility with other less respectable women. Likewise these husbands’ actions in homosexual coitus outside the marriage may not be regulated. Once the man has established his patrilineal authority within his household and community his extra-marital sexuality would be permitted.

The avunculate could be important in understanding Israelite society regarding King David’s role in the Old and New Testaments. Within patrilineal Israel, narrators and editors make space for the story of the female, Ruth.

Notwithstanding issues associated with her own father's Moabite yemies, Ruth is a grandmother of David who unites the ancestry of her deceased husband with that of her *go'el* husband, which later produces the great Davidic line of Israel's society and Deity. Despite her biological origins, readers in the Exile and observers in premonarchical Israel would be assured of David's Israelite (and Yahwistic) patriliney and his candidacy to rule the nation, i.e., he is not an outsider.

The developmental cycle

As we speak of domestic groups, it is important to reflect on which phase of the developmental cycle the family is experiencing. Like the biological life energy of the human organism, so do social systems like a society and a family have life, as well. In the next chapter, we will discuss a transition or phase of the Israelite society. For now, we review Fortes' work on the developmental cycle in domestic groups.

As with Durkheim, Fortes believes the individual is influenced by his society, and it is this social system which interests social scientists.²⁹³ It is the effect on people during critical phases in life which attracts Fortes. It is difficult to delineate all the phases in the developmental cycle but Fortes discusses a few: (1) Expansion occurs from marriage until the completion of family procreation. (2) Dispersion or fission overlaps the former as offspring are married and no longer depend on their parents' economic, affective, and jural support/power. (3) Replacement begins in the previous phase and ends with the death of the parents and

²⁹³ Fortes, 1-2.

the replacement of the children's families in the social structure.²⁹⁴ Other 'critical turning points' include initiation, rites of passage, inheritance, retirement, and death of a group member, which not only appear in Fortes' developmental cycle but also in Old Testament narratives (q.v., Literary Scenes and discussion on Robert Alter's work).

Rites of Passage

Strikingly, initiation, rites of passage, succession, and inheritance (see also liminality) are some key phases which are narrated/redacted in the David-Jonathan story. As a prelude, or more accurately a prototype, to these phases for David and Jonathan are the paradigmatic and type scenes from previous judges with an emphasis on Samuel as judge. The young Samuel's rite of passage to ministry is depicted in the exchange with Yahweh and the mentor Eli (1 Samuel 3, NRSV). Yahweh calls to Samuel repeatedly and Samuel does not understand. In an attempt to decipher the voice of the Lord, Eli instructs the lad to respond to the voice by replying: 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening' (v. 9). Now Samuel had already been 'ministering before the Lord' (2:11, 18; 3:1), but now the Lord (and Eli) has changed his status and Samuel begins to receive direct communication from Yahweh. In his communiqué, Yahweh reveals to Samuel private matters regarding his mentor and his family and how Yahweh will treat it. Next we learn Samuel is 'growing up' with the Lord (3:19).²⁹⁵

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 4-5.

²⁹⁵ Terence E. Fretheim (1989) offers an excellent hermeneutical study on new leadership within The Books of Samuel.

The next neo-judge, David, undergoes a few rites of passage too. One is narrated in David's appointment to be leader of Israel (ch. 16) and another in David's defeat of Goliath (ch. 17). Although Samuel and Yahweh recognise David's new status in the former rite, it is not until after the latter that King Saul and the people of Israel recognise David's new status (i.e., neo-judge) – which includes a move to adulthood (17:55-58, 18:6-7): 'Boys become men by touching death'.²⁹⁶ David grows up with Yahweh.

As Samuel is initiated by Yahweh into his service, David is initiated by Jonathan. In a religious ceremony at Mizpah, Samuel begins his leadership over Israel (ch. 7). In a multifaceted ceremony before the king of Israel, David begins a new phase in his life as he has conquered Israel's greatest enemy. David becomes bound to the crown prince (18:1-4), enters the royal house as a lyrist (18:10, cf., 16:14-23), is appointed a commander over the army (18:5, 13), and marries the king's daughter (18:27, also v. 17). Initiation is essential to the maturation of the individual, one's contribution to society, and one's new power and authority. 'Initiation ceremonies, in the strict sense, are often regarded as the prelude to marriage, if they do not actually end in marriage'. In kind, Samuel and David mature and serve Yahweh. Both mature biologically, experientially, and spiritually. The narrator and DH use rites of passage in type scenes and paradigmatic scenes to validate both men's roles, religiously and socially.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁶ Carolyn Marvin and David W. Ingle, *Blood Sacrifice and the Nation: Totem Rituals and the American Flag* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 74.

²⁹⁷ Fortes, 10-11.

Ritualised kinship

Through his ‘initiation’, David becomes part of the royal court at the behest of his king and Jonathan’s father, Saul. What are the implications of a newly initiated warrior or ‘son’ in Saul’s house? Does this move change David’s jural filiations from that of Jesse to Saul? A response, in either scenario, may not be definitive, but one might consider that in family fission Fortes observes how jural dependence shifts from the rearing and education, of the parents, ‘to the superior and impersonal powers of society at large’.²⁹⁸ Following the implications of this rite of passage, it is plausible that David’s initiation into the king’s court, through the king’s son, also shifted the responsibility of rearing and educating the young shepherd boy to that of the superior power of society, which can be represented by the king of Israel and father of Jonathan, the king’s son with whom David covenanted to bind together their lives. By way of Jonathan’s ritual in 1 Sam 18:1-5 and Saul’s commands, David seems to have become a member of Saul’s family and subject to Saul’s paternal authority. However, Fortes’ model reflects a structure whereby the young man marries, moves on to begin another household, and is guided by society’s impersonal powers. Although David moves from his father’s house, initially, he does not marry until later in the story.

Julian Pitt-Rivers enters into the discussion with an analysis of fictive kinship, or more precisely ‘figurative kinship’.²⁹⁹ Amiable relations include real, adoptive, and ritual kinship. Like the ‘mystical bond’ of godparents (‘grace-

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 4-7, 10-11.

²⁹⁹ Julian Pitt-Rivers, "The Kith and the Kin," in *The Character of Kinship*, ed. Jack Goody (London: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 94-96.

parents') and child, so too can ritualised friends and kin be formed consubstantially. However unlike the parallel pseudo-kinship in an adoptive kinsman, Pitt-Rivers assigns the ritual kin within the non-jural sphere of authority. Ritual kinship, ritualised friendship and un-ritualised friendships are relationships founded upon sentiment, conscience, the will, and the moral (as opposed to the jural) sphere, not upon rights and duties.

Returning to the concept of adoptive kinship, this pseudo-kinsman 'does not necessarily become subject to the incest prohibitions in relation to his adoptive siblings (though this is sometimes the case with ritual kinsmen)'.³⁰⁰ In fact, some cultures *intend* for the adopted son to marry the biological daughter. Likewise, King Saul offers his eldest daughter to the pseudo-kin David in marriage. David refuses early on but later marries the king's younger daughter after another victorious feat or rite of passage. Can David be considered a ritualised kinsman or an adoptive kinsman? Does he have and is he subject to jural powers in the Saulide family? He does have some rights, as Saul articulated in his argument with Jonathan. First, in 1 Samuel 20, David asks Jonathan to join in a ruse, against his father, for David to be absent from the king's table. The excuse is that David's biological brother has directed him to fulfil some family 'rights and duties' in their hometown (vv. 6, 28-29). However, another 'rite' is performed when David and Jonathan make *another* covenant (previously in 18:1-4) with each other and invoke the Deity as witness (vv. 12-17). When Jonathan presents the ploy to his father, the king is outraged and sees through the deception. Saul iterates that David has some

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 94-95.

or equal claim to the throne as the crown prince does (v. 31a). Not simply taken aback by his father's actions, Jonathan is so 'grieved' by the 'disgrace' towards David that the prince does not return to the king's table the next day (v. 34).

Arguing for the comparative method, Howard Eilberg-Schwartz revises his apprehensions against cultural comparisons as he now proposes that biblical exegetes and theologians have utilised a type of comparative enquiry to compare the Israelite concept of covenant and the Decalogue with suzerainty treaties in the ANE.³⁰¹ Following this example we will next endeavour to utilise the comparative method in order to compare and contrast how some societies view male relationships.

A Survey of Cultures

From his award winning essay on *Food and its Vicissitudes: A Cross-Cultural Study of Sharing and NonSharing*, Yehudi Cohen discovered four types of communities while explaining economic behaviour in non-Western societies. He defines these functionally significant units of association as: 'that solidary social group which, for the individual, is the most immediate and consistent area of cooperation, reciprocity, and feelings of responsibility for others'.³⁰²

³⁰¹ Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, *The Savage in Judaism: An Anthropology of Israelite Religion and Ancient Judaism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 87-89.

³⁰² Yehudi A. Cohen, "Food and Its Vicissitudes: A Cross-Cultural Study of Sharing and Nonsharing," in *Social Structure and Personality: A Casebook*, ed. Yehudi A. Cohen (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961), 314.

Units of Association: From solidarity to fissility

These significant units of association or informal social structures exist alongside or are intermingled with the formal framework of economic and political power. At times the, ‘informal social relations are responsible for the metabolic processes required to keep the formal institution operating’. ‘The informal structures . . . are supplementary to the system: they operate and exist by virtue of existence, which is logically, if not temporarily, prior to them’. So then the significant units of association co-habit the realm of what we know as a formal institution, if not preceding the formal institution itself. This would place an emphasis on understanding the import of the significant units of association.³⁰³

The maximally solidary community³⁰⁴

The first unit of association on Cohen’s continuum is the maximally solidary community. This unit can be either a total geographic community or groupings within a community. Another key characteristic is that there is great physical proximity between households. Cohen concludes that in the maximally solidary community, ‘the juxtaposition of highly integrated kin groups, physical proximity, and sedentary life appear to yield feelings of social proximity in extreme degree’.

The solidary-fissile community³⁰⁵

Like the maximally solidary community the solidary-fissile community has definite physical and/or social boundaries and can be either a total geographic

³⁰³ Eric R. Wolf, "Kinship, Friendship, and Patron-Client Relations in Complex Societies," in *The Social Anthropology of Complex Societies*, ed. Michael P. Banton, Association of Social Anthropologists of the Commonwealth, and Jesus College (University of Cambridge) (London: Tavistock, 1966), 1-2.

³⁰⁴ Cohen, 314-15.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 315-16.

community or groupings within a community. However, sociologically in the solidary fissile community, ‘the ties and alignments of kinship are not solidified into corporate kin groups’. In other words the level of exclusivity in the maximally solidary community does not exist in this unit of association. The solidary-fissile community produces emotional and social solidarity amongst its real kinsmen and fictive kinsmen associations. The distinction between the two is apparently blurred when extra-kin relationships resemble that of kinsman relations. Unlike the maximally solidary community members of the solidary-fissile community can sever these relationships as exclusivity is not a factor. It is important to recognise that, ‘the simultaneous operation of factors making both for solidarity and fissility produces a “compromise” between the two, and places such peoples at this point along the continuum of social cohesiveness and solidarity rather than at the point of maximal or lesser solidarity’.

The nonnucleated society³⁰⁶

The next unit of association is the ‘nonnucleated’ society. In actuality, this unit forms neither a society nor a community as it is characterised by the socially, geographically and emotionally isolated family group. Although the physical and emotional distances are great in this society, the nonnucleated society can unite during temporary, often seasonal, amalgamations. This sociological community is usually a nomadic one, but the nonnucleated social system can be observed in a sedentary people. However, ‘it appears that the nonnucleated structure – an extreme and marked activism – is a temporary or transitional phase in the society's history’.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 316-17.

Cohen observes that many segments of an American society resemble the nonnucleated social system.

The individuated social structure³⁰⁷

The final community is difficult to compare with the above three on the continuum of solidarity-fissility as the individuated social structure is discontinuous with the former. Here the individual's primary objective is to amass and accumulate wealth. Of greater significance is that even the nuclear family is not maximally solidary in this structure. So among both kinsmen and non-kinsmen feelings of belonging or reciprocity are rare. Instead expedient and contractual allegiances and economically competitive struggles, leading to personal profit, are the predominant values of the individuated social structure.

Categorising Friendships with Units

In Cohen's *Patterns of Friendship*³⁰⁸ he observes relations within these four types of communities. Not unlike Aristotle's friendship of virtue, friendship of pleasantness, and friendship of utility (or even ritualised friendship in the Classical period), Cohen assesses points on a continuum of friendships labelled inalienable friendship, close friendship, casual friendship, and expedient friendship. Cohen observes certain factors in these units of association and societies which lead to certain patterns or types of friendship.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., 317-18.

³⁰⁸ Yehudi A. Cohen, "Patterns of Friendship," in *Social Structure and Personality: A Casebook*, ed. Yehudi A. Cohen (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961).

Inalienable friendships³⁰⁹

Within the maximally solidary community inalienable friendships are the principal pattern. An inalienable friendship is entered into ritually or ceremonially. It is as binding as that between consanguineal kinsmen and suffuses sexual, economic, political, religious and especially emotional areas of life. Some examples of inalienable friendships are blood brotherhood, bond friendship, best friendship and institutionalised friendship. One of two informal best friends in the maximally solidary community of Kwakiutl Indians in British Columbia is said to communicate on behalf of his friend with the girl that he is attracted to. Could it have happened, similarly, that Jonathan was an intermediary for David with Michal, the one who loved him? With the Tallensi of the northern Gold Coast of Africa the primary functions of friends are in transactions of gift exchange and mutual assistance. One report of assistance took the form of an aged friend deputing his alter-ego to beget a child for him. Within Early Israel the act of mutual assistance occurred after the warriors' brotherhood ritual between David and Jonathan and in the second rite in which one brother is appointed as caretaker for the other's family and progeny. Likewise, the Tallensi are organised into localised patrilineal clans and can enter into friendships at any age.

In pre-contact, localised, patrilineal clans of the Tanala, restrictions on their inalienable friendships included covenants between a noble and a slave; and incest taboos between friends' families. The primary function of the friendship was economic and regarded so highly that to break this covenant was cause for

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 351-52, 355-58.

supernatural punishment. These customs resemble Jean-Fabrice Nardelli's view of David and Jonathan in the lord-vassal type relationship and the patron-client relations model – which we will discuss in *Affect and Amiability*. The Tikopia of Polynesia also uses male friendships as moral obligations that provide both men with economic and protective benefits in life-long bonds of friendship during their early adolescence or early adulthood years. These friends engage in mutual trust, reciprocal obligations, and some exchange of gifts. Such a scenario seems likely for David and Jonathan whereby similar customs of trust, reciprocity, protection benefits, and the like are cited the OT narrative.

Apart from few exceptions most cultures in the maximally solidary communities maintain inalienable friendships among the same age-sets. Friendship covenants and rituals are taken as serious matters which govern the relationships. Inalienable friendships in localised clans and communities are another important factor among these men. Even though some women form inalienable friendships, a curious link between a patilineal makeup and male friendships is evident. I suspect the patrilineage provides the means of continuity or stability within the geographically and socially local community. It reinforces the youths' world view which develops ties closer to home such as those same ties within their own home. Likewise a matrilineal order would result in a similar stability.

Close friendships³¹⁰

The next classification after the inalienable friendship in a maximally solidary community is the close friendship in the solidary-fissile community. Close

³¹⁰ Ibid., 353-68.

friendships are not ritualised or ceremonialised and can thus be broken at any time. Close friends are not usually aware of each other's intimate information. 'The element of personal choice is the dominant characteristic of close friendship. .' For example, the informal close friendships of the Basuto in South Africa take an economic form. The patrilocal extended families choose friends to share in the general labour of one's household. These close friendships save on hiring help and can cement personal or political loyalties. Although not considered friendships, we will observe that Early Israel formed family households which pooled the work and resources of a patrilocal unit.

Friendships can take the form of co-parenthood or a *compadrazgo* in certain societies. The Puerto Ricans of Cañamelar maintain independent nuclear families which include many blood, ritual, and marriage relationships with many houses. These ceremonial and economic bonds primarily bind the godparents and parents in the *compadrazgo*, and secondarily bind the godparents and the godchild. For the Haitians of Mirebalais who are peasant farmers residing in permanent villages, their *compadrazgo* or godparent relationships focus on relationships between generations rather than with one's contemporaries. The godchild may request aid from his godparents before asking his family, as his godparents represent the truest of friends. This friendship embodies a mutual warm affection with mutual reciprocal transactions. In this unit the godchild and his godparents' children are also considered siblings. Can characteristics of the *compadrazgo* relationship typify aspects of the David-Jonathan relationship – especially in a case whereby the two

men are considered siblings? Does Saul's authority over David mimic that of the *compadrazgo*? Does Saul hold a joint paternal authority with Jesse?

Close friendships can also take the form of confidant type relationships as with the Dahomeans in West Africa in which the highly institutionalised friendship is the basic element of the social structure. Although this society deviates from Cohen's model of inalienable friendships within the maximally solidary community, this solidary-fissile community is organised, 'sociologically into patrilocal extended families, patrilineal clans which are no longer localized but which crosscut many villages, social classes, and mutual-assistance associations'. Male inalienable friendships play a dominant role in this society with women also forming inalienable friendships. Friends are organised into groups of three with more meaningful relationships between two of the three. An initiation ceremony, which uses a knife, binds brothers into an intimate and confidant type friendship. Confidants discuss problems, conduct funerary ceremonies, and act as executors among family and friends for the recently deceased. However the Omaha Plains Indians of Iowa and Nebraska who were primarily buffalo hunters and whose kinship traced patrilineally, with kinsmen grouped into patrilineal clans, developed by clan exogamy. Intimate friendships for both men and women begin from childhood and develop into confidant type relations who share many intimate secrets – not unlike David and Jonathan who confided in each other regarding Saul's attacks against them. Like our heroes, a man of the Plains Indians is said to cleave to his friend, follow him in the face of danger, and protect him with his own life; and where false friends would be considered without honour and be shunned

from the community. A more notable observation, akin to that of the Dahomeans, is reflected in the events by which David performs the elegy at Jonathan's funeral, and becomes the 'executor' for Jonathan's family, crown, and possessions.

The sedentary pastoralists of the Navaho Indians in Arizona and New Mexico are organised into matrilineal extended families, and the matrilineal clans are further grouped into phratries in which the relationships of friend and partner are separate and distinctive friendships, apart from kinsmen. Strikingly, the term partner can be difficult to translate into English: It can mean wife or someone who regularly hunts, travels, or works with another and not necessarily a relative. Would Jonathan and David have been considered partners as in hunting, travelling, or working together, or as in a sexual relationship?

The Suye Mura cluster into farmhouses on the main Japanese island of Honshu. The boys form close friendships among their classmates and corresponding age-mates; throughout life age-mates remain very close, and the ties develop and grow as the friends become older: When a man's sexual desires diminish in old age, his age-mate becomes closer than his wife. Contrary to the implication that David and Jonathan might be one type of partner or sexual partner, as with the Navaho, the alternative appears to better resemble the model of the Suye Mura in that age-mates become closer and more asexually intimate than those sexual relationships with wives. Could this reflect the reference in 1 Sam 1:26 in which David extols his relationship with Jonathan as one being closer than a wife or women? Age-mates in the Suye Mura society often join clubs, not unlike that of the warriors' brotherhood group for David and Jonathan. While clubs might exist for

wealthy male members, and serve as a source of mutual economic assistance, the clubs for less wealthy Japanese men are based more on friendships than on finances: 'A close friend will adopt another's child if the former is childless or if his friend is in poverty'. This practice can be observed in the Samuel stories when David adopts the son of his deceased brother, Jonathan.

Casual friendships³¹¹

The third type of friendship is the casual friendship. Casual friendships exist predominantly in the nonnucleated society. This lax relationship is never ritualised and can be broken at any time. Unlike the other four types of friendship the casual friendship implies neither allegiance nor affiliation. There is no main direction to this form of relationship, and little is shared on any social, emotional or material level. One such example is seen with the Kaska of British Columbia, Canada who are organised in a social isolation held by the family. At times unmarried youths engage in friendships, but which are often close, affectionate, and resemble confidant type friendships. Tactile demonstrations, rather than emotional expressions, serve as evidence of the closeness of these relationships. Girls are often seen holding hands, sitting close together, hugging, and wrestling. Boys often sit together while resting against each other's bodies, wrestling, or horsing around. Boys also creep up behind their friend and embrace the other tightly from behind. In a reciprocal reaction, the other friend then tries to shake him loose or to lift him up. Such embraces and tactile demonstrations between David and Jonathan can be

³¹¹ Ibid., 353-70.

observed in the 1 Samuel narrative, and might be misinterpreted in its meaning other than a possible ‘casual friendship’.

The isolated households of the northern Ojibwa maintain distinctions between the formalised rules of friendship and the actual behaviour of the friends. Although gift-giving and exchange, not unlike that in the ritual of 1 Sam 18:1-5, are unelaborated among the northern Ojibwa and restricted to a narrow range of persons, the culture’s formal rules stipulate that exchange is one of the functions or duties of friendship. However, Ojibwan friends and kinsmen neither have automatic rights to each other's property, nor do they exercise trust and loyalty privileges.

Expedient friendships³¹²

The final type of friendship which Cohen observed is the expedient friendship within the individuated social structure: ‘Expedient friendship is an alignment of two persons, often standing in superordinate-subordinate relationship, in which some gain, material, social, or a combination of them accrues to both parties as a direct result of their affiliation with each other’ (q.v., patron-client relations). It is the permanence of the temporal element – as seen in inalienable friendships – which becomes a factor in the social need with this *expedient* friendship.

The sedentary farmers and fisherman of the Marquesans of eastern Polynesia were experiencing a social and cultural transition at the time of the Cohen study; so loose familial ties were observed as prevalent in a society where, ‘Households and

³¹² Ibid., 353, 370-71.

individuals are graded in a prestige system based on manpower and derived wealth'. The Marquesans had ritualised friendships, although not by definition inalienable friendships, male-male or female-female friends entered formal unions marked by an exchange of names which intimately bonded them through an identity. Would David have taken on the Saulide name after entering into the chapter 18 ritual?

In Jamaica, West Indies, a small community of peasant farmers live in Rocky Roads. Their households are relatively isolated and scattered. Individuated wealth is the primary goal of every adult in this competitive economic environment. 'The Rocky Roaders say that every man should have a "best friend", but there are no such arrangements. The only patterned extra-kin relationships are exchanges of labor [*sic*] by two men'. Can the alliance between David and Jonathan be considered economic or political?

An Anthropology of Friendship

In Bell and Coleman's contemporary study on friendship, various contributors examine the intimacy, loyalty, tolerance, and mutual confidences that friends share with one another as each one strengthens their identity – not unlike our heroes.³¹³ Like the OT narratives of David and Jonathan in premonarchical Israel, the Icelandic sagas of the stateless society that was governed by chieftains in the Commonwealth describe 'politicking' friendships between the 'big men' which constituted 'ordinary', kinship, and affinal based relations. The 'crafting' and 'tying' of these friendships through gift exchange between big men with potentially

³¹³ Sir Raymond Firth, "Preface," in *The Anthropology of Friendship*, ed. Sandra Bell and Simon Coleman (Oxford: Berg, 1999).

differing power identities developed into ‘pure’ friendships between them: These pure friendships are akin to ‘the idea of “one soul in bodies twain”, usually applied to courtly love and the ideal of “perfect” friendship between two males’. Contrary to Carrier’s comments earlier on individualism (q.v., A Western Context), these contributors caution the reader to interpret certain terms within the time and place of each society. In particular from their study of the sagas, they have observed changes in the English term ‘individual’ which did not necessarily represent a change from collective friendships to individualistic friendships, as Carrier proposed.³¹⁴ As it relates to our thesis, the concept of an individual soul in bodies twain, or souls being knit, could reflect a unified kin-type relationship useful in a political or courtly setting among men of varying ranks: When the gift exchange and ritual of 1 Sam 18:1-4 occurred, David’s rank became transformed as the two entered a covenant based on kinship and kingship ties.

The process of combining family and politics into one relationship is akin to the Chinese *guanxi* in which the fluid person-centred network blurs the strict views of dyadic individualistic friendships and courtly patron-client type relations. The *guanxi* relationship is one built on social connections and shared identities from one’s native place, kinship, age-grade, or the like. Often difficult to separate from the concept of friendship, the *guanxi* seems to incorporate both affective and instrumental aspects to the relationship, which can vary in degree based on context and situation. ‘Gift exchange helps to form *guanxi*, and sometimes to build such relations into intimate friendships,’ which bleeds into aspects of culture that

³¹⁴ Durrenberger and Palsson, 62.

westerners would prefer to segregate into strict categories of economy, polity, and society. Not only does *guanxi* combine affective and instrumental aspects of relationships, but it also seems to combine capitalistic and socialistic schemes.³¹⁵ It is unclear which aspect affects the other, but striking is a simultaneous shift in the micro-culture and the macro-culture: while both the self and other relations are affected in one way, a larger societal shift also occurs. We will observe a similar transaction in the David and Jonathan relationship as it relates to Early Israel transitioning to statehood.

This phenomenon of blurring distinctions also transpires among the youth in rural Auvergne, France within their kinship and friendship relations. Young age-mates form intimate and reciprocal based friendship groups which later become the support structure for them once they are married and have families of their own. Although the activities of the friends change in adulthood and parenthood, in which sexually and socially intimate relations exist between husband and wife pairings, the emotional support from social intimates continues to last over the life course. In youth, the group functions to encourage socially acceptable behaviour, age appropriate behaviour, and to prepare the other for adulthood. The social group facilitates open discussions on sexuality, mediates generational conflict, and provides 'relief for lower-class male youth from the social structural and psychological stresses of family demands'.³¹⁶ The above comparative studies will serve as a basis for later discussions on the influence of friends over a life course

³¹⁵ Alan Smart, "Expressions of Interest: Friendship and Guanxi in Chinese Societies," in *The Anthropology of Friendship*, ed. Sandra Bell and Simon Coleman (Oxford: Berg, 1999), 130.

³¹⁶ Deborah Reed-Danahay, "Friendship, Kinship and the Life Course in Rural Auvergne," in *The Anthropology of Friendship*, ed. Sandra Bell and Simon Coleman (Oxford: Berg, 1999), 140.

and to develop of the warriors' brotherhood which combines kinship and friendship concepts with militaristic and courtly concepts – as seen above.

In another study in rural Andalusia, Spain, Stanley Brandes conducted anthropological field research in the rural area (specifically in Monteros) where he found that both men and women feel more comfortable revealing their deepest and innermost thoughts to a same-sex friend rather than to their spouse. In Monteros and the wider area of Andalusia friendships are decidedly unisexual. Brandes was told by his male informants that the home is essentially women's space, and that for men 'it is only for eating and sleeping'. Men in Andalusia spend most of their leisure time with their male friends at the local tavern after work hours. In fact a man is expected to spend several hours each day with his best friend before returning home for a late dinner. When their teen-aged sons become old enough to be brought into this men's friendship sphere, then the men would assume the rearing of the adolescent males from their mothers – who is responsible for nurturing the children when they are younger. Since any association between non-kinsmen and women would arouse suspicion of adultery, men and women would avoid close social interaction with the opposite sex. Notably, these intense male-male friendships in Andalusia are not seen as a threat to the family; and while the marriage bond is strong, its key components are economic co-dependence, food consumption, sexual intercourse, and sleep. Although marriage relationships between husbands and wives are close, they are not expected to answer either partner's personal intimacy needs which are instead met by one's same-sex friends. In effect, Andalusians have two kinds of close bonds: the structured mixed-sex

marriage (and kinship), and the unstructured same-sex friendship network. These two bonds strengthen and complement each other while providing supportive allegiances and psychological outlets from the pressures of life. Rather than posing a threat to one another, each of these two bonds has its own boundaries and does not violate the other. Brandes believes that the two systems, together, operate better than either a marriage or a friendship would separately. This society of unisexual friendships serves as an excellent model for those in the ANE and Early Israel. Of particular note is how David maintains sexual relationships with his wives in *Samuel* while developing an asexual, intimate male bond with Jonathan that is described in terms of a love which surpasses that of woman.^{317 318}

Observations

As observed, friendships can take on various functions for various people within certain societies and are not a mandatory relationship for everyone. Additionally they are not, 'at least in its institutionalized or inalienable form. . . a sociological or cultural imperative'.³¹⁹ However friendships do provide a support not always found in kin or consanguineal relationships and yet exist in parallel to, or interwoven with, the family unit. As the usual functions of the family include economic provisioning, socialisation, the exchange of sexual services and the bestowal of affect,³²⁰ so too can the family unit function as a conduit for friendship. 'Here we may also underline the fact that in its pursuit of multiple purposes, the

³¹⁷ Stanley Brandes, "Sex Roles and Anthropological Research in Rural Andalusia " *Woman's Studies* 13 (1987).

³¹⁸ Williams, 192.

³¹⁹ Cohen, "Patterns of Friendship," 372.

³²⁰ Wolf, 7.

family remains the multi-purpose organization *par excellence* in societies increasingly segmented into institutions with unitary purposes [*sic*],³²¹ such as the purposes described in each significant unit of association.

Studying friendships also provide us with a, ‘major avenue by which [we] can [learn] a great deal about the effects of social structure and community systems on personality’.³²² ‘It is notable that a relation continues to exist between the way in which a family carries out these multi-purpose tasks and the ways in which it is evaluated in the eyes of the larger community’.³²³ We can learn of one’s horizontal or vertical virtue or how one relates to one’s class equals and those above and below one’s station. Additional insight can be ascertained into how the family guards its reputation or how one decides who to trust. ‘Invariably, they refer back to ways in which people handle their domestic affairs’.³²⁴

Apart from Cohen’s defined points on the friendship continuum, S.N. Eisenstadt classifies ritualised personal relations specifically as blood brotherhood, blood friendship and ‘best’ friends, compadre relations and the godparent relation, and contractual servanthip. ‘[A]ll these relations have some basic characteristics in common, although they vary in the intensity of these characteristics, and that these characteristics are related to some similar or parallel social conditions’. These relations are, ‘particularistic, personal, voluntary and fully institutionalized (usually in ritual terms). By particularistic I mean that the incumbents of the relationship act towards one another in terms of their respective personal properties and not in terms

³²¹ Ibid., 8.

³²² Cohen, "Patterns of Friendship," 372.

³²³ Wolf, 8.

³²⁴ Ibid.

of general universal categories'. Eisenstadt hypothesises that, 'the various forms of ritualized personal relationships constitute also a mechanism of social control which tends to mitigate some of the tensions and strains of predominantly particularistic societies. . .[sic]',³²⁵ It does appear that a corollary exists between the social-structural alignments of groups and the social-physical proximity and distance of the group and the individual within. 'Nor can there be much doubt that these alignments are internalized within the individual as emotionally predisposing forces which are as strong as the religious values of his society, its ideas of sexual propriety, its ideas of good and bad, desirable and undesirable, right and wrong, and the like'[sic].³²⁶

Being Possessed or a Worldview

Cohen's observation that the individual in the maximally solidary community is provided with a set of inalienable consanguineal relationships which are geographically and socially localised,³²⁷ follows Eric Wolf in that one can, 'expect to find (emotional) friendships primarily in social situations where the individual is strongly embedded in solidary groupings like communities and lineages, and where the set of social structure inhibits social and geographical mobility'.³²⁸ It appears then that an individual is influenced by his environment or in this case his social structure. More precisely one should speak of the individual as *having or being possessed* of inalienable ties within the social structure.³²⁹ It is

³²⁵ S.N. Eisenstadt, "Ritualized Personal Relations: Blood Brotherhood, Best Friends, Compadre, Etc.: Some Comparative Hypotheses and Suggestions," *Man* 56 (1956): 90, 92.

³²⁶ Cohen, "Patterns of Friendship," 373-74.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, 374.

³²⁸ Wolf, 11.

³²⁹ Cohen, "Patterns of Friendship," 374.

clear that within the maximally solidary community the *worldview* of its members value human relationships in permanent, intense and irrevocable terms.³³⁰ This worldview is then shared by both kin and extra-kin relationships.

An advantage of sharing the same worldview is that both kin and extra-kin partners form an extended base of support for the self (family member) outside of, and in concert with, the family.³³¹ Within the instrumental and economic fields there exists in these friendships a set of mutual obligations.³³² Then, ‘all these mutual. . . instrumental obligations are set within a framework of diffuse solidarity’³³³ or in the public realm outside of the family. While in the atmosphere of diffuse solidarity or the public realm the other may embody the role of kinsman. As the alter-ego shares the values of the self, and his family, the other can mobilise the ego to conform to said values when operating outside the family’s purview.³³⁴ In this ritualised friendships are very close to kinship relations and groups with a voluntary element of choice involved.³³⁵ So even though inalienable friendships are ritualised, friendships in general are a choice and there are certain bonds in friendship which mimic the family relationship.³³⁶ One such bond was previously observed in the other ascribing to the same worldview as the self’s family.

Another bond can be achieved through exchange. According to Lévi-Strauss, the principles of exchange in marriage form the basis for other exchanges –

³³⁰ Ibid.

³³¹ Wolf, 9.

³³² Eisenstadt: 90.

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ Wolf, 9.

³³⁵ Eisenstadt: 90.

³³⁶ Wolf, 10.

particularly within alliance and kinship. In ritual kinship, one can then perceive a need for exchange to establish the relationship. Though exchanging a bodily substance in a blood-brother compact is necessary for that act, following Pitt-Rivers, the gift can be any solid or liquid including food or drink.³³⁷ The symbolic significance for the act and the relationship are thus revealed in the gift. To form a blood-brotherhood, blood must be exchanged. To form a Christian church or fraternity, the Eucharist and fellowship of the Holy Ghost is exchanged.³³⁸ For Pitt-Rivers, consubstantiality adjudicates the gift. So then for David and Jonathan in 1 Samuel 18 the gifting of the sword, bow, robe, armour and belt are significant to that covenant and relationship. Joint discussions on the weaponry and gift theory³³⁹ will follow in future chapters. For now, the marital-mimic exchange in the ritualised kinship forms the alliance or bond between the ego and alter-ego.

This alliance however could not include the conjugal aspects of Fortes and Lévi-Strauss' basic domestic units. If it were so, the relationship would need to be reclassified or redefined for self and society. Following Bourdieu, the actors (primarily the self, without neglecting the other), in the above 'primitive' examples, incorporated social precedent into their choosing of the relationship. This often led to a neo-Aristotelian view of friendship of virtue without the Platonic, sexualised elements of highest order friendship. This is not unlike Early Israel's social and theological view on the corporate nature of relationships within their *occidental* society. Descriptively more appropriate than primitive, an occidental society

³³⁷ Pitt-Rivers, 93-94.

³³⁸ See also Pitt-Rivers.

³³⁹ See Mauss, Durkheim, and Godelier.

embodies a blending of Orientalism and what we label today as Western – including individual Protestant thought. The corporate nature becomes Israel's shared identity as they share the same activities and code for interpreting those activities,³⁴⁰ i.e., Yahwism. It is thus Yahwism which becomes the hub of the social, political and religious values of the nation which even those on the periphery must be articulated. This is what brings Israel, 'together and what marks them off from each other is essential for understanding their relations with God, both collective and individual', or for both the nation and David and Jonathan. Between the less amiable relations of the patron-client (see below) and the erotic or conjugal relations, lie the nonconsanguineal relation of ritualised friendship. Although higher Platonic sexualised elements may exist between some ritualised kinsmen, the boundary of this discussion is historical Israel's Yahwistic ethic – which as their religion is blended into the macro-society of Early Israel and the micro-society, as seen through the lens of the reclassified David-Jonathan relationship.

Affect and amiability

As observed previously, those in the expedient friendship must express some minimal element of affect, even if it is feigned.³⁴¹ As an unspecified series of performances of mutual assistance are important to the relationship's stability some expression of emotion aids in the natural and social glue of this relation. In this case, the use of affect in reciprocity is a necessary tool which is not only deemed to be of equal value between the two but can also evoke a sense of continuity in the

³⁴⁰ William A. Christian, *Person and God in a Spanish Valley*, New revised ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 11.

³⁴¹ Wolf, 13.

relationship. ‘When instrumental friendship reaches a maximum point of imbalance so that one partner is clearly superior to the other in his capacity to grant goods and services, we approach the critical point where friendships give way to the patron-client³⁴² tie’. Like instrumental friendships patron-client relations need some level of affect in order to ensure the promise of mutual support.³⁴³

However the level of mutual support is different for each participant. Anthropologist, Eric Wolf, observes that the patron offers economic aid and protection against both the legal and illegal exactions of authority. The client then returns demonstrations of esteem such as loyalty to his patron. This loyalty is not limited to an exchange within the tie, but the client must also demonstrate this loyalty outside of the relationship. Other client responsibilities include informing the patron about the machinations of others and promising the patron political support. ‘Here the element of power emerges which is otherwise masked by reciprocities’,³⁴⁴ despite a blurring of the patron-client relationship with our notion of friendship as we observed in the Icelandic sagas and the *guanxi* relationship.,

Thus far, what we have learnt that elements of power and reciprocity are intertwined in friendship-type relations and that patron-client relations can resemble or be a subset of friendships. To explore these concepts further, one must attempt to analyse the complex and integrated emotional or motivational forces underlying these relationships. Cohen postulates that peoples’ actions and reactions are a combination of early experiences and the social systems in which they live, at the

³⁴² See also Stansell, p.116.

³⁴³ Wolf, 13.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 16-17.

least: ‘Similarly, the kinds of friendship into which people enter are not only the results of their predispositions to acquire friends but also of the kind of society in which they live’.³⁴⁵ David and Jonathan might not only have had predispositions to become friends, but the macro-society in which they lived determined what kind of specific relationship was necessary at the time. As I proposed, the transitional nature of Early Israel to statehood opened a non-sexualised social means for the two men to enter into a warriors’ brotherhood which united the pseudo patron-client (or lord-vassal in ANE terms), Jonathan-David, into amiable bonds of comradeship and kinship. The transitional nature of what seems to be a ritualised kinship, couched in ritualistic and religious terms of covenant and loyalty, reflected a more global move from socially unrelated disparate tribes/clans to a national unity formed from amiability, shared military victories and reverence for the same Deity. One of the rituals which united Israel might well be the defeat of the Philistine enemy, while this defeat of Goliath also served as a catalyst for uniting David and Jonathan – again the mirror of society reflects a micro-change in two individuals’ relationship and a macro-change in the social and geo-political nature of the people. Both Israel and the two men reached beyond established customs to form brotherhoods not based on blood but on God: ‘In all societies friendship seems to serve the same end by allowing people to go beyond institutionally required affiliations’.³⁴⁶ The new institution and affiliation in the monarchical state holds to a Deuteronomistic link between people and God, and king and God, while the ritual and intention of the warriors’ brotherhood was made through Yahweh as the uniting force. David and

³⁴⁵ Cohen, "Patterns of Friendship," 382.

³⁴⁶ Gerald D. Suttles, "Friendship as a Social Institution," in *Social Relationships*, ed. George J. McCall, Michal M. McCall, *et al* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1970), 96.

Jonathan's newly established relationship, which served Israel in transition, forms the template for the DH's perspective on relationships with Yahweh in (pre/post) Exilic times.

Commentators and other Later Readers on the David-Jonathan 'Friendship'

As we revisit some previously discussed commentaries on 1 and 2 Samuel, we will analyse the degree of cultural awareness in these more popular and commonly cited commentaries, such as that of McCarter, Klein, and Anderson, and explore other requested biblical commentators and later readers of the David-Jonathan story, such as Brueggemann, a recent discussion by Stansell, and several later readers from the first century BC to the fifteenth century AD. In other words, how do biblical and historical commentators, who are often cited as producing a wealth of scholarship on the Books of Samuel, account for friendship in their discussions of Early Israel? What nuances exist or can be made with the Bell, Coleman, and Cohen models above?

Being cited by many for his authoritative discussion on *Samuel*, P. Kyle McCarter, Jr. discusses I Samuel 18:1-4 from a strictly exegetical perspective. His analysis of David and Jonathan's initial meeting focuses on the use of key biblical and Ancient Near Eastern terms. McCarter examines the terminology of love, covenant, loyalty, political relations, and royal indications, and refers to an 'inseparable devotion' and 'deep bond of friendship' which David and Jonathan share. A similar bond or binding was referenced in an earlier biblical and perhaps

cultural context (although not intentional) in Genesis 44:30-31. Other terms such as ‘loyal ally’ are used in 19:1-7 but no cultural analysis is offered.³⁴⁷

In 20:1-21:1, McCarter discusses the David-Jonathan covenant from varied perspectives.³⁴⁸ The first perspective is how the covenant relates to the Deity. However further information on a human’s interaction with his God is not explored. Then, an exegetical presentation develops into the covenant taking on personal and political aspects. Finally, the covenant is foretold to be effective for Jonathan’s progeny after his death. Again no cultural study on the function of covenants in these generations is engaged.

McCarter makes a brief comment on the 2 Samuel 1:17-27 elegy.³⁴⁹ Political terminology is employed with a hint of personal overtones. Specifically the commentator mentions, ‘a warm personal intimacy in the relationship between [David and Jonathan]’.³⁵⁰ This is coupled with a passing reference to an Ancient Near Eastern understanding of ‘love’ without any anthropological excursus.

Overall McCarter takes the position that the story, as he calls it, is ‘the History of David’s Rise’ to kingship – with little or no discussion on kinship elements.³⁵¹ So, aspects and terms in these select passages pertain to how and why David became king. In this regard the David-Jonathan story serves as a bridge to the Davidic Monarchy. Cultural and societal interests would not be McCarter’s

³⁴⁷ McCarter, 305, 322-23.

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 341-43.

³⁴⁹ P. Kyle McCarter, *2 Samuel : A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary*, 1st ed., The Anchor Bible ; 9. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1984), 77.

³⁵⁰ Ibid., 11.

³⁵¹ McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 27.

focus. Therefore little or no anthropological or sociological analyses on friendship are attempted, as seen in the models above.

Ralph Klein's attempt at a sociological discourse on friendship is also limited. Klein speaks in exegetical terms on the 1 Samuel 18 pericope.³⁵² His terminology includes a binding or bonding of David and Jonathan. This bond is expressed both affectionately and politically in terms of love, covenant, and succession. Most notable is Klein's understanding of the exchange of garments between the two men. However no cultural analysis is attempted to understand this rite in more detail.

Klein's commentary on 20:1-21:1 mirrors that of McCarter. Klein includes a discussion on both the longevity of the David-Jonathan friendship and the purpose of the relationship. The 'promises of mutual protection between David and Jonathan' serves as the backdrop for the future loyalty and covenant enforcement for Jonathan's descendants. Again the covenant terminology is enshrined in the overarching purpose of the David-Jonathan story: the History of David's Rise. The mutual oath and perceived transfer of power from Jonathan serves 'to show David's right to kingship'. So then the loyalty discussion is more of a political instrument in the story rather than a socio-political analysis of the narrative or the culture.³⁵³

Even though both of the above commentators focus on the History of David's Rise it is important to note the Deity element. With the Exilic (or even Josianic) Deuteronomistic writing style in 1 and 2 Samuel, the reader cannot help

³⁵² Klein, 182.

³⁵³ Ibid., 204-10.

but encounter the emphasis on Yahweh in the covenant and bond: ‘Yahweh was hailed not only as the link between David and Jonathan. He also stood as the guarantor of the relationship between David’s house or descendants and those of Jonathan’.³⁵⁴ Thus any social anthropological model of the David-Jonathan culture must include some account of deity. The interaction of Yahweh figures prominently in Israel’s history. So then the model must also include not only a cultural assessment of how friendships form but also how relationships are affected by a divine figure(s).

Finally in A.A. Anderson’s commentary on 2 Samuel 1:17-27 a hint of culture is perceived. Anderson discusses the ‘situation of life’ regarding David’s elegy for Jonathan. Anderson further discusses the funerary dirge and its relevance for the period. However no additional information on the relationship of David and Jonathan, in light of the elegy is attempted, with the exception of a discussion on a Levitical understanding of homosexuality.³⁵⁵ It is evident that there is a need to explore a more cultural or social perspective within biblical scholarship.

But first we will treat a controversial topic for the late, modern, western reader. Some late readers, including queer theorists, perceive an erotic element within the David and Jonathan relationship in the *Samuel* texts of 2 Sam 1:26, 1 Sam 20:30, and 20:41. Again, our intention is not to treat the perceived issues of sexuality of David and Jonathan arising in the late modern age. Nevertheless we will discuss Walter Brueggemann’s reflections on these ‘queer texts’ in this section

³⁵⁴ Ibid., 210.

³⁵⁵ Anderson, 13, 19.

as some are more influenced by his reflections than the well cited study on *Samuel* by Kyle McCarter.

Brueggemann approaches 1 Samuel 20 within the ‘present reality of Saul’s intense anger’. Saul’s ‘electrifying violence’ and ‘madness’ lend itself to his psychological ‘conspiracy’ theory and his debilitating mental state. Saul is humiliated by Jonathan’s charade with David (Saul’s imagined enemy) and retaliates with the verbal insult in order to hurt Jonathan as he was hurt. This anger which has little to do with feminising Jonathan according to Brueggemann’s account is simply the rage of one who feels rejected, especially by one’s own offspring and heir. Moreover as Saul was previously rejected by both the nation’s Deity and prophet this scion betrayal aggravates his humiliation, and he ‘pulls out all the stops of woundedness and indignation’ for he perceives that Jonathan has become *one of those people* who forsook their primary allegiance.³⁵⁶ Aware of his father’s anger, Jonathan realizes that, ‘David is in deep danger and Saul is beyond reason’, so he leaves the feast and the tension of the drama is allayed, as the absence of the Saul character is the literary source of the dramatic tension, and ‘The friends, now both in danger, are relieved to be with each other (v.41).’ Where queer theorists see homosexuality in this verse (v.41), Brueggemann instead describes this scene in terms of peace in solidarity and reliability which ‘the world cannot give or take away (cf., John 14.27)’. Also, this scene can be considered as foreshadow to the poetic language of 2 Sam 1:26 as this peace is a surpassing peace which outrivals that of a human or worldly nature (i.e., a grandiose peace, a Divine peace;

³⁵⁶ McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 343.

cf., a grandiose love, a Divine love, a surpassing love in 2 Sam). Contrary to McCarter who interprets the narrative in terms of the HDR and a rehearsal of the covenant theme,³⁵⁷ Brueggemann warns that the focus of the David-Jonathan story is not the relationship itself (whatever it is), but that it refers to ‘God’s new reign’ and ‘the risk, pain, hurt and hope’ involved in bringing this reign about in the historical present.³⁵⁸ In either case, McCarter and Brueggemann do not interpret the text in modern sexual innuendo.

Regarding another ‘erotic text’, Brueggemann sheds light on the Hebrew translation of ‘This “son of Jesse” which is a “son of death”’ (1 Sam 20:31). This translation can be used to reinterpret the ch. 18 ritual as a covenant of death. Held together with the covenant in ch. 20, both serve as a last will and testament for Jonathan in that if he dies then his warrior-brother David and family will guarantee ‘faithful love’ to Jonathan’s house and offspring in perpetuity (20:14). Strikingly, this theme of death resurfaces throughout ch. 20 so that if Brueggemann’s crux in v. 31 is correct, and David’s identity is wrapped up in becoming the son of death, then David’s potential for death from v. 3, and Jonathan’s prediction of death in v. 14 are two means within this chapter to foreshadow the events of the public revelation of this death-covenant within the text of 2 Sam 1.³⁵⁹

In summary, it is Saul who becomes shamed and humiliated unlike the ideas of some queer theorists such as Pyper, Ackerman, and Heacock (q.v., *The Impact of OT Precepts on Israelite Society*) who postulate that ch. 20 is about Jonathan’s

³⁵⁷ Ibid.

³⁵⁸ Brueggemann, 150-53.

³⁵⁹ Ibid., 152.

transformational shame. Walter Brueggemann interprets Saul's wrath and the concept of shame as a conspiratorial perception which Saul maintains against Jonathan rather than a queer perception which effeminises Jonathan. The style of verses 30 and 34 serve as bookends to the dramatic anger as first Saul maligns David's character in anger and then Jonathan becomes embroiled in a 'fierce anger'. Again, the focus here is not effeminising the Jonathan character into a submissive homosexual shame, but rather it is the narrator who heightens the action of the episode with the strong human emotion of anger.

Gary Stansell is a German theologian who specializes in anthropology of the Mediterranean world, and tends to approach the David-Jonathan 'friendship' from a social scientific perspective of friendship in a theoretical and historical sense over the 'anachronism and ethnocentrism' in sexual undertones.³⁶⁰ Specifically, Stansell postulates that the Hebraic tradition does not tend to a concept of friendship, but instead that kinship ties are paramount. He and I seem to share mutual ideas and methods especially as it relates to the concept of the ritualised kinship which binds the two men, and forms the relationship which is not necessarily a friendship. Nevertheless, Stansell does reiterate in his research that today's David-Jonathan readings are heavily romanticised and rendered homoerotic, made anachronistic and based in modern western influences, and should be focused on certain mutually relevant ideas which are that friendship, in its basic sense, is rooted in loyalty and

³⁶⁰ Gary Stansell, in his recent article and as a late addition to my thesis, does fill much of this anthropological void whilst still remaining in the camp of friendship as a classification for the David-Jonathan relationship. Stansell discusses broad strokes of my research in his article and is a useful companion to this thesis. However repeating my claims with his would not be a helpful endeavour when the reader can easily access his work and as space in this thesis is already quite limited at this stage in revisions.

trust, reciprocity (e.g., gift exchange), the language of honour, and terms of kinship ('I love him like a brother'). Even in this interpretation, Stansell adopts the established view that the 'love' between David and Jonathan is one of a political-affective significance. Following Gerhard Wallis, Stansell observes that, 'In the Old Testament, love presupposes not only an inner disposition, which is built upon friends' personal experiences, but also conscious deeds for the sake of the beloved'. This notion is akin to that of Aristotle's above. Stansell and I agree on a holistic view of the David-Jonathan relationship in that our treatment of the text tends to a wider view than that of perceived erotic texts in 2 Sam 1:26 and the like (e.g., ch. 20) as we consider material which precedes that of ch.18: Stansell's observations begin in ch.13 in which Saul and Jonathan are bound together by blood and war as a father-son team. This becomes relevant not only in David's lament, which we will discuss later, but also as crucial to Jonathan's role in initiating David into the warriors' brotherhood, Jonathan as a transitional character, and the transitional nature of this relationship to a nationally recognised social brotherhood.³⁶¹

Apart from the above later readers and commentators of the *Samuel* text, other post-monarchical and post-Exilic readers existed throughout history (i.e., after the historical present of *ca.* 1000 BC and composition of *ca.* 6th century BC) – or those readers after the Deuteronomistic edition. While one should consider McCarter, Klein, and Anderson as key resources with respect to the composition of The Books of Samuel, it is also important to refer to certain later commentators

³⁶¹ Gary Stansell, "David and His Friends: Social-Scientific Perspectives on the David-Jonathan Friendship," *Biblical Theology Bulletin: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 41, no. 3 (2011): 116-20.

from the Jewish rabbis in the period from 3rd century BC to 3rd century AD,³⁶² Josephus' rendering (*ca.* 1st century AD), the Medieval period (*ca.* 12th century AD), and the early Renaissance period (12th to 15th centuries) which will feature here as later readers to the Deuteronomistic edition. We will evaluate the doctor(s) of Aboth 5:16, Josephus' Antiquities, Maria Sherwood-Smith's analysis of select *Vulgate* readers from the Medieval period, and Reginald Hyatte's observations on the David-Jonathan friendship in the late Medieval and early Renaissance periods.

First, it appears that the rabbis of Roman Palestine followed their predecessors in that they shared a conservative and levitical perspective on sexual activity. Using the Hebrew Bible, other established texts, and traditions the later clerics and rabbis considered 'men lying with men' as 'abhorrent' and a violation of their code in Leviticus 18 and 20 which would result in the death penalty. The implications for this taboo on 'sexual irregularities', along with idolatry and moral failures, not only prohibit anal intercourse between men, but are also couched in the language of violations 'against nature'. Like these later readers, Michael Satlow also uses the writings of 2 *Enoch*, Philo, Josephus, the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, and Paul as examples of that period's literature which denounce the confusion of the male role in homoerotic intercourse, the consequence of 'destroying the means of procreation', and the education of 'teaching effeminacy to [male] youth' (e.g., pederasty; q.v., *The Impact of OT precepts on Israelite Society*). Not only did the rabbis follow the sexual taboos of earlier periods, but their comprehension also reinforced a consistency and connectedness of Israelite-Jewish

³⁶² See "Pirque Aboth" in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 2005.

society over time: Similar themes existed from the laws of *Leviticus* and *Deuteronomy* through to the time of *Samuel* and Josiah, and to the 3rd century AD which followed their religious and legal traditions of the Bible which they considered as a definitive, normative work, and classical for Israel.³⁶³

As we discuss their conservative approach and how it relates to this thesis, we note that *The Mishnah* cleric also commented on the perceived sexual text of 2 Sam 1:26: Far from involving homoerotic activity, which the Jewish authors ‘vigorously condemned’,³⁶⁴ the transitory nature of certain carnal loves are contrasted to a grandiose or superlative love which does not pass away, even in death (q.v., Pre-modern Contexts). John Boswell, queer theorist, attests to that love in his commentary on Aboth 5:16, and describes the contrast between the ‘lasting love’ of David and Jonathan and the transitory sole ‘physical desire’ of Amnon in the raping of his half-sister, Tamar (2 Sam 13).³⁶⁵ Reuven Bulka follows Boswell and adds that this prototypical, ‘unconditional love’ of Aboth 5:16 is ‘timeless and imperishable’, transcending even death itself.³⁶⁶ Bulka also favours V.E. Frankl’s view that this ‘mutually transcending love (that) is not contingent on what one or the other partner has, but on what the partner *is*, and still can *become*’ – even after death. Although seemingly not the cleric’s focus, it is an interesting eventuality for

³⁶³ Michael L. Satlow, "They Abused Him Like a Woman': Homoeroticism, Gender Blurring, and the Rabbis in Late Antiquity," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 5, no. 1 (1994): 5-8.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

³⁶⁵ John Boswell, *Same-Sex Unions in Pre-Modern Europe* (New York: Villard Books, 1994), 136.

³⁶⁶ Reuven P. Bulka, "Logotherapy and Talmudic Judaism," *Journal of Religion and Health* 14, no. 4 (1975): 280.

David who became the quintessential Israelite king after Jonathan's death.³⁶⁷

Regardless, this later reader saw David and Jonathan's love as a spiritual and virtuous love which is timeless and survives death.

Another view is that of Josephus, a first century Romano-Jewish historian, who condemns not a spiritual or virtuous love between men, but an effeminising male eroticism which confuses gender expectations and 'worthy of particular opprobrium'.³⁶⁸ Considering his works on the loosely translated titles of War of the Jews (*War* 4.560-63), Against Apion (*Ag. Ap.* 2.199), and Antiquities of the Jews (*Ant.* 1.200), Josephus takes a firm position against homoerotic or homosexual behaviour, especially where Jews are involved.³⁶⁹ In fact he completely omits the attempt at Benjaminite homosexuality in the Judges nineteen narrative (q.v., The Impact of OT precepts on Israelite Society), and what some today might perceive as homosexuality or effeminisation in the David-Jonathan narratives. Whilst he tends to renderings based on the *LXX* (the Septuagint), Josephus is well educated in and follows the Hebrew, Aramaic Targumim, and proto-Lucianic texts in his writings – along with the Jewish-Israelite Torah which, for him, includes the Oral Law (*Ant.* 13.297) and is later embodied in the midrashim.³⁷⁰ These foundations might explain why he omitted the entire pericope of the Hebrew 1 Sam 18:1-4; omitted the 1 Sam 19:1 comment on Jonathan taking delight in David; rewrote a love reference in ch.

³⁶⁷ It is interesting that Gilgamesh became the pillar of society *after* Enkidu's death in *The Epic of Gilgamesh*.

³⁶⁸ Satlow: 8.

³⁶⁹ Louis H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrayal (Antiquities 5.136-174) of the Benjaminite Affair of the Concubine and Its Repercussions (Judges 19-21)," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* New Series, 90, no. 3/4 (2000): 257-75.

³⁷⁰ Louis H. Feldman, *Studies in Josephus' Rewritten Bible*, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism, V. 58 (Leiden ; New York: Brill, 1998), 539-42.

20 to be a love for Jonathan *from* David instead and then equating it to that of a master for his servant (*Ant.* 6.228); inserted text in which Saul presupposed David's absence from the feast was due to David and his wife having coitus (6.235); changed a reference to the two men kissing one another in 1 Sam 20:41-42 to David referring to Jonathan as 'preserver of his soul' instead (6.240); and omitted the pericope containing 2 Sam 1:26 which some today epitomise as homosexual coital love between the two (*Ant.* 7.1-6). Josephus expunges any implication of homosexuality from his account while presenting the David-Jonathan soul binding love in terms of empathy, devotion, goodwill, and faithfulness instead (*Ant.* 6.236, cf., 6.193, 6.232).³⁷¹ Josephus' description of the relationship between David and Jonathan is that of a virtuous friendship based in covenant. Any romantic or sexual elements in the story are instead described in the scenes with David and the young maidens who sing his praise, and Michal his wife.³⁷² In fact it is Jonathan who considers the marriage of David to *Saul's daughter* as the means of the kinsman relationship between David and the Saulide family; Jonathan considers the code of this kinship to restrict Saul from harming David and causing Saul's own daughter to be a young widow (6.210). Male-male affection is also expunged from the text in 1 Sam 20:30-34 as Jonathan is said to weep not because of David *per se*, but because Jonathan did not have anything to eat at the feast after his argument with Saul

³⁷¹ Feldman, "Josephus the Benjaminite Affair," 274, 274 n.52.

³⁷² Louis H. Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation of the Bible*, Hellenistic Culture and Society ; 27. (Berkeley ; London: University of California Press, 1998), 567.

(6.239). In essence, Josephus describes the relationship between David and Jonathan in terms of ego/alter-ego, friendship, and pity (Ant. 6.228).³⁷³

Clearly Josephus and his predecessors of the midrashim period adhered to a conservative reading of the *Samuel* material. Following James A Diamond,³⁷⁴ if the conservative Talmudic rabbis even suspected that David were homosexual then they would not have hesitated 'to excoriate' his behaviour in their writings according to their interpretation of the biblical text. Consistent with the rabbis' views on David and Jonathan's love being a spiritual and virtuous love which endures time, Reginald Hyatte, professor of French and comparative literature, observes many friendships in medieval literature which cite the friendship of David and Jonathan as *the* model for this chivalrous relationship.³⁷⁵ Narrowing our focus of medieval literature, Sherwood-Smith examined how three historians in the 12th and 13th centuries described the David-Jonathan relationship as represented in the *Vulgate*: the *Historia Scholastica* by Peter Comestor, the *Weltchronik* of Rudolf von Ems, and the *Rijmbijbel* of Jacob van Maerlant.

At the onset, translations in The Vulgate become problematic for late modern readers. For example to pin down a single use of the verb 'to love' is difficult as the Vulgate not only uses the verb *diligo* for 'love' in 1 Sam 18:3 (Douay trans.), but also for erotic love, Divine love, filial love, and love between abstracts throughout the biblical text. Furthermore we learn that Saul has a 'love'

³⁷³ Ibid., 565-66.

³⁷⁴ James A. Diamond, "King David of the Sages: Rabbinic Rehabilitation or Ironic Parody?," *Prooftexts* 27, no. 3 (2007).

³⁷⁵ Reginald Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship: The Idealization of Friendship in Medieval and Early Renaissance Literature* (Leiden, The Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1994), 81-117.

for David which tends to vacillate later when the narrative begins to focus on the Saul-David action, and sets Jonathan as its intermediary. As for Comestor and his reading of the Vulgate in the *Historia Scholastica*, his general attention focuses on the ‘covenant’ aspect of the relationship and not the ‘love’. Like that of Josephus, Comestor omits references to ‘love’, and instead replaces Jonathan’s love for David with Jonathan’s concern for his sister and David’s wife (Michal), as a new element to the story. This back-story becomes the motivation for Jonathan’s actions against his father later in the narrative. In the *Weltchronik*, von Ems focuses on the dualistic aspects of love and loyalty and the progeny of David and Saul; while van Maerlant in the *Rijmbijbel* sets his sights on the action between Jonathan and Saul instead, and casts Jonathan in the role of intercessor or intermediary (cf., Ch. 18).³⁷⁶

All three historians abbreviate the accounting of 1 Sam 20 and present Jonathan as cunning or strategic in his thinking against his father’s schemes while protecting David, himself, and his descendants. As for the covenant in vv. 14-15, Comestor portrays it as being mutually made, and von Ems follows this presentation but further develops the aspects of chivalrous mutuality and equality of the oath. Van Maerlant omits the oath altogether. With respect to the action of Saul’s anger to Jonathan in vv. 30f, and recollecting Brueggemann’s assessment of this text, Saul is viewed as insulting Jonathan’s mother and implicating his son in a joint act of treachery with David at the expense of Jonathan’s own succession – this is not the action of a ‘true’ son of the king. In David’s emotional departure in vv. 41f,

³⁷⁶ Maria Sherwood-Smith, "Old Friends: David and Jonathan in the Vulgate, the *Historia Scholastica* of Peter Comestor, the *Weltchronik* of Rudolf Von Ems, and the *Rijmbijbel* of Jacob Van Maerlant," *Oxford German Studies* 36, no. 2 (2007): 164-66.

Comestor minimally treats the affective aspects while giving more emphasis to the covenant for future generations. Van Maerlant does not mention the covenant and reduces all emotive aspects to a milder message of hope for their *vrienscap* (friendship/camaraderie). However, von Ems' account of ch. 20 is the most extensive of the three, and repeats certain themes of gratitude, constant loyalty, mercy, protection, and *trúwe* (fidelity, faithfulness) throughout. And in ch. 23, Comestor adds the element of needing a human witness to the covenant of the Vulgate, van Maerlant refers to a bond of *vrienscap*, and von Ems places greater emphasis on a 'sworn bond between the two friends', 'steadfast loyalty', and a 'binding oath of loyalty' which is the subject of future generations and strikingly not referred to in the other two accounts.³⁷⁷

As the David-Jonathan narrative moves to 2 Samuel, the 'love' aspect remains problematic for our modern translation and how each of the historians portrays the two heroes. Upon David receiving the news of Jonathan's death, Comestor and van Maerlant treat David's reaction as a formality of national significance or a matter of observing a mourning ritual for the state, rather than a matter of deep personal sorrow. Conversely, von Ems speaks to the individual nature of David's grief and with great personal emotion. The lament of ch.1 is treated in terms of the Saul-Jonathan/father-son relationship, their mutual battles, and their bravery. Verse 26 in several translations of the Vulgate reads: 'I grieve for thee, my brother Jonathan, exceeding beautiful, and amiable to me above the love of a woman. As the mother loveth her only son, so did I love thee'.

³⁷⁷ Ibid.: 166-68.

Sherwood-Smith focuses on this translation as revealing David's heart and a mutual or reciprocating affection for Jonathan with the intention of possibly sanitising the text in order to prevent misinterpretations. For Comestor the lament is scholarly explained and considers that his audience (viz., history students) is well aware of what this well quoted piece of writing meant (i.e., a national lament). Van Maerlant follows Comestor, but adds the word 'love' to the lament. 'Rudolf [von Ems] allows himself considerable freedom with regard to the text of the lament, restructuring it and radically altering the original relatively even balance between Saul and Jonathan in favour of David's friend: Rudolf [von Ems] mentions Saul's name only once, and only refers to him collectively with his son and fellow warrior'. Von Ems discusses David's love of women in the larger narrative and makes comparisons to Jonathan still within the context of maternal love and a mutual 'friendship among like-minded warriors'.³⁷⁸

Once the historians reach the accounting of the Mephibosheth story, Comestor and van Maerlant use this narrative to applaud David for upholding his end of the bargain while von Ems identifies Mephibosheth as having been one of David's own sons – a view which this reader proposes too. This identification is used to reemphasize the fidelity and faithfulness of David for Jonathan. In the Vulgate, Mephibosheth makes his next appearance when David and Absalom, his son, are at odds with one another. Mephibosheth is seen again to take the posture of one of David's own sons who waits for Absalom to be disinherited so that he can take his place, but David makes it clear that Mephibosheth will not inherit the

³⁷⁸ Ibid.: 169-70.

throne – as the ancient reader might recall an earlier debate between Saul and Jonathan. Upon Absalom’s death Mephibosheth is portrayed as being in solidarity with David in mourning over Absalom. Von Ems revises this portrayal and views David’s actions as a breach of fidelity which will be avenged on David’s progeny (e.g., the disposition of Rehoboam, David’s grandson). However, David himself is spared because he shows true allegiance to God and obeys this first and highest commandment. Conversely, Comestor and van Maerlant treat the Mephibosheth story minimally.³⁷⁹

Overall, van Maerlant and von Ems include more ‘love’ themes in their renderings as they write for entertainment purposes and for young royal leaders;³⁸⁰ contrary to Comestor who writes history as a biblical studies textbook. Comestor’s account is brief as his audience is already very familiar with the narrative. Von Ems builds on a poetic ‘romance tradition’ in his colourful interpretation of the reciprocal camaraderie between David and Jonathan in that he stresses the chivalry and fidelity of the covenant, friendship, and lasting implications of the covenant to future generations, beyond the Vulgate’s own depiction. While both the Bible-MT and the Vulgate make clear the notion of covenant fidelity (*hesed*), von Ems re-presents this notion of *hesed* in a sworn bond between friends in a *feudal society*. Within this historical context and society these concepts are characteristics which are valued far greater than what late modern readers might expect.³⁸¹

³⁷⁹ Ibid.: 170-71.

³⁸⁰ Van Maerlant pays more attention to the kingly nature of the story for he is a royalist himself, and he writes for young noblemen and aspiring kings (p. 173).

³⁸¹ Sherwood-Smith: 172-73.

Moving to the later readers of the late Medieval and early Renaissance periods, Reginald Hyatte explores the most perfect and virtuous friendship from writers throughout the ages. From his observations, medieval and Renaissance writers took cues from their Classical, Christian, and pre-Christian counterparts in their assessment that only a man of virtue and wisdom could attain a ‘true friendship’. However, in their humanistic endeavour they bypassed the Aristotelian-Ciceronian spiritual ideal of the virtuous friend in Christianity, and focused instead on a juxtaposition of moral authority and honourable friendship with social and political counterparts. Although, as Heacock noted, there are no unanimously accepted definitions of perfect friendship,³⁸² there are generally agreed upon fundamental qualities of virtue, wisdom, and beneficence which the ancients did agree on.³⁸³ While some see the ‘highest friendship as the exclusive property of the godlike’, others take a more humanistic view, but most agree that apart from those who consider ‘the eternal’ or ‘ideal’ type, the two main types of friendship can be divided into ‘the ordinary’ or ‘the false’ – not unlike C.S. Lewis’ proposals. It seems that while most writers through the ages considered the David-Jonathan relationship an eternal ideal, it was not until the late medieval and early Renaissance ages which the spiritual and godlike qualities of a certain true friendship was dismissed. However, Hyatte does not make clear that the erotic or sexualised interpretation is what replaced the spiritual; instead a more humanistic substitution is specified. From that time a humanistic approach which incorporated the social and political spheres became the ideal for friendships in human history. Perhaps it

³⁸² Heacock, 111 n.63.

³⁸³ Hyatte, 2.

is after this that *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality* (Halperin, 1990) continues the discussion to the late modern era. Regarding a timeline on the conversation of sexual identity, the reader might recall Giddens' earlier comments along with the Assyriologist, Markus Zehnder: 'It may be that the sexual interpretation of the relationship of David and Jonathan that came up during the last three decades or so is related to the wider phenomenon of the sexualization [*sic*] of life in Western societies'.³⁸⁴ Although an elaborate discussion on this is not the goal of this thesis, we note when queries on David and Jonathan's perceived sexuality entered the debate, and look beyond these late, modern, western interpretations to observe the David-Jonathan relationship in its time and space. The intent of this thesis is not to rehearse existing coital or effeminising discussions on David and Jonathan from queer theorists and the like (see also Heacock and Ackerman), which are abundant in biblical scholarship today.³⁸⁵

The spiritual/eternal ideal of the David-Jonathan friendship, and how it sets a three-way relationship between two men and God, is often depicted as antagonistic to the love of a wife or a woman in medieval literature. These medieval authors seem to use the David-Jonathan model as the 'epic exemplum of chivalric friendship', but without the Christian-type elements found not only between David and Jonathan but also between Paul and God, Moses and God, the members of the first Christian community, John and the Christ, and the Twelve Disciples and Jesus.

³⁸⁴ Markus Zehnder, "Observations on the Relationship between David and Jonathan and the Debate on Homosexuality," *Westminster Theological Journal* 69 (2007): 174.

³⁸⁵ Apart from the generous references and citations offered throughout this thesis one might only search for David and Jonathan on Google or in the ATLA Religion Databases and find multiple entries discussing a modern homosexual perspective on the relationship.

These identified ‘romance’ relationships are limited to the language of ‘monastic charity’ and ‘Christian legend’, and do not seem to hold to modern erotic-sexualised notions (N.B.: monastic as in *ca.* 350-1250 AD). What does become apparent is that the erotic in the medieval period might not be as sexually oriented as it is today, for the ‘true romance’ is considered a chivalric ideal: A knightly friendship which includes high, moral characteristics of faithfulness and courage, and is often set against the hero’s love of a wife or woman, sentimentally. The absence of what is called the peace and security of the Christian model in these late medieval friendships would be discussed in terms of the profane or erotic which humanistic writers employ. Romance friendships in Hyatte are akin to what is called a Romance language in that it shares a common, Roman origin rather than a necessarily modern sexual/erotic appellation. Although the metaphysical friendship extends beyond the carnal nature of male-female coitus, it does not always refer to God or the Divine, as late medieval writers placed this superlative love within a knightly realm or the king’s court (e.g., king and country instead of God and country).³⁸⁶

The misogynistic view of these friendships warns men against the carnal mores of sexual love with women, and favours a chivalric love with another knight or comrade in arms instead. Medieval stories of a woman’s affections distracting a warrior were not lost on the DH/biblical narrator either, for the story of David being distracted by Bathsheba details the mores of such unfaithful, disloyal, unloving, and selfish behaviour. Second Samuel 11 outlines the tragedy of David the warrior chief who abdicates his role among Israel’s elite warriors during a time of war, and rather

³⁸⁶ Hyatte, 81-100.

than taking up arms with his comrades, he takes another man's wife into his arms instead. He seems to ignore his covenantal, loyal love with Jonathan, the mighty men, and the Israelite brotherhood, and reneges on the grandiose love which bypasses that of women as David appears to surrender to the carnal love-lust which rages in infidelity and selfishness, and produces an unwanted pregnancy. Aborting the child does not seem to be viable when David, in another act of unfaithfulness, schemes to recall Bathsheba's husband and David's comrade in arms, Uriah, from the battle in order for him to violate his own chivalrous code by yielding to a night of lovemaking with his wife in the midst of a fight. Uriah's love for his countrymen and fellow warriors bar him from such a dishonour in this contravening move to David's disloyalty. The reader remembers David's former loyalty when he first refused to marry the king's daughter on a whim, after entering covenant and loyal love with Jonathan (1 Sam 18). Recall that Saul set David as a commander of the armed forces and then offered his first daughter, Merab, to him for a wife. David's honour dictated that he followed his loyalty to his God, king (and Jonathan), and countrymen (and Jonathan) as he must be 'valiant and fight the Lord's battles' alongside his 'kinsfolk and family' on the battlefield rather than performing marital functions. Saul revisits the offer by presenting Michal to David instead. David again refuses, and Saul adds the proviso that David must *gift*³⁸⁷ to Saul the foreskins of one hundred enemy combatants in *exchange* for Michal. Noteworthy is David's

³⁸⁷ Following D. Winton Thomas and W. L. Moran, David Nirenberg accepts the association of gifts and giving with the root of the Hebrew word for 'love' and notes a variety of political implications including one in which the DH's emphasis on Israelite humans loving God affected the priesthood in a positive manner. He sees this in the David-Jonathan political relationship and other Homeric relationships of *philia* and *xenia* which exhibit hospitality, alliance and dependency (Nirenberg, p. 576-77).

response in that he was ‘well pleased to be the king’s son-in-law’ rather than being pleased to be with Michal. It can be deduced that David focused on fulfilling his covenanted warriors’ brotherhood role with Jonathan/Saul by engaging in battle with his comrades instead of participating in the carnal love of a woman. Although the reader might have remembered this cameo and concept of love, David did not in 2 Sam 11 and schemed to murder the man who in fact exhibited the qualities of his covenanted friend’s loyalty and love. The narrator’s misogynistic view on the selfless role of the ‘valiant warrior’ (2 Sam 11:16) against the selfish sexual desires of a husband and adulterer, in times of battle particularly, is demonstrated twice more as God chastises David and the bastard child dies. Whether it be David’s Mighty Men in Monarchical Israel or Arthur’s Knights of the Roundtable in Camelot, the need for these warriors to be focused on protecting their comrades in battle and maintaining fidelity to the warriors’ code, rather than a carnal coital focus, would have been imperative to secure their nation’s developmental and continual identity.

While today’s ideals are simply different than those of that time, queer theory has vouchsafed us a homosexual and effeminised rendering of the David and Jonathan love which shifts the emphasis away from social concepts such as national brotherhood and self-sacrifice. As to the reading which characterises Jonathan as the wife, Jonathan’s own sexual appetite reigns supreme as he throws away the most powerful role in the state and his manhood within a male-oriented society for one possible sexual escapade with the ‘gay-stag’ David (Heacock cf., Brueggemann). The theme of a selfless sacrifice to the point of death is innate within many of these

‘true’ friendships but do not always specifically refer to Christ’s selfless sacrifice for humanity – especially in the later writings.

That being said, a modern western deconstruction of the medieval language could manufacture sexual, coital, erotic, or homosexual undertones within any piece of literature in that period, or even in Early Israelite and Classical periods for that matter. One example is seen in David Marsh’s critique of Hyatte which accuses Hyatte of being overzealous in applying Aristotelian views of friendship to his analysis over the *evident* homoerotic tones. Although in the end, Marsh does agree with Hyatte’s conclusion that the friendships which Hyatte discusses conform to a ‘conservative and patriarchal’ ideal.³⁸⁸ Hyatte’s response would subsume that late modern readers see homosexual tendencies in medieval texts at points which early authors ‘took pains to obviate’.³⁸⁹ In addition, Peter Noble’s critique follows Hyatte in dismissing homosexuality in that period, yet it supports a supplementary latent homosexual reading.³⁹⁰ In a separate article, Markus Zehnder concludes: ‘A sexual dimension in the relationship between David and Jonathan can only be claimed if the biblical descriptions of this relationship are not taken at face value, but expanded by having recourse to a presumed hidden message’.³⁹¹ This serves to highlight the linguistic and rhetorical tensions of today. Such modern revaluations of older text, and of old analyses of more ancient text, will persist today regardless of my thesis. Hence, it is not my goal in this thesis to do so. Based on the above

³⁸⁸ David Marsh, "The Arts of Friendship: The Idealization of Friendship in Medieval and Early Renaissance Literature. By Reginald Hyatte," *Speculum* 71, no. 1 (1996).

³⁸⁹ Hyatte, 103-04.

³⁹⁰ Peter S. Noble, "The Arts of Friendship: The Idealization of Friendship in Medieval and Early Renaissance Literature. By Reginald Hyatte," *Medium Aevum* 65, no. 1 (1996).

³⁹¹ Zehnder: 174.

later readings of David and Jonathan from rabbinic (and midrashim), Josephian (and Septuagintal), Vulgate and medieval, and late Medieval to early Renaissance sources, a high concentration of asexual relevance to the *Samuel* material exists, and is coupled with the description of a deep, spiritual, superlative bond between men and God – which gives way to my proposition for the warriors’ brotherhood between the two *ancient knights*.

If this virtuous, grandiose love is not for coitus or sexual eroticism then what is it for? The above readers presented synonymous themes of covenant and chivalry (or in our own terms: a brotherhood in times of war) which appear in *Deuteronomy* and Deuteronomistic History frequently. We have explored these concepts before, but it is worth restating them in light of these later readers to Early Israel and Exilic Israel. Using the symbolism or metaphor of love (*ahb*) to represent obedience or treaty compliance, the DH weaves throughout the Former Prophets the appropriate response from Israel and humankind towards Yahweh in face of the suzerain or lord-vassal type treaty (i.e., the Decalogue). Usually coupled with terms such as loyal-love or loving-kindness (*hesed*), covenant (*berith*), heart, soul, and obedience, the human’s *ahb* for God is equated with keeping the Divine commandments after the Lord God fulfils his commitment of the treaty and *shows* Israel *hesed* (see also Deut 5:10 of the Decalogue). The Lord God reiterates this equation in 6:4-7 (and 11:18-19) by stipulating in this Divine-human covenant that Israel is to *love* God with all of one’s *heart* and *soul* which is akin to *obeying* the commandment in one’s *heart*. Furthermore one is to teach this practice of obedience and love to one’s children, not unlike Abraham had done in the ‘nineteen narratives’ (Gen 18:19). In

Deuteronomistic History, the DH reiterates that the Lord God keeps to the covenant: most notably in 1 Kings 8:23 as Solomon declares, on behalf of Israel and his father David, that God keeps covenant and obeys the treaty by having given loyal love to those Israelites and humans who obey the treaty and the Lord with all of their heart. Is it a wonder why the admonition to write loyal love on one's heart (Prov. 3:3), and to reflect on God's loyal love and humanity's responsive heart (e.g., Ps 13:5, 36:10) are prevalent themes in the OT. With this established interconnected biblical tradition, the DH compared the Divine-human relationship to that of David and Jonathan in terms of 1 Sam 18:1-4 and these *Samuel* narratives. The inner beings or souls of David and Jonathan were bound together just as a binding of the inner beings or hearts of God and man are required in the covenant. Thus it was inevitable for David and Jonathan to have been presented as loving one another. The narrator sets the scene of *loving the other as one's own soul* in verse one as the precursor to the foreseeable covenant which is established in verse three. Recall that v.3 is again tagged with the same phrase as in v.1: 'loved him as his own soul'. This is done to affirm the treaty and its requisite obedience. In the covenant between God and Israel, God agrees to be loyal to Israel and in return Israel must obey/love God. Likewise, if in covenant Jonathan were to be loyal to David then in return David must obey/love Jonathan (and perhaps vice-versa).³⁹² We ask again: what is this love or obedience for? Before reflecting on the chivalric response presupposed by medieval, Septuagintal, Renaissance, and midrashim readers, it is important to recognize some themes in the meta-narrative of *Samuel* and the Former

³⁹² The mutuality of their covenant or one in which one serves as the lord and one as the vassal is a complex issue which we discuss in other parts of this thesis.

Prophets which include those of monarchy, family, and war in which Yahweh serves as supreme king, father, and warrior. Keeping to our thesis, as David becomes the next heir and king, brother to Jonathan, and elite warrior in the ‘mighty men’ in 1 Sam 18:1-4, the need arises for mutual loyalty or obedience. If David ascends to the throne then he will require the house of Jonathan to support him through the ascension, coronation, and reign. If David and Jonathan were to be brothers then the loyalty and practice of family must be ensured by all members of the family, including Saul and his other children. And if David were to fight side by side with Jonathan in battle then each warrior must be assured that the other will comply with and support whatever is necessary to secure victory and one’s comrades’ safety. The success of these three social institutions could fail if a mutual obedience or support had not been agreed to.

Hence during the period of chivalry and war, in order to establish a national identity and presence, a mutual compliance and loyalty is a necessary component. Strikingly the relationship between Israel’s national brotherhood, the David and Jonathan relationship in Early Israel, and the monarchical period, also become relevant components in England during the Medieval Period when knights defended God and country (or king and country), and maintained a national identity in the land. One might recall these themes as we discussed Comestor’s emphasis on covenant in his text book, von Ems’ focus on love, loyalty and progeny, and van Maerlant’s focus on Jonathan as intercessor from the Vulgate’s *Samuel* narratives. Also we should remember that the first two historians focused on the national significance of David’s lament in 2 Sam 1, and the Vulgate identified the greater

love of David and Jonathan in v.26 as a grandiose love which a mother has for her son (a kinsman love or offspring love). The OT reflects a similar idea in Isaiah 49:15 which evokes the image of a woman, who remembers and loves the child she has nursed, and a woman who will have compassion for those she bears; yet still God will love his children even more than that (e.g., love as fidelity, faithfulness, chivalry). The medieval historians seem to take the account of David and Mephibosheth very seriously as it reflects how well, or not so well (see von Ems), David fulfils the covenant to Jonathan. There are lasting implications of covenant for future generations, both for God and Israel, from the Decalogue forward as well as for David and Jonathan from the ch. 18 ritual and forward. Sherwood-Smith is quite clear that these considerations are very important in this feudal and chivalrous society. So much so that when these knights set off to defend their Camelot, each warrior knows that the love, respect, support, and compliance for and with the other becomes a part of their inner being, *heart*, and *soul* – which would not be second guessed in battle or in court.

These ‘true friendships’ and corresponding motifs of love/obedience were vital in these cultures. Even those early Renaissance descriptions of friendship, which eliminated the Christian ideal, juxtaposed factors of moral authority and honourable friendship which were essential in the social scheme. This too seems to have been equated to the concept of love from the aspect of giving or doing for the other as opposed to the self’s emotional or sexual state. Strikingly an emphasis on the self took precedence over the other as Giddens and Zehnder demarcate the move to introspection and self identity and one’s sexual identity in recent history. As one

turns the corner to identifying one's self and one's sexual identity one might also consider chivalric aspects of love in favour of sexual aspects of love. Could this very tension explain today's need to redefine ancient loves from the view of the self instead of the other? Coincidentally, while disparate discussions on what we know as anthropology or ethnology existed throughout the ages, the science or discipline of anthropology did not come to the fore until the late 19th century/early 20th century with scholars such as Edward Tylor, Lewis Morgan, Franz Boas, and Emile Durkheim. Furthermore it was not until the late 20th century that discussions on the phenomena of 'identity', selfhood and otherness began.³⁹³ It is interesting that the formation of this discipline and sub-discipline coincided with a period in western history which sought to explore the self, pleasure, self-gratification, and the like (see also Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan). It seems to me that an exploration, outside of this thesis, might be considered for the time in which a stronger focus on the self, sexual identity, and a priority on self-pleasure became part of a nation's discourse. However as we observe the social structures of Deuteronomistic times, Josephian times, rabbinic codes, medieval times, and early Renaissance times the view that themes of love/compliance, covenant, heart/soul, fidelity, loyalty, and selfless sacrifice for *the other* develop as interrelated concepts, and support the dramatic action within chivalrous stories such as Arthur and the Knights of the Roundtable, and David-Jonathan and the Mighty Men.

³⁹³ See 'identity' in *The Sage Dictionary of Cultural Studies*.

Towards a Thesis

As we observed in theory and in practical examples of ritualised kinship and exchange, alternative relationships like that of David and Jonathan's can exist outside of a sexual context. In the Bell, Coleman, and Cohen models, as well as those later interpretations of the David-Jonathan model, a variety of same sex friendships (sexual and nonsexual) are apparent within various human cultures throughout. The goal is then to understand where the David-Jonathan relationship might be placed in the continuum of male-male *intimate* relations. An analysis of Israel's Premonarchical culture in chapter four becomes necessary to determine the society surrounding the David-Jonathan story. Such an investigation must be carefully executed as biblical commentators have avoided social anthropological models and interpretations of the text and relevant society. Our examination of the Premonarchical culture must include a discussion of family life, and specifically, David's family is an important element to probe. In his preface to *Person and God in a Spanish Valley*, William A. Christian, Jr. sums up his rationale for cultural classifications:

(1) By locating group identities and understanding the way they arise, one can begin to understand what role religious symbols play in the lives of different people. (2) By understanding the types of relationships existing among humans, one can begin to understand the relationships of those humans to holy figures.³⁹⁴

As we borrow this worthwhile goal, having reviewed several classifications, we will endeavour, in the next chapter, to appropriate the culture of Early Israel, with the

³⁹⁴Christian, ix.

Divine element, in the historical context of Old Testament precepts which impact upon our study.

In this chapter we discussed how worldviews and perception relate to social scientific concepts of structure and classifications. These cultural classifications become important for our study because it aids our understanding of the values and way of life for Early Israel which is an occidental society in *ca.* 1000 BC that exists in a time and place very different to our own. To understand Early Israel's ideas of gift exchange and habitus, for example, help us to understand what we are seeing through the societal window of the David-Jonathan relationship into that time and place. To give, to receive, and to repay are social ideals which we have seen in operation in Israelite history and which we will delve into regarding the David-Jonathan narrative and society in the next two chapters. We examined the importance of comparative anthropology in this thesis and how the analyses of other cultures and societies help us to unravel the complexities of Israelite society. Some of these societies revealed the relevance of family and kinship as foundational in a people group, and with this, we will revisit the family household in detail in the next chapters and how these structures are given significance in OT society. Another concept in Israel's worldview is that they are a people which are set apart and as such would not conform to a number of the customs of their neighbours in the ANE. Where practice may be one thing the values and laws of the nation might be another as we observed in the OT the significance of patriliney, offspring and procreation. The developmental cycle and rites of passage concepts seen in *Samuel* will be elaborated in the following chapters as we observe how ritualised kinship and blood

brotherhood transforms David's identity into the Saulide family and dynasty. The role of the David and Jonathan relationship are key to this transformation and elements of the relationship have been seen in many characteristics of the inalienable friendships above and other similar cultural classifications. In many of these comparative cultures, we observed intimate asexual relations between men and applied this kind of intimacy to the text which embodies 2 Sam 1:26.

Additional explanations as to why David adopts Mephibosheth or takes him into his family were detected as not only a fulfilment of covenant with Jonathan but as a part of the new social order also. As with other conventional biblical commentators in earlier chapters we noted from a social scientific view the rationale for 'perfect' friendships with political connotations. Now it might well be that the warriors' brotherhood involved certain political aspects to it but one aspect of our focus concerns the resultant new way of thinking for a national brotherhood in times of monarchy. Yahweh's role in Israel's worldview and the military-monarchy, kingship-kinship concepts were also seen through a social scientific lens.

Strikingly, where modern western scholars see sexuality in the David Jonathon relationship, we observed some contemporary scholars and a number of later readers to the text who did not see issues of eroticism and sexuality in the narrative. These eroticised views, which are perpetuated in queer theory and fill modern western scholarship with coital and effeminising views of the David Jonathan relationship, do not seem to conform to what these selected later readers presented. Not only do these later readers not see homosexuality but they also see the interconnectedness of OT literature and religion. The chivalric medieval world seems to present the

David-Jonathan relationship from a conservative viewpoint, and seems to mirror, in a cultural comparison to Early Israel, an asexual intimacy which can exist between male heroes and warriors at the unfortunate expense of a certain misogynistic view. This stance lends itself to credence for the warriors' brotherhood, and the role a national identity and unity plays in such chivalrous societies (i.e., medieval times and Early Israel). Also in observing these other societies and times, we have seen the continuity of an asexual male-male 'true' friendship which had been exhibited in this and previous chapters (recall Aristotle, Lewis, Japanese, Chinese, Icelandic, Medieval, and Josephian views on 'true' friendship – just to name a few). As we explored cultural classifications we have learnt more of Israel's identity and the socio-religious importance of the Holy One in the life of Israel, her customs and symbols. Again the three tiered concept of the individual, the society and the Divine, and how these forces interact with one another serve as an important basis for the discussions in the next two chapters.

Chapter 5 – The Impact of OT Precepts on Israelite Society

Inevitably, a modern discussion of the David-Jonathan narrative tends to either a pro-homosexual view or an anti-homosexual perspective. So we are compelled to treat this controversy in a cursory fashion and as a tangential discussion to this thesis of which sexuality is not the focus. Some of the complexities of both viewpoints are addressed in this chapter as rejoinders underscore the pro/anti-homosexual rendering of the ‘sin’ of Sodom in Genesis 19. While Gen 19 is treated here relative to the parameters of its hefty discussion in biblical scholarship, the reader should note that conclusions drawn from the Judges 19ff narrative are more likely to be relevant to the homosexuality debate in the Bible. As both of the *nineteen narratives* of Genesis and Judges have been treated in a number of commentaries (e.g., Wenham, 1994; Speiser, 1964; Butler, 1983; Boling, 1975), with a propensity to stress either a pro-homosexual view or an anti-homosexual view, we will re-examine, at length, the relevant Scriptures ourselves and dispense with the usual tendency to accentuate sexuality in this dialogue, while favouring issues of male, female, national and Divine identities and powers; divine justice, gift theory, and an OT view on life and death.

Before we begin we will deviate from this thesis’ intended goals and examine some of the homosexual issues in our modern discussion (i.e., Jonathan becoming effeminate, Jonathan’s homosexual shame). As one considers Giddens’ comments in the introduction, it seems appropriate to hold Marti Nissinen’s more recent observations as authoritative in that both fundamentalist and political debates

on modern homosexuality have impinged on the academic discourse of identity of ancient peoples; and he retorts that it will not stop there as he follows Ivan Crozier.³⁹⁵ Specialising in forensic psychiatry and sexology, Dr. Ivan Crozier reports that people no longer contact doctors of sexology to receive professional guidance in developing or exploring one's concept of identity, but in order 'to help the cause of homosexual liberation' instead.³⁹⁶ Nissinen takes the term 'sexology' as 'shorthand for the psychiatric, psychological, and social-scientific studies on human sexual conduct and its causes'.³⁹⁷ Crozier agrees that sexologists are intended to work with the psychological issues of a patient as opposed to a General Practitioner who would use observation and other scientifically deductive methods to diagnose and assist a patient. Crozier supports a return to these principles and stipulates that in order to validate the field of sexology and its findings it is important to filter out biases from the practitioners' political leanings.³⁹⁸ Following Crozier and Nissinen, it also becomes important to filter modern political leanings from studies of biblical texts in order to validate the sub-disciplines within Theology. With respect to sexual or queer perspectives on biblical material, the researcher might consider a focus on clear sexual texts and contexts instead (e.g., references to heterosexual/homosexual coitus in the Holiness Code); such that certain interpretations which suggest that God hates homosexuals based on the Sodom and Gomorrah narrative, or that the Christ inhabits a modern gay identity

³⁹⁵ Martti Nissinen, "Are There Homosexuals in Mesopotamian Literature?," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 130, no. 1 (2010): 77.

³⁹⁶ Ivan Crozier, "Pillow Talk: Credibility, Trust and the Sexological Case History," *History of Science* xlvii (2008): 389.

³⁹⁷ Nissinen, "Homosexuals in Mesopotamian," 73.

³⁹⁸ Crozier.

based on a traitorous kiss from Judas should be avoided in order to advance scholarly discussion and queer studies. However, popular and political views on these matters too will continue to impinge on scholarship as Nissinen has conceded.

The use of 2 Samuel 1:26 (and 1 Sam 20:30, 41) to advance a certain political idea has likewise become subject to such bias. For example, in his article 'Love beyond Limits' the queer theorist arguably makes a series of misstatements about 2 Sam 1:26 and the David-Jonathan relationship, although no coital activity has been discussed by the biblical editor. The perceived erotic or coital text is translated in the article: 'I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; very pleasant have you been to me; your love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women'. The article first misreads the translated text by stipulating that women are made inferior to men, or certain other women, in David's comment about Jonathan: 'For a man to be more than a woman may be an assertion of the distinction between male and female and the superiority of the former . . .' (38).³⁹⁹ However, in a careful reading of the English text, one observes the sentence construction and the object of the comment to be 'love' and not superiority – more specifically Jonathan's love towards David. The distinction of 'women' enters this picture as a *descriptor* of a certain love which David feels surpasses what he, and his audience at the eulogy, would relate to as 'the love of women' – notice the prepositional phrase 'of women'. In context, as Yahweh is the focus of 1 and 2 Samuel and the Deuteronomistic writings, one can postulate that a 'surpassing love' which a man

³⁹⁹ Hugh Pyper, "Love Beyond Limits: The Debatable Body in Depictions of David and Jonathan," in *Between the Text and the Canvas: The Bible and Art in Dialogue*, ed. J. Cheryl Exum and Ela Nutu (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2007), 38.

has for a woman could not be greater than the ultimate love that Yahweh has for his people. Moreover, in light of the DH and The Decalogue, God advises those who love him that he will reciprocate a '*steadfast* love' or surpassing love not only to one recipient, but also passing through the generations to one's progeny (Deut 5:10). In the NT, the Son of God later confirms this claim and declares that one should love God with all of one's heart, soul, mind, and strength. And he adds that one should love one's neighbour as oneself (Mark 12:30-31). This is the love which passes that of women: to love God with all of one's heart, to love one's neighbour as oneself, or to love one another in an act of 'binding souls' as God loves us and is bound to us in the Decalogue covenant. This resembles the David-Jonathan covenant (1 Sam 18:1; John 5:12 cf., 1 John 4:7-11) which is to be loved loyally by God beyond life, time, and generational family relations. In this the Jonathan and David relationship serves as a microcosm of and window into Israel's socio-religious culture and as a model for national unity, for just as the Divine-human treaty applies to one's progeny also, so too does the warriors' brotherhood treaty applies to one's progeny. Earlier we discussed that God's relationship was not only with Abraham, but intended for his descendants also. Similarly, Yahweh's covenant was not only with Israel, in that historical present, but for her descendants too; and Jonathan and David's covenant was with one another and for their progeny also. Moreover, these actions and rituals became replicated after Early Israel's transition to statehood and when the national brotherhood became realised. Inasmuch as monarchical Israel would retain this tradition and pass it on throughout the generations. This perpetual and generational love for the other is another type of

love which surpasses that of women. Jonathan laid down his life for his friend David as Christ laid down his life for his friends, or his followers throughout the generations, in an act of surpassing or 'greater love' (John 15:13). Indeed this love of family, of brothers, and of warriors is a long lasting loyal love bound up in each other's hearts, which not only existentially exists there but also in an existential eternity beyond life as we know it. In David's case it included Jonathan's own progeny, Mephibosheth. In other Christian terms, this Divine *agape/phileo* love can be applied to v.26 without unduly demeaning women past and present.

Other issues in the article include the 'role of women in the process of succession', how this role and process relates to David's 'usurping' the throne, some perceived 'threat' to patriarchy in Israel or to male dominance or to men's roles in general (this is difficult to distinguish as 'threats' appear throughout the piece), and an exclusion of female roles and femininity in the David-Jonathan narrative. In this, Hugh Pyper may not have allowed sufficient scope for at least two roles of women: as mother and life-giver (see also Isaiah 49:15), which become apparent in Samuel's miraculous birth and Saul's curses for Jonathan and his relationship to his own mother and life-giver. Additionally, as Eve helped Adam in the creation narratives, so a helping role of women is depicted in Michal's supportive actions towards her partner David as she assists with his escape from Saul. Next, the female roles of daughter and the exchange to wife are seen in Michal and Meriab. In that same Meriab/Michal chapter, an artistic role of women is apparent as the women of Israel create a clever tune in support of David and with a cunning blow to Saul in the refrain. One should not forget the roles of the matriarch Ruth in the larger narrative,

and even of the woman serving as God's mouthpiece and interpreter, with respect to Huldah the prophetess in the DH corpus (2 Kings 22:14-20). Considering Pyper's arguments and the article's use of the term 'patriarchy' in Early Israel (as we addressed elsewhere in this thesis) more attention should be given to the *identities*, roles, and bodies of David and Jonathan. Pyper has rightly stipulated that a crossing or merging of roles occurs. However it is conceivable that both David and Jonathan's bodies resemble one another due to the exchange process in the warriors' brotherhood ritual of 1 Sam 18:1-4. Organically, the reader would cognitively integrate the two ritualised brothers, just as the artists who integrate the two bodies on their canvases do in Pyper's critiques. As it relates to this thesis, integrating the characters of David and Jonathan, and this visual representation in art and the text represent not only the microcosm of brotherhood between the two, but also a macro or national brotherhood of all Israelites (or followers of Yahweh) as they enter the social stage of statehood – for even the king of Israel is directed to be nondescript from other members of the community (Deut 17:20). Pyper, whilst analysing artwork from the poetic text of 2 Sam 1 which depicts the David-Jonathan relationship, arguably underplays the artistry in the genre of poetry, lament, dirge, and/or elegy.⁴⁰⁰

Anthony Heacock also supports the use of biblical material for homosexual liberation. In his opening comments to *Jonathan Loved David*, he clarifies his 'gay rights' goals, although vacillating on this position throughout the book: In his commentary on 2 Sam 1:26, Heacock presents the lament as both David's love

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., 38-39.

elegy and a political ploy (ch. 1). In ch. 3, Heacock softly promotes the levitical proscriptions against male-male coitus. In ch. 5 he shifts back to his original agenda and supports the gay rights political movement and uses ‘The Hermeneutical Shift’ to support a sexualised reading of the David and Jonathan material. In the book’s conclusion and ch. 6, Heacock presents a placating twist, but not without restating his original motive: that reading this narrative through a contemporary gay lens will support the view that the David character is a ‘hegemonic straight man’ who cannot reciprocate the sexual homoerotic love from Jonathan, the ‘transgressive gay man’, whose sexual desire for David is apparent. Whilst mincing words with other ‘hands’ of interpretation, Heacock again returns to his point of the (one-sided) ‘queer friendship’ of the two men, whereby Jonathan’s sexual attraction to David’s manliness is categorised as being the ‘deviant’ behaviour with which many gay men today can relate, as the gay man’s coital or sexual affections for the manly ‘gay stags’ (viz., attractive, straight, manly men of the day) run deep and wide. A measured critique of Heacock’s book would suggest that his post-structuralist goal is to deconstruct the exegetical method itself.⁴⁰¹

The concept of shame is used by such writers as Heacock, Ackerman and Pyper to deprecate the Jonathan character. T.M. Lemos takes another view on the ideas of shame and mutilation in the DH corpus and *Samuel*. As he addresses the concept of shame, Lemos considers the public aspect of this idea which contradicts the views of the preceding authors in that for them Jonathan’s alleged shame was some mystical internal process which transformed him into a wife-like character.

⁴⁰¹ Heacock, 34, 98-99, 144-45.

However, following David D. Gilmore, Lemos emphasizes that shame in *Samuel* was ‘above all visual and public’. The use of shame was intended to dishonour the self before the other, or ‘the gaze of others’ within the community sense; but this public display was not the case with Jonathan and not enough to effeminise his character. Again, some very public display had to have been made instead. Rather, Lemos observes a very honourable and heroic Jonathan in 2 Sam 1. Moreover, Lemos makes a distinct connection between the concepts of shame and mutilation in the DH in that some visible blemish or mutilation of the body must be made in order to affect the shame. The narrator’s use of shame in the DH does not conform to these modern authors’ use of shame in the Hebrew text, and thus it becomes unlikely that the concept of shame was the tool used to effeminise Jonathan. In fact, Lemos suggests that to effect shame on the male’s masculine nature, some public exposing of the genitals or nudity would be necessary to effeminise *the other*, or *the enemy* in particular to the DH material. Jonathan was not subject to such acts.⁴⁰²

A less sexualised and more social scientific approach to the David-Jonathan story is exhibited in the concept of ‘liminality’. When we speak of the warriors’ brotherhood as a transitional tool for both David and Jonathan in David’s move to kingship, and Early Israel’s transition to national brotherhood and statehood, we can also speculate on the *liminality* of David and Israel’s identities. The *Encyclopedia of Postmodernism* (2001) defines liminality as ‘the state of being or betwixt . . . [used] to describe the nebulous social and spiritual location of persons in ritual rites of passage’. Such rites include betrothal, adolescence, or the like in which the

⁴⁰² T.M. Lemos, "Shame and Mutilation of Enemies in the Hebrew Bible," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 125, no. 2 (2006): 228, 239, 229, 232, 234.

individual is in a 'passage', process, or between two or more spatial or temporal realms; and during which the person wrestles with identity or selfhood within oneself and/or with the culture.

Specialising in women and gay studies, Susan Ackerman who is a professor of religion utilizes the concept of liminality in a different way as she follows the anthropologists, Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner, in describing the David-Jonathan relationship. Although she proposes a sexualised reading of the relationship she does not specifically identify the relationship as homosexual, for she believes that would violate the OT and biblical traditions. However, following David Halperin and her own self-proclaimed 'gay rights agenda' she does advocate an effeminate reading of the Jonathan character and does transform his person into the wife-like figure. Ackerman then turns to the notion of liminality to explain this effeminisation and Jonathan's 'sexual humiliation'.⁴⁰³

Through some literary means which the OT author/editor is himself unaware of at the conscious level, Ackerman makes a scholarly leap using some erotic or 'sexual apologetic' and transforms the masculine hero into a wife-like character for David.⁴⁰⁴ It is from this point that David uses the tools of shame and humiliation to barter for the kingship. Consider if Jonathan is already destined to become the king, then why not simply become the next king and retain David as 'royal concubine', of sorts? That is if Jonathan's heart still yearns for David sexually, then strategically he should wait for Saul to die, become the king, and maintain a sexual

⁴⁰³ Susan Ackerman, *When Heroes Love: The Ambiguity of Eros in the Stories of Gilgamesh and David* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 236-37.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 220f.

relationship on the side. It is difficult to deduce from the text that Jonathan would relinquish the throne because he is effeminised and in an erotic or coital love with David. While the Genesis story of Joseph portrays a biblical character who gives up erotic coital love with his master's wife, he does so in order to honour his master and his God. In another *Samuel* story David does not give up his throne for erotic coital love with Bathsheba. Instead he keeps that secret hidden and develops an elaborate plan to conceal it until he is confronted by Nathan, and still then he keeps his throne. It is not in keeping with these practices and characters that Jonathan would relinquish his throne for a night of homosexual passion. Conversely the themes in these texts (especially DH) contain concepts of leadership, heroism, military might (e.g., Deborah, Goliath), and Yahwistic codes. One's might, like Gideon's own, along with Yahweh's might conquers all in these narratives. Sex does not appear to be the victor; in fact it seems to be the trap. It should also be considered that active homo- or hetero-sexual motifs in this *Samuel* narrative might be situated in the background of the story rather than at a critical point of emasculating the mighty crown prince or justifying David's ascent to the throne for a pre-Exilic/Exilic audience in each of the young characters' liminal processes. Furthermore the erotic apologetic Ackerman espouses could very well be the Divine's love-apologetic, which is evident throughout the OT and the DH influenced material, and which underlies many biblical plots, themes, dramas, and narratives – as discussed elsewhere in this thesis. In her prologue, chapter 1, and epilogue, Ackerman makes clear her 'gay rights' perspective in writing this work, and thus intentionally looks at the story through an erotic lens.⁴⁰⁵ With a definite

⁴⁰⁵ See also Nissinen's review of Ackerman in *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, (May

inclination in her judgement it seems that it was not Jonathan who was *confused*, but Ackerman who seemed to confuse the definition and use of a viable model of liminality instead: How can a process of effeminisation equate to a liminal process such as adolescence or betrothal (q.v., Fortes' developmental cycle)? Or even a tribal initiation into a warrior class? Accordingly the definition of liminality is the state of being in the midst of a ritual rite of passage, rather than emasculating a hero.

The classicist, Jean-Fabrice Nardelli's assessment of David and Jonathan in *Homosexuality and Liminality in the Gilgames' and Samuel* is liminal in its own right. His nebulous discussion on the *Samuel* narrative asserts that a homosexual relationship between David and Jonathan cannot be attested to in the text or Semitic culture, yet claims that there are sexual undertones in the narrative. Nardelli seems to affirm that an ANE type of brotherhood exists between the two men, while stipulating that 2 Sam 1:26 is an innuendo. He then retracts his first position at the end of his book by stating that David and Jonathan are not in a brotherhood. He does not believe that a liminal model should be applied to the two as we do not know enough about their civilisation. Instead he sees a suzerain-vassal relationship in which Jonathan serves as the suzerain, just as Yahweh is for Israel. While we both agree that it is unlikely for the son of Saul to engage in a passive homosexual relationship, Nardelli does not define what homosexuality and heterosexuality are as it relates to the ANE or late modernity, and thus leaves the reader bewildered about the ANE and its writings in that sense. Although difficult to understand, and this could be due to this work's English translation from Nardelli's native French,

his position is refreshing as we cannot definitively know all the nuances of the ANE – another conclusion at which we both agree. While Ackerman presents her thoughts as decisive and definitive, her conclusions seem out of step with the hermeneutical process. I repeat: the narrator/editor's intent was not to highlight a sexual aspect of the relationship in the David-Jonathan narrative.⁴⁰⁶

In an attempt to clarify Nardelli's position, one might look to Joseph Azize's review in which he confirms the problems and errors of the English grammar and lexicography in Nardelli, and queries why the publisher did not tidy up his 'disjointed writing'. Azize like Nardelli discounts Ackerman's assessment of the 'modern construct' of liminality in David and Jonathan, but Azize diverges from Nardelli at which he indicts Nardelli for taking the *Samuel* text out of context and 'reading them through the lens of over 2,000 years and a social revolution'. The latter statement is striking as we too have discussed changes in our pre-modern and modern western world which affect our current perspectives. Azize also charges the classicist with ignoring the modern practices of Israel, Lebanon, Iraq, and Jordan over Nardelli's analysis of modern Finland instead. In fact this seems to be a point at which many current discussions falter, for comparisons between the ANE and the modern Middle East are lacking.⁴⁰⁷

As we move from the sexual debate, we begin our analysis with the Holiness Code in Leviticus 17-26 which includes the religious or cultic expression of safety within and for the kinship group. As we will observe in chapter four, the economic

⁴⁰⁶ Jean-Fabrice Nardelli, *Homosexuality and Liminality in the Gilgames' and Samuel* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakker, 2007), 62, 38-40, 10, 57-58, 1, 34, 44-47.

⁴⁰⁷ Joseph Azize, "Homosexuality and Liminality in the Gilgames and Samuel," *Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 46 (2009).

benefit of and for the family in society was a primary goal for Premonarchical Israel, and so it would make sense for such a theme to find itself into the society's laws and religious codes. A discussion on the Priestly material in the Holiness Code was addressed previously and will be developed in this chapter. The Holiness Code was written from the perspective of what legislated course of action should be taken or what should be done. As opposed to what may be occurring in Israel, the Holiness Code is laid out syntactically as practices which Israel should avoid. 'The purpose of this is to establish the chosen people as a holy nation, and thereby to make them distinctive amongst their contemporaries as representatives of the one, true and living God.' Their neighbours, the Egyptians, Canaanites and other peoples of the Ancient Near East, were seemingly involved in customs that the new Israelite service (or cult) of Yahweh would practise either differently or not participate in at all (Leviticus 18:3). At the very least, the noted practices of Israel's neighbours serve as a contrast to the Holiness Code and the requirements for Yahweh's people. Yahweh was forming an unconventional religious service from other members of the ANE and so had different requisites. 'Holiness of life must therefore characterize both priests and people, and in order that the future sedentary life of the nation might be firmly established on such a basis, a series of social, moral and economic regulations [in Leviticus] was promulgated' [*sic*]. One is expected to be tolerant of many things in today's modern and 'postmodern' Western sensitivities, but the uncommon Yahweh service of the past did not conform to many of the customary practices of the time, and did not receive tolerance from neighbouring nations and cults.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁸ R. K. Harrison, *Leviticus: An Introduction and Commentary*, ed. D.J. Wiseman, The

The Holiness Code is one such distinction which today evokes great debate in social and theological circles – often without a social anthropological context. ‘Standing in time, the Scriptures point beyond time, but always and only as a product of the cultures out of which they speak.’⁴⁰⁹ A careful exegesis which observes the historical text, interprets the observations, and then applies the concepts for a modern audience is one inductive hermeneutical model which serves the reader best. It is then within the context of the Holiness Code and its implications in OT Scripture which we turn our discussion to the impact of ‘homosexual’⁴¹⁰ prohibitions in Early Israel – more specifically male-male coitus. The debate surrounding the David-Jonathan relationship includes a modern ‘homosexual’ implication. As the 1 and 2 Samuel scriptures provide no explicit evidence to support this argument in a historical, social anthropological or theological sense, it is imperative for modern readers to investigate the Old Testament attitude to such a relationship. Other key Scriptures which modern scholars cite as alluding to ‘homosexual’ behaviour⁴¹¹ are the Holiness Code, as mentioned with specific texts in Lev 18:22 and 20:13, the story of Sodom’s

Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1980), 27.

⁴⁰⁹ Phyllis A. Bird, "The Bible in Christian Ethical Deliberation Concerning Homosexuality: Old Testament Contributions," in *Homosexuality, Science, and the 'Plain Sense' of Scripture*, ed. David L. Balch (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2000), 145.

⁴¹⁰ The term ‘homosexual’ in the late modern age carries different implications to that which historical societies *may even consider* homosexual. The term can become anachronistic for ANE discussions.

⁴¹¹ A preponderance of both conservative and liberal scholars readily cite the specified passages in their interpretation of biblical homosexual references. In actuality the focus of the three pericopes are different than specific instances which scholars highlight. Furthermore the term ‘homosexual’ is loosely used within the scholarship even though such a term and our understanding of it might not have existed in Early Israel.

destruction in Genesis 19, and like Gen 19 another story of gang rape⁴¹² in Judges 19.

'Homosexuality' in the ANE

At times, categorised with Carol Meyers and Phyllis Trible, as a Feminist Theologian, Phyllis A. Bird has researched homosexual behaviour in Old Testament texts. Her caution for Christians to recall God's love for humanity and for Christians themselves to adhere to the 'love command' are essential in analysing these passages in a modern, New Testament, or even Old Testament context. Although some would identify *covenant* or the *Kingdom of God* as the unifying theme of the Bible,⁴¹³ Bird contends that, 'What holds the Scripture together is the *community* that created, preserved, and transmitted the writings, Israel and its daughter, the church' [emphasis mine].⁴¹⁴ As organic entities, communities and cultures tend to evolve, even within a short period. Now consider the broader distinctions between historical Israel and late modernity. An attempt to reconcile all the progressive cultural changes in that time span would be monumental. Likewise, negotiating the cultures of historical Israel with what Bird observes as her *daughter*, the modern church, would be another feat. A modern understanding of Scripture

⁴¹² Although an alarming modern term, we too will adopt 'gang rape' in this discussion as no other culturally relevant term for Early Israel has emerged, at this juncture. Moreover, Phyllis A. Bird (2000) and Richard B. Hayes (1994) seem comfortable with its usage. Bird favours its usage as culturally appropriate for (1) male *honour* in Early Israel was *threatened* by homosexual intercourse, hence the connotations of the term 'gang rape'; (2) the connotations contrast that of 'ordinary' sexual intercourse between male-female; (3) the connotations parallel abusive sex with a female or, in other words, homoerotic relations with rape; and (4) Israel could only conceive of male homoerotic acts as *forced* (Bird, p. 148).

The late modern has a tendency to designate various historical sentiments or actions as 'sexual'. One may appreciate contrasting discourse, on the use of late modern terms to describe the historical 'sexual', between authors Michael Carden [*JSOT* 82 (1999) 83-96] and Ken Stone [*JSOT* 67 (1995) 87-107].

⁴¹³ See Steven McKenzie (2000) and John Bright (1953)

⁴¹⁴ Bird, 145.

might be expected to be distinctly different from an ancient understanding, within its social anthropological framework. Thus, it behoves us to employ an inductive hermeneutic of observing and interpreting the text in its original context, *before* developing an appropriate modern application. This would enable society to preserve the past as humanity progresses in its future.⁴¹⁵

Bird further cautions the reader against an historical elitist bias within the Old Testament context and culture. She refers to the ‘male members and an elite among them’ in Early Israel which limit and skew Scripture. It is unclear who the elite are specifically; but it is possible that Bird is referring to the biblical authors, Levitical priests, OT prophets, Deuteronomic writers, Deuteronomistic editors, or a number of ‘elite’ members in Israel, or among the male population, who contributed to OT themes and writings. In either case the OT in its current form is a combination of the above and worthy of our analyses from their context(s) – regardless of whether they are ‘elite’. The Old Testament text in time becomes historical: ‘Scriptures [do] point beyond time, but (always and only) as a product of the cultures out of which they speak’.⁴¹⁶

Bird does limit the OT understanding of the David-Jonathan relationship. She argues that with regard to homosexuality the OT focuses on homosexual acts rather than homosexual affections. Thus by inference she categorises the David-Jonathan relationship as an homosexual affection. Phyllis Bird then supports Martti

⁴¹⁵ I discuss the tension between preserving and progressing elsewhere.

⁴¹⁶ Bird, 145.

Nissinen's use of the term 'homosociability'⁴¹⁷ to describe the David-Jonathan relationship.⁴¹⁸ Although homosociability may be a more appropriate generic descriptor, Bird nonetheless assumes a developed homosexual affection in the David-Jonathan friendship rather than a deep non-western (and 'non-homosexual') male-male love. Her observation is unusual as 'there is absolutely nothing about Jonathan's and David's "affections" for each other, let alone "acts" that can be reasonably construed as homoerotic.'⁴¹⁹

Robert Gagnon disagrees with Bird's assessment on the OT interest in homosexual acts over affections. Sexuality across the pages of the OT presents an assortment of both affective and physical bonds. 'A conspicuous case in point is that an entire work in the OT canon is dedicated to the celebration of romantic heterosexual love, the Song of Solomon.' Genesis 2:18-24, 24:5, 24:67; 29; Proverbs 5:15-20; and Malachi 2:14-16, just to name a few, all refer to affections a man has for his wife. Gagnon argues that 'the focus of the Levitical proscriptions and the Sodom [Gen 19] and Gibeah [Judg 19] narratives are also on male-male relationships. Affective bonds were considered for men in heterosexual unions and yet still treated as irrelevant for a proscription of homosexual behavior [*sic*].' Extending his point further, why did Bird minimise the preponderance of examples of heterosexual affective bonds in the OT as it relates to men? With such a global presentation why not treat the contrasting matter? Sexual relationships within the

⁴¹⁷ Homosociability is defined as the interaction between people of the same sex where the erotic-sexual aspect is not emphasized or essential.

⁴¹⁸ Bird, 146-47 n. 6.

⁴¹⁹ Robert A. J. Gagnon, "The Old Testament and Homosexuality: A Critical Review of the Case Made by Phyllis Bird," *Zeitschrift Fur Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 117, no. 3 (2005): 368, n. 6.

context of the OT and Israel are permitted for male-female actions and affections. Sexual actions in male-male relations are prohibited in this context but affections according to the David-Jonathan example are permissible, at the least. If Bird is correct in that the OT only treats homosocial actions and not affections then one logical conclusion is that male-male affections were not considered taboo by Israel or Yahweh. Laws are typically written to address specific issues in society. Norms and customs often follow suit. If the issue of homosocial affections is not considered socially or divinely unacceptable then there is little need to create a proscription for it.⁴²⁰ Gagnon further contrasts homosocial and heterosocial relationships of Israel past with today. He believes that ‘the Western world’s obsession with individual sexual self-fulfilment and romantic infatuation has its own drawbacks. Chief among them is putting the needs of the self over the needs of the other.’⁴²¹

Although Gagnon’s primacy of modern sexual self-fulfilment can be supported by theories such as Freud’s supremacy of the pleasure-principle, Israel’s theology did not support such a primacy. Now Israel was not often applauded for her selfless acts, as many examples of selfish behaviour can be observed. One might cite the Judges 19 example of the Levite’s concern for himself over his concubine when he surrendered her to his oppressors – especially after ‘winning’ her back from his father-in-law. Moreover, the Levite appeared callous the next day. He was seen to begin his day without regard for his concubine’s health. Then

⁴²⁰ Ibid.: 369.

⁴²¹ Ibid.: 369, n. 11.

as he *happened* upon her on the doorstep he again expressed little concern for her well being.

Elements of a Unique Religion

As previously discussed, the Yahweh service in the ANE was a unique religion with an unrivalled Deity. Yahweh asked for an unparalleled relationship with his worshippers and for them to abide by an exclusive covenant. No other deity would take precedence or be acknowledged. OT features of Yahweh's character included his concern for *the other* and an ensuing regard for justice and charity. Whilst charity began in the household towards one's parents, Israelites were not to form idols, to commit murder against another, or to steal from another. These are some stipulations in the Decalogue which reflect the preceding characteristics.

The religion also set parameters on sexual conduct. Within the primary sexual relationship of the culture appears man's regard for his wife and that conjugal grouping over his own domestic group. The first example which sets the precedent for the OT in Yahweh service and Israelite culture is found in the Genesis 2:4-25 narrative of man and woman. The Lord God was searching for 'a helper suitable for [the adam (*'adam*)]' (v. 18b, NASU, NIV), and had formed living creatures which man assigned names to; but for the man no suitable helper could be found. God had already decided that it was 'not good for the man (*'adam*) to be alone' (v. 18a, NASU, NIV). 'So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man (*'adam*)' (v. 21). While he slept, the Lord God fashioned woman (*'ishshah*) from the man's rib (*'adam*) (vv. 21-22). He (*'adam*) awoke and commented that the

woman (*ʾishshah*) was taken out of the man (*ʾiysh*) (v. 23). The narrator then declares: ‘For this reason a man (*ʾiysh*) shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife (*ʾishshah*); and they shall become one flesh. And the man (*ʾadam*) and his wife (*ʾishshah*) . . .’ (vv. 24-25a).

In a striking contrast to other usage, the term for *man* in verses 23c and 24 is *ʾiysh* and not the usual *ʾadam*. While in the creation narratives *ʾadam* often refers to the crown of creation, nomenclature for this man, the first man (Adam), a proper noun, or generic man or mankind, the *ʾiysh* here could be the writer/editor’s word play with *ʾishshah* (mate, wife, woman), man as an individual male, or husband (TWOT). Irregardless, the literary complement of man-woman/husband-wife stands in contrast to a lack of complementation between man and the living creatures, and fulfils the need for a suitable helper (vv. 18-20). Thomas E. McComiskey adds to his comments on *ʾiysh* that it,

[communicates] a close and intimate relationship that Adam could not find apart from one who shared his own station and nature; indeed, his own life. It reflects God’s desire to provide man with a companion who would be his intellectual and physical counterpart. The permanency intended in the relationship is expressed in the assertion that man should leave his parents and cleave to his wife (TWOT).

It is with this close relationship which we are concerned; for the father and mother whom the man was to honour all his life (Exod 20:12) are to be abandoned for the union with the man’s wife. The emotional and consanguineal (and less likely geographical) detachment from one’s family seems contradictory to the economic needs of Early Israel. In fact, as we will discuss later, the family’s dependence is on each member in order to survive the difficult milieu of the land; moreover the

emotional attachment that would have been formed in such close quarters and such constant contact with one another. Now the man is instructed to leave this relationship. Apart from the Lord God or man endorsing this practice, more specifically the writer here comments on an already occurring scenario in Israelite society where the man is ‘leaving’ his mother and father and ‘cleaving’ to his wife.

The social and religious connotations of this conjugal unit preponderate as the narrator explains a custom typically practised in his immediate context while commenting on the precedent. The primacy of the husband-wife unit in Israel’s patrilineal society is not unlike many of the examples discussed in the previous chapter and with social scientists like Lévi-Strauss. As with another anthropologist like Fortes, the primacy of the mother-child pairing will come to fore in our discussion on the Holiness Code – after venturing into an area which threatens the order of Early Israel: coitus outside the husband-wife unit.

In summation, the YHWH Service appears to be a unique religion in the ANE as certain practices in effect throughout the land are instead prohibited within Israelite society. Leaving one good thing for a greater thing is an example of unique customs and practices within the religious and sociological life of Israel. One should be cautious in accepting an historical OT reading of Early Israel within their cultural context describing a relationship between a people and their God. The subscriptions within are geared to a people who entered into covenant with Yahweh. In doing so *they* are required to abide by the covenant policies, unless non-Israelites, like Rahab or Ruth, of their choosing, accept the religious and social policies of

Israel. Similarly, other peoples in the ANE and today have certain nuances within each culture or society that one relates to or even conforms to.

As we will observe, the prohibition of male-male sex is an historical fact in Early Israel. It is difficult today to erase or redefine that truth. In modernity we may not subscribe to this prohibition, perhaps as many of us do not consider ourselves Jewish or Christian, and thus do not have to adhere to Judeo-Christian practices. Similarly, in the modern west we may not subscribe to an intimate, non-sexual male-male friendship because we have personal freedoms, rights and choices which extend beyond the limits of Judeo-Christian beliefs.

The chapter 'nineteen narratives' of Genesis and Judges

Homosexual acts or the intention of homosexual acts are what many scholars accentuate in Genesis 19 and Judges 19. In Gen 19:1-29 two angels travelled to Sodom one evening. Lot, an Israelite living in Sodom, invited the two travellers to his home rather than having them spend the night in the square (Gen 19:2, NIV). After Lot's prodding the two eventually accept Lot's invitation to spend the night in his home. The story tells us that before bedtime all the men of Sodom, young and old, surrounded Lot's house and demanded that Lot bring the two male travellers outside so that the Sodomites could have sex with them (19:4-5, NIV). Lot pleads with the Sodomites not to do this 'wicked thing' and offers his two virgin daughters to them instead, for the travellers are under the protection of Lot's roof (vv. 6-8, NIV). The Sodomites rebuke the Israelite Lot's insolent judgment as he is alien to Sodom 'who came to sojourn' (Gen 19:9, ESV). Then they bombard the front door.

The two angels strike all the Sodomite men with a blindness so that they cannot find the door.

The two angels then instruct Lot to gather his family and anyone else who belongs to Lot from the city, and separate from or flee Sodom, for they will destroy it (Gen 19:12-13, NIV). The rationale proffered is that, ‘the outcry to the Lord against its people is so great that he has sent [the two angels] to destroy it (v. 13).’ As Lot and his daughters flee with angels, God ‘rained down sulphur on Sodom and Gomorrah’ (vv. 24-25). From his divinely visited vantage point, Abraham observes the destroyed plain the next morning. Abraham looks towards Sodom, Gomorrah and all the land of the Plain and sees only smoke like that from a furnace. The narrator comments that God remembered Abraham in the midst of the destruction as God himself saved Lot from the catastrophe which overtook the cities of the Plain. Although catastrophe did not overtake Gibeah in Judges 19 a catastrophic event occurs which mirrors much of the attempted male-male gang rape of Genesis 19. A Levite and his concubine travels to Gibeah which is a city occupied by Israelites and not foreigners (Judg 19:12). The narrator makes this very clear as the ‘evil’ about to unfold is within the ranks of Israelite society and not of the *other* or the ungodly aliens. The sojourners arrive late in Gibeah of Benjamin where no one takes them in initially. Eventually an old man who is a sojourner from the hill country of Ephraim, and now lives and works in Gibeah of the Benjaminites, sees the Levite and enquires of his circumstances (vv. 16-17). The Levite explains his predicament including facts that he is on his way to the house of the Lord (or his own levitical house) and that he has enough provisions for his party as well as for his host. As

Lot welcomed the angels in Gen 19, so this old man welcomes the travellers to his house, offers to supply the sojourners with whatever they need, and urges the travellers not to ‘spend the night in the square’ (Judg 19:20). Again the protection of one’s home stands in contrast to the dangers of the open square.

While the old man and his guests are eating and drinking, ‘some of the wicked men of the city surrounded the house’ (v. 22). Pounding the door and shouting they exclaimed to the old man: ‘Bring out the man who came to your house so we can have sex with him’ (v. 22). Recall, a similar demand for male-male coitus is made in Genesis 19, and just as Lot responded before, the old man now rejoins: ‘No, my friends, don’t be so vile. Since this man is my guest, don’t do this disgraceful thing’ (Judg 19:23). The precedent is followed when the host offers the wicked men of the city his virgin daughter and the Levite’s concubine instead. The man repeats his caution, but the ‘wicked men’ of the city did not listen to him and the Levite sends his concubine outside. Is it not ‘disgraceful’ or is it less disgraceful for men to rape a woman than for men to rape a man in Israelite culture? But, diverging from their original intention, perhaps as they are Israelites and not ‘Sodomites’, and unlike the remainder of the Sodom narrative, the wicked men of Gibeah raped and abused the woman throughout the night. Here the wicked men of Israel eventually accept the woman, whereas the wicked men of Sodom did not relent. Perhaps the Sodomites did not have an opportunity to relent, for the angels acted pre-emptively. What stands in contrast between the two stories is the presence of divine beings (i.e., the angels) in one versus the presence of a less than reputable religious man (i.e., the Levite) in the other as the objects of intended danger. Sadly

another contrast is observed whereby a narrative twist to the symbol of the home occurs: earlier in the story the home is established as a safe place but later it becomes a place of danger instead. At this dangerous focal point in both narratives, the horror of the attempted assault on the angels is transformed into an act of salvation by the angels (the key actors) as God representatives through Abraham's prayers; whereas the horror of the attempted assault on the Levite (the key actor) is transposed to the horror of the concubine's final state whether at the hands of the attackers or the Levite himself.

Now the Levite returns home with his limp concubine. Her health is uncertain, nevertheless he proceeds to dice her into twelve parts and distributes the pieces into all areas of Israel (more than likely to the twelve tribes). 'Everyone who saw it said, "Such a thing has never been seen or done, not since the day the Israelites came up out of Egypt. Think about it! Consider it! Tell us what to do"' (v. 30, NIV)! Is this a commentary on the Levite chopping a human into twelve pieces, a commentary on the Israelites raping a woman, a commentary on the intended gang rape, or something else? What should the reader consider (v. 30c)? We know the later action was that *all* Israel from Dan to Beer-Sheba, united as one, and gathered against Gibeah of Benjamin (20:1-11, NRSV). Such a united force is reminiscent of the time of the Ban at the beginning of Judges and in the Book of Joshua when all Israel united against other groups they considered wicked, vile and disgraceful. Or is this even the point of the *nineteen narratives*?

Judges nineteen

Before considering Genesis 19, a view of Judges 19 is appropriate. Perhaps more biblically and scholastically relevant, this nineteen narrative shares the DH corpus as *Samuel* does and brings to the fore Israel's reaction to Israel's own actions, or a culturally internal struggle among kinsmen (e.g., civil war). Although within the historical present of the Book of Judges it becomes more difficult to label Israel's group status as early, premonarchical, tribal league, amphictyony, etc., again we will use simpler language like Israel or Early Israel, as discussed previously. As to the second motive, the narrator and/or editor comment on Israel's reaction to Benjamin of Israel's 'vile' actions (Judges 19:23, NRSV) – whatever it may be. Inherent in the phenomena, like those of Genesis 19 and the Holiness Code, for example, are the people's emotions which cannot be exorcised from understanding. The titanic response of Israel towards Benjamin must also be taken within the context of the narrative and historical precedent (e.g., the Ban).

The preface (19:1) and conclusion (21:25) to the story emphasise the point that: 'In those days there was no king in Israel; all the people did what was right in their own eyes'. Now this commentary could be couched in a larger Deuteronomistic theme that Yahweh and his judges are better rulers than kings. Was it not Israel's last judge Samuel who, according to Yahweh, warned the people of the dangers of having a king to rule over them (1 Sam 8)? Further, the Deuteronomistic preface in Deuteronomy 17 cautions the reader to potential dangers

of the king and imposes limits of his rule; in contrast to an idealised Yahwistic judge and religious representatives who will adjudicate matters.⁴²²

The curious commentary could be interpreted in one of two ways. Either it is better to have Yahweh rule and judge Israel, or it is better to have a king rule Israel, for it is necessary to have someone rule over a 'lawless' people. The second part of the commentary qualifies the first, in that during this period in Israel the people did not follow Yahweh's central policies (e.g., the Decalogue) or society's policies. Instead everyone did what was right in one's own view. Not even one of Yahweh's religious representatives is holy unto the Lord, as we will see with the Levite in this nineteen narrative. The judges themselves were temporary solutions, for when the judge dies *Judges* tells us the people returned to sin against Yahweh [and society]. Perhaps then the continuity of kings, like a David or even another DH preferred king like Josiah, is necessary for Israel (i.e., permanent 'judges'). Providing the latter is the case, a king may have adjudicated the lawlessness in Benjamin and prevented civil war. Was it not David who united the tribes? And like Moses before who provided Israel with the Law and other religious, legal and social policies to control a society without bounds, so too the DH mentions that the chaos after the Exodus was as unruly as the behaviour of Benjamin (v. 30b). Yahweh's servant Moses was needed then to organise the society, and Yahweh's servant David or a king is needed now to rule and judge.

⁴²² It is intriguing that Deut 17:15 stipulates that the king cannot be a foreigner, but Deuteronomistically one of the greatest kings in Israel, if not the greatest, was David whose paternal [great] grandmother was a Moabite (Ruth 4:17, 1:4). She was of a race which Deuteronomic tradition prohibited interaction with (Deut 23:3-6, NRSV). Also recall the Moabites' incestuous origin in Gen 19:30-38.

While we treat Genesis 19 in more detail below, for much of the scholarship on the David-Jonathan relationship refers to this significant nineteen narrative, it is important to note that Genesis 19 sets the framework for Judges 19 in that the language and scenario are almost identical. C.F. Burney juxtaposes the nineteen narratives to reveal ‘the closeness of the verbal coincidence’ and the account of the outrage (vv. 22ff) as parallel phrase by phrase with Gen. 19:4ff.⁴²³ Burney also juxtaposes Judges 19 with 1 Samuel 11. This parallel alludes to some cultural observations for Israel. The type-scene of cutting sacrificial property (i.e., a concubine, cattle) into pieces and distributing them through all Israel *is* a call to arms or a battle cry. Since a splintering of forces after the Ban and Joshua’s leadership, a new battle cry is needed to unify the ‘military’ against a common foe: cutting property to pieces and signalling Israel for united battle.

The concubine’s identity

If this woman is considered property in the culture, then Israel’s titanic outcry was not directed at her gang rape, death, or splicing. Some cultural and narrative elements pervade. First this is no ordinary woman. Her status is made clear in that the narrator and actors refer to her as ‘concubine’ eleven times in chapters 19 and 20. She is referred to as ‘woman’ only three times, and two of those occurrences are by the narrator/editor and not her ‘husband’ (19:3, 20:4, NRSV), the Levite. As we note the term ‘husband’ used only twice, we realise that it is employed by the narrator/editor and not the Levite. He neither considers himself her husband, nor her his ‘wife’, for the term is remarkably absent in this

⁴²³ C. F. Burney, *The Book of Judges: With Introduction and Notes*, ed. C. F. Burney, 2d ed. (London: Rivingtons, 1920), 444-45.

narrative. Furthermore, her status stands in contrast to the host's *virgin* daughter. Her identity is clear: she is not a full-status 'woman', a wife, or a virgin; she is a concubine or someone of lesser repute. As with previous OT concubines, she has little to no status and can be disposed of more readily. Abraham disposed of his concubines by sending them away (Gen 25:6). Their sons would have no part in Isaac's blessings. Previously, Sarah, the *wife* of Abraham, demanded he dispose of Hagar and her son Ishmael, 'for the son of this slave woman shall not inherit along with my son Isaac' (21:10c).

The matter of disposition can be further extended to bolster the case for this woman's lower status. The concubine may have died as a result of repeat rape by multiple assailants throughout the night (Judg 19:25). She reappears at her master's accommodations and perhaps falls dead there from the night's trauma, and when the morning light appears so her master appears also. The Levite addresses her but there is no response. She may be dead so he puts her on the donkey and they travel home (v. 28). Perhaps she dies en-route? If not already dead, she dies at the hands of her master when he takes the knife, grasps the concubine, and cuts her into twelve pieces (v. 29, NRSV). Whatever the case for her death, she has died, and the Levite has had ample opportunity to dispose of the body. Instead of interment the Levite opts for an animalistic slaughter *and* distribution of the remains. The concubine is sacrificed in this ritual instead of the ox (c.f., 1 Sam 11:7), just as she was sacrificed to the gang of Benjaminites instead of the Levite. In the 1 Samuel account of this ritual, McCarter believes it to be a symbolic curse for those who do

not heed the call.⁴²⁴ Like other ANE parallels, failure to respond would result in dismemberment of one's own oxen or of one's own person. The Levite then infers that the twelve tribes might experience the same fate, or their concubines, if they fail to respond. Clearly other symbolic elements are at play in this ritualistic sacrifice, which might be investigated at a future date, but for now the concubine does not *merit* a burial. She is more readily disposed of than full-status women.

Elizabeth Bloch-Smith provides some insight into a woman's status for this period in Israelite history through *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead*.⁴²⁵ Proper burial required interment in a 'burial place' (Gen 23:4; Exod 14:11; Isa 22:16; Gen 35:20; Deut 34:6; Isa 14:20) including a common burial field like the Kidron Valley (2 Kings 23:6). Burials with one's family became popular with the conquest generation and Rachel: a woman was buried on the border of Benjamin, which reflected a territorial boundary (1 Sam 10:2). Recall, Rachel is the *wife* of Jacob and *mother* of their special sons, Joseph and Benjamin. In Gen 48:7,⁴²⁶ Rachel died while sojourning and an appropriate time was taken to bury her in an appropriate place. During the Exodus journey, Miriam, Moses' sister, was afforded the honour of a burial at Kadesh (Num 20:1). Now if the Levite's concubine died en-route, there was a cultural norm to stop and bury a deceased female. A final feminine example is Deborah's burial under a tree (Gen 35:8). Deborah, a labourer and perhaps servant, was Rebekah's nurse. Strikingly burial under a tree represented both a divine presence and immortality, as it illustrated the 'tree of life'

⁴²⁴ McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 203.

⁴²⁵ Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs About the Dead*, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series*, vol. 123 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 110-15.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*, 114, n. 4.

in the Garden of Eden. Although female and in servitude *this woman* was doubly honoured with her interment.

According to the Bible, interment was accorded to all who served Yahweh; sinners were cursed with denial of burial or exhumation (Deut. 28.25-26; 1 Kgs 13.22; 14.10-11; Jer. 16.4), and certain sexual crimes were punishable by burning the individuals involved (Gen. 38.24; Lev. 20.14, 21.9) . . . Less fortunate individuals were consigned to the common burial field (2 Kgs 23.6).

While higher classed people received more elaborate burials, most people like the poor, non-Israelite, and non-officials received a simple interment.⁴²⁷ Gender was not a factor for interment preferences. However one's status like playing the harlot and other sexual crimes were punishable by burning. So, biblically, the Levite's concubine could have received a proper burial even if by 'cremation'. But she did not have status relative to other Israelites. 'Of all the characters in scripture, she is the least . . . Neither the other characters nor the narrator recognizes her humanity . . . She is property, object, tool, and literary device' [*sic*].⁴²⁸ So, based on the literary element of the type-scene's call to arms and the ease at which the concubine's body is disposed, it can be concluded that she did not have status. Thus Israel's outcry and titanic response were not related to the concubine, her gang rape, death, or sacrifice.

The vile thing among kinsmen

As with the other nineteen narrative, hospitality could be a factor in Israel's response. At the first, hospitality is not the issue as the old man from Ephraim, who

⁴²⁷ Ibid., 149.

⁴²⁸ Phyllis Tribble, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives*, Overtures to Biblical Theology (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 80.

was living in Benjamin, cared for all the travellers' wants, blessed them, fed the donkeys, washed their feet, provided food and drink, provided a place to sleep, and offered his own virgin daughter to the gang in order to fulfil protection protocols (Judg 19:20, 24). But in the second, the inhospitality of the Benjaminites can be at stake, for no Benjaminite offered the traveller a place to stay, instead it was an Ephraimite who did (vv. 15c, 18c). Furthermore, the Benjaminites were inhospitable to the Levite when they disregarded his rights in the old man's home and demanded he have non-consensual intercourse with all the members of the gang.

More to the point, the disgraceful 'vile thing' from the discourse between the host and the gang of Benjaminites in 19:24 is clarified as the non-consensual, group male-male sexual attack⁴²⁹ in the dialogue of chapter 20. The disgraceful thing does not refer to the Benjaminites inactions, but to their actions and intentions: 'Bring out the man who came into your house, so that we may have intercourse with him' (19:22c). Having been summoned to arms, the Israelites asked the Levite about the 'criminal *act*' (20:3, NRSV). He responded that the 'lords' of Gibeah 'rose up against' him, surrounded the house, intended to kill and rape him, but killed and raped his concubine instead (20:5, *c.f.*, 19:22). And because, 'they have committed a vile outrage in Israel' he decided to call Israel to arms (20:6). After he asks their counsel (v. 7), Israel responds emphatically that as a leading *group* from Gibeah rose up against him (v. 5), so they will in kind, 'go up against it by *lot*' (v. 9) to repay Benjamin, 'for all the disgrace that they have done in Israel' (v. 10c), 'so that

⁴²⁹ Apart from the physical aspects of the *attack*, matters of power, control, domination, and other elements might be part of the *attack* or the primary rationale for the *attack*.

we may put them to death, and purge the evil from Israel' (v. 13b). Then, 'the LORD defeated Benjamin before Israel' (v. 35a) and Israel put the Benjaminites to the sword and 'the remaining towns they set on fire' (v. 48). Likewise *the LORD* in Genesis nineteen *purged* Sodom and the surrounding *towns* by *fire*. This confirms Bloch-Smith's notion that sexual crimes were punishable by burning.

Furthermore, the colossal response includes a sworn oath that no one in Israel shall offer their daughters in marriage to anyone left from Benjamin (21:1), thereby severing basic marital exchanges in the society. Moreover, Israel discovered a group from Jabesh-gilead which did not join them against Benjamin, and they killed them too (vv. 5-12). Clearly this refers to the Levite's battle cry and McCarter's observation that those who do not heed the call are destined for death as well. However, Israel discriminately chose those destined for death. Of the treacherous Jabesh-gileadites, all the men, women, and children are to be put to the sword (v. 10). Particularly, 'every male and every woman that has lain with a male you shall devote to destruction' (v. 11), except 'four hundred young virgins who had never slept with a man' (v. 12a). Every sexually active male and female, whether they performed heterosexual or homosexual coitus, is contrasted with sexually inactive females – the former group shall be destroyed and the latter group shall be saved. Unlike Yahweh and Abraham's exchange, when 'the Judge of all the earth' promised to 'do what was just' and relent on destroying Sodom and 'the whole place' even if only ten righteous remained (Gen 18:22-33); Israel 'did what was right in their own eyes' (Judg 21:25b) and saved only the virgin women.

From Yahweh's exchange to Israel's exchange, the surviving Benjaminites are given wives from these virgin women and granted⁴³⁰ wives from the female dancers of Shiloh (vv. 13-14, 20-23). The marital exchanges solidify peace between the warring communities. Israel made peace with the Benjaminites (v. 13c), had compassion on them (v. 15a), and allowed the survivors to marry and rebuild their destroyed territory (vv. 23-24). The crime that Benjamin of *Israel* committed against the Levite of *Israel* was grossly punished by all of *Israel*, but eventually this fractured moiety exchanged the horror of Benjamin's actions and Israel's reactions for peace in Israel among their *kinsmen*.

Religious and masculine power

In a fascinating exposé on Judges 17-21, Gale A. Yee⁴³¹ incorporates social anthropological methods into an historical analysis of the text.⁴³² Of note is the context of this nineteen narrative, which is placed within the corpus of chapters 17-21, and indicates that the piece should be contextualised as promonarchy propaganda during the time of King Josiah, his 'religious reforms', and a preexilic DH. Chapters 17-21 serve to discredit 'country clergy', like the Levite, in favour of centralised monarchy and religion. In other words, for Yee's DH, everyone does right in the sight of the state-church, as in these days when a king rules. Yee

⁴³⁰ In granting the Benjaminites wives from this group, Israel permits the *abduction* of these women (vv. 21-23). Do female dancers hold a lesser feminine status in Israel? How do dancers compare with concubines?

⁴³¹ Yee also edited the same book containing her article. *Judges and Method* (2007) integrates social scientific approaches, among others, with that of traditional biblical scholarship to analyse biblical matter.

⁴³² Gale A. Yee, "Ideological Criticism: Judges 17-21 and the Dismembered Body," in *Judges and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, ed. Gale A. Yee (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 138-60.

points to gender power and status as rationale for the social chaos⁴³³ in the nineteen narrative and following. First, she underscores the concubine's doubly subordinate position. The concubine is first subordinate to the man and then to the wife. As such, she serves as sexual gratification for the man while the wife honours the conjugal family and society with offspring. The concubine is property and her, 'raped and battered body replaces⁴³⁴ the sacrificial animal'. According to the DH, this historical event and period is contrasted to the time of kings in, '1 Samuel 11 where King Saul protects Jabesh-Gilead', and appropriately uses an animal for the call to arms rather than a human being. Finally, as the text is replete with male-male power dominations, Yee contends that the gang rape would severely shame the Levite's honour and subordinate him to, 'a fate worse than death; they wanted to rape him'.

Although masculinity is sandwiched between the Judges 19:1 and 21:25 refrains (which are different exclamatories to those at the beginning of the book), it cannot be disputed that the men (and women) of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. Not unlike their contemporaries in the ANE, post-Joshua Israel (repeatedly) forgot Yahweh and worshipped other gods (e.g., 3:7) – which is a direct violation of the first command in the Decalogue and reminiscent of the golden calf scenario and Moses' displeasure (Exod 32). The socio-historical context of Israel's actions and

⁴³³ Ibid., 152-57.

⁴³⁴ Does the human really *replace* the animal as the agency for sacrifice? In Genesis 22 the great patriarch of Israel, Abraham, was directed by Yahweh to sacrifice his human son. Just in time, Yahweh replaces the human sacrifice with an animal. But that does not preclude queries into the culture of human sacrifice at both the historical present and editorial present of the *Genesis* writings. Most scholars would agree that by 6th-7th century Israel this practice was not acceptable and thus would impact our reading of *Judges* and *Samuel*, from an editorial sense, at least. Future research into this dilemma may begin through scholars Roland de Vaux (1964), Paul G. Mosca (1975), Moshe Greenberg (1983), and Jon D. Levenson (1993).

relationship to Yahweh are not only relevant to the Decalogue but in discovering the nature of the monarchy and the culture surrounding the David-Jonathan relationship.

A Divine-human relationship: Genesis 19

However controversial these stories and their analyses might be, it is important to look within the historical record of the larger story. In particular the Genesis 19 narrative falls on the heels of a dialogue between Abraham and God. More precisely, the Divine-human discourse seems to occur between two characters who are quite familiar with one another. God and Abraham have interacted on many occasions prior to this juncture in the Genesis story. The apparent climax of their relationship is when God has promised Abraham that he will become a great and powerful nation and that all the nations on the earth would be blessed through him (18:18-19; cf., 12:2-3). God and Abraham's relationship includes benefits and intimacies which might just prompt the Divine to reveal secrets to his human companion.

The encounter begins when 'the LORD' and two other 'men' appear to Abraham one day by Mamre (18:1-2, NIV). Abraham invites the men for a respite in his home in order to wash and have a meal. 'The LORD' informs Sarah, Abraham's aged wife, that she will have a son in a year's time. Sarah does not believe him initially but may have been convinced not of her capability to have a child in her old age but by the authority of the speaker (vv. 13-15). The three men rise to depart for Sodom as Abraham escorts his guests. The narrative reveals a thought as the LORD deliberates:

‘Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham shall become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? No, for I have chosen him, that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice; so that the Lord may bring about for Abraham what he has promised him’ (Gen. 18:17-19, NRSV).

What is immediately striking is the relationship the Lord has with Abraham. For the Deity to contemplate revealing his actions upon humanity seems contradictory to acts of the Divine. After all he is GOD the Creator of humanity so there is no need to deliberate upon his course of action with man, but this Deity does. God and Abraham have a history. Their experiences together begin when God calls Abram to depart or ‘go’ from Haran and his father’s re-settled home to the land of Canaan (Gen. 11:31-12:5). This pericope is in a part of Scripture some call the beginning of Redemptive History or even Patriarchal History. Redemption would begin then with a series of blessings. The Lord promises to make of Abram a great nation, to bless him, to make his name great so that he will be a blessing, to bless those who bless him, to curse those who curse him, to bless all the families of the earth through him, and to give Canaan to Abram’s offspring (12:2-7). Later, Abram settles in the promised land of Canaan and his nephew Lot settles in Sodom. The narrator mentions that, ‘the people of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the LORD’ (13:13). This assessment precedes a war in which Sodom was involved and Lot was in peril (ch. 14).

But Abram’s ‘trained servants’ defeat the enemy and Abram brings back all the goods and people from the cities of the Plain along with Lot and his goods (vv. 14-16, NKJV). Melchizedek king of Salem and a priest of God rewarded Abram’s

success with bread and wine (seemingly on behalf of the rebel forces). The king also blessed Abram by ‘God Most High, *Possessor* of heaven and earth’ (14:19, NASU; cf., ‘Creator’ in NIV) who ‘delivered’ the enemy to Abram.

Now an interesting dialogue between Abram and Bera king of Sodom takes place. In verse 21 the king suggests Abram ‘give’ or return to him the ‘persons’ of Sodom but Abram is to keep the ‘goods’ for himself. But since Sodom has been looted, why not keep some of the goods to rebuild the city? If the people of Sodom were wicked and sinners against God (13:13), why would Bera desire such an unpleasant group? Furthermore, the reader has been given insight into Sodom’s future destruction (13:10). How does this also play into Bera’s request? Perhaps Bera is concerned for his people or perhaps there is another reason he asked for the people in particular. Yet Abram refuses anything from Bera *in particular* (v. 23b). A startling contrast is presented here as Abram has just received food, drink and a blessing from the other rebel king, Melchizedek, but rejects Bera’s offer on account of an oath Abram made to God. The oath in effect released Abram from any indentured or contractual relationships with Bera or Sodom. For example in *exchange* for Abram saving Sodom’s people, Bera makes Abram rich, which may lead to other obligations from Sodom demanded of Abram.

What is important is that there is much detail about possessions, goods, resources and blessings in this and the preceding chapters. In chapter 12 God promises Abram and his descendants land and other blessings. Then verse 5 explains how Abram gathers the possessions and persons he acquired in Haran to depart for Canaan. Later in verse 16 Abram acquires more possessions on account

of Sarai (known later as Sarah). Then the narrator comments on Abram's wealth in Genesis 12:20 and 13:1-2. Abram's (and Lot's) possessions are so vast that the land could not support Abram and Lot collectively (v. 5-6). In Genesis 13:14-18 God again promises the land of Canaan to Abram and his descendants, after which Abram settles in Canaan.

During the Melchizedek ritual God is referred to as the *Possessor* of heaven and earth. First Melchizedek attributes this characteristic to God in verse 19 (NKJV) then Abram reiterates this title in verse 22. Also during the exchange, mention of possessions or persons and goods generally and specifically are repeated several times (e.g., bread, wine, a tithe, persons, goods, a thread, sandal strap, anything, portion [twice]). Ultimately it is God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth who has protected Abram and given him such wealth and possessions.

In the current precedent, Abram receives gifts from the Deity and repays through an intangible relationship. The spiritual representative, found in Melchizedek, serves as the medium for the sacrifice and exchange. However to receive gifts from Bera of Sodom would have cancelled the *contract* with Yahweh and/or proffered Divine consequences of dishonour.

Remarkably, in 1 Samuel, David does not accept King Saul's militaristic gift, yet later accepts the crown prince's militaristic giftings. Then again, the national hero rejects the king's initial marital exchange or engagement with the first daughter over a second offer of marriage with the younger daughter. Although anecdotally, practical reasons are given for David's rejecting the gifts, religiously

and socially other implications might be at play – one being subjugation to a power other than Yahweh.

Justice and righteousness

Nonetheless, Abram's relationship with God and prior association with Bera are essential for the narrator's plot development in Sodom's pending destruction. God covenants with Abraham and his offspring (ch. 17) before the story leads to God reappearing to Abraham near Mamre; where God affirms the son Abraham and Sarah will have in due time. Although they are old, Abraham believed in the Lord and this promise in a previous encounter, 'and He [God] accounted it to him for righteousness' (Gen. 15:6). But now Sarah laughs as she does not have the confidence in God and the special relationship Abraham and God have developed thus far.

From worshipping multiple gods to worshipping the one God, YHWH or EL (Joshua 24:2), Abraham and God develop a close friendship. Contrary to the Canaanites and other cultures in the ANE, ELOHIM or YHWH (cf., Gen. 15:7) is now the personal, ritualised, relational God of Abraham, rather than one of many gods of things or places. The New Testament's interpretation of the OT affirms the personal nature of God and Abraham's friendship. The account of James 2:23 stipulates that Abraham was called 'the friend of God' immediately following James' quote of Genesis 15:6 in which Abraham believes God and 'it is accounted to him for righteousness'. The Lord God had found Abraham to 'stand in the breach' before him on behalf of Sodom to dispute their destruction (Ezekiel 22:30, NRSV). Likewise the ritualised relationship of Jonathan and David serves David

later as Jonathan adjudicates matters before King Saul. Now this unique relationship serves God well as he is righteous and just and his friendship with the righteous Abraham will be employed to adjudicate Sodom's sin.

Now in Gen. 18:20 the Lord begins to reveal to Abraham the outcry against Sodom and that he has come down to adjudicate the matter. Notably, the 'outcry' against Sodom and Gomorrah is reminiscent of other closely placed outcries in the Pentateuch. In Genesis 4 Cain kills his brother Abel over the matter of their offerings to the Lord and God communicates to Cain that his brother's blood is 'crying' out to Him from the ground (v. 10). Later in Exodus 1 the Egyptians forget the Hebrew Joseph's influence on their nation and they turn against the children of Israel. Egypt appoints taskmasters over Israel, afflicts them with hard labour (v. 11), and attempts to kill all the firstborn males (v. 16). The children of Israel 'cried out' to God, 'and their cry for help because of *their* bondage which rose up to God'. So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob' (Exod 2:23-24, NASU). In both instances the people cry out to God and he responds. God is righteous and just and must adjudicate the appeal from the people. Cain's murderous act and Egypt's abuse of the children of Israel both compel God to intervene. In a just verdict for the victim Abel, God curses Cain and relegates him to fugitive status. Then, in mercy, God tempers the sentence by marking Cain so that others would not kill him lest God's vengeance fall upon them greatly.

As Israel is still alive, their just verdict is deliverance from Egypt. Admittedly Pharaoh and Egypt have sinned against the righteous Lord and are a

wicked people (Exod. 9:27, 10:16, NASU). Eventually Moses delivers the children of Israel from the bondage and slavery of Egypt, albeit at a cost to the Egyptian overlords. In mercy, God repeatedly offers Egypt an opportunity to let his people go, but they continually refuse with hardened hearts. As a result the Egyptians pay by losing much of their wealth to the Israelites, their crops and livestock, their firstborn males, and their soldiers' lives in the Red Sea – among other things. But Sodom has not lost anything yet in this case. Although the narrator has signalled Sodom's offence to the reader, God has not implemented his verdict: the destruction of Sodom. So God and his friend, Abraham, deliberate after the Lord has his own personal debate.

The Lord's internal dialogue reveals something of the problem with Sodom. An outcry or appeal for help against Sodom and Gomorrah has reached the Lord and he has observed how grave their sin is. In contrast God chooses to discuss the Sodom problem with Abraham because God has chosen or has 'known' Abraham (Gen. 18:19, *yada*). Yet God does not know Sodom. The narrator informed us earlier that the people of Sodom are 'wicked exceedingly and sinners against the LORD' (13:13, NASU). The reader has also been prompted with the conclusion that God is going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah from Gen. 13:10. Now their very grave sin has gone up to the Lord in a great outcry for *justice*.

Sodom's very grave sin and unrighteousness stand in contrast to Abraham's righteousness, justice and being known by God. God knows Abraham through their long established ritualised relationship and he represents one thing which God requires of man in the Micah 6 directive which is to do justice (v. 8). Moreover

God *chooses* or *knows* Abraham specifically because he will train his children and future family to observe the LORD's way of life or worldview by living kindly, generously and fairly (Gen. 17-19, The Message). Incidentally this characteristic of training one's children to observe the ways of the Lord features prominently later as Moses reiterates to the people of Israel the commands of the Lord (*c.f.*, Deut 6:1-9). Sodom is neither righteous nor just. They neither live according to the way of the Lord nor do they train their children in such manner. Instead they are [exceedingly] wicked and [great] sinners against the LORD (*cf.*, Gen. 13:13, NRSV with NKJV).

The narrator's structure of chapter 18 also characterises the contrast of justice and righteousness with injustice and unrighteousness. Observe in Genesis 18:1-15, God delivers a message of impending life or a newborn son to Abraham and Sarah, but in vv. 16-33 God delivers a message of impending death or the destruction of Sodom to Abraham. Abraham has found favour with YHWH as the Lord renews his promise from chapter 12. Abraham merits life for his faithfulness or a just verdict from God for his righteousness. Sodom's wickedness and sin has come before the Lord in the outcry. Sodom and Gomorrah merit death for their unrighteousness or a just verdict from God for their actions against humanity and the Lord's way.

God and Abraham's discussion also focus on justice. Although God is focused on the injustice against his way and humanity, Abraham's focus is on the just living in Sodom (*i.e.*, his nephew, perhaps). The justice themed interchange envelopes the pericope as the focus shifts from those who made the outcry to the great, or few, righteous people who live in Sodom. Hence the dialectic for the

Genesis 19 story: God is righteous and just, Sodom is neither, but Abraham is and is chosen by God. An outcry for justice for the victim and against Sodom's unrighteousness has been raised to the just God. So as he is just and righteous he conveys to the righteous Abraham that he has decided to 'go down' to see if the outcry factually represents the actions of the cities of the Plain, 'and if not, I [God] will know' (Gen. 18:21, NRSV).

It is quite fascinating that God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth (14:19, NIV) does not merely adjudicate from his high place in heaven but comes down to first investigate, confirm the sentence and then execute the verdict if necessary. This act of a just and merciful God is familiar to OT audiences and implies the Yahwist (J) narrator's thrust of the nearness of God to humanity. The first of two closely placed narratives when God specifically 'comes down' to interact personally with his creation was discussed earlier (in other occurrences God still interacts personally with his creation but the narrator omits the 'comes down' or 'goes down' formulae): God comes down 'to deliver' the children of Israel from their 'oppression' in Egypt (Exod. 3:7-8).

The second is after the Flood narrative and before the *toledoth* descendants-story of Terah and his son Abram. Here Genesis 11:5 describes the scene at the Tower of Babel. Creation has been renewed, God renews some key imperatives to Noah and humanity, Noah's three sons and their families disperse through the known world, and humankind rally together to build a tower to heaven in order to 'make a name' for themselves (v. 4). The Lord is concerned about the arrogance of man in this act and how far mankind would go in their unrighteous state. (Recall a

similar concern in the Garden of Eden, the arrogance of Adam and Eve's new knowledge of good and evil possibly being coupled with eternal life which causes their expulsion and dispersion.⁴³⁵) So God and his divine courtiers decide to 'go down and confuse their [one] language' in order to stop the building of this tower and any future misfortunes. The effect is that the people are also dispersed throughout the earth as they can no longer communicate effectively. Now God and his associates 'come down' near Sodom and Gomorrah to examine this case. His associates proceed to Sodom leaving God and Abraham to study the matter. Abraham, being righteous himself, takes up the cause or defends the righteous in Sodom – if there are any (Gen. 18:23-24).

The narrator retreats to a language of discourse in righteousness and justice again with Abraham's enquiry: 'Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked' (Gen. 18:23, NRSV)? The ensuing queries all reiterate the same 'righteous' and 'just' theme. In this pericope alone Abraham employs the term 'righteous' seven times in his discourse with God (vv. 23-28). Further, Abraham implicates the righteous Judge himself as justice would not be served if the righteous are swept away with the wicked (vv. 24-25). God may have opened a Pandora's Box by involving Abraham in this debate. 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just' (v. 25b)? The answer is yes! God chose (v. 19a, NRSV) to have Abraham involved in this deliberation because Abraham is known by the Lord

⁴³⁵ Then the Lord God said, "See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"—therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a sword flaming and turning to guard the way to the tree of life' (Gen. 3:22-24, NRSV).

(v. 19a, NKJV). Abraham knows the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice with his family. Sodom does not. As Abraham does justice, loves mercy for his client, and walks humbly with God, so God interjects this righteous man into defending the unrighteous client (e.g., King Bera) in His just court (see Micah 6:8).

Excursus: Jonah, Mishpat and Sedeq

The Sodomites' narrative shares commonalities with the Ninevites in *The Book of Jonah* that it does not share with the Benjaminites' narrative.

- The people's sin/wickedness had been presented to God (Gen 18:20-21; Jon 1:2).
- The offending people groups are not in covenant with God; they are neither Israelites nor Hebrews (cf., Jonah stipulates he is a Hebrew who worships God, Jon 1:9), and they are foreigners (Sodomites and Gomorrans in Gen 18:20; Ninevites in Jon 3:2-3) living outside the sacred land (i.e., Promised Land).
- The population of the offending people groups are in question (Gen 18:22-33; Jon 4:11). Value is placed on human lives whether the number is small or great and accounting for a collective group versus individuals.
- God sends his own representatives to the offending peoples [contrast Israel taking it upon themselves to go to Benjamin after being incited by the Levite] (The angels in Gen 18:1-2, 18:16, 19:1; Jonah in Jon 1:1-2, 3:2-3).
- The offending peoples react to the presence of the holy representatives in their sacred *space* (Gen 19:4-5, 9; Jon 3:5-9). Both peoples become aware of the impending doom if they do not change or repent of their unrighteous ways. They also seem aware that a deity is involved in the judgement. While the Sodomites are offended at outsiders determining their fate, the Ninevites (and king) realise their wickedness and repent. Both groups are 'invaded' by outsiders in their own land.
- God himself reacts to the people's response through his decision [contrary to the rest of Israel responding to Benjamin]. The Sodomites are adamant and defiant in continuing their harm against others, so God rains down sulphur and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah. However, the Ninevites repent, and God relents the destruction (Gen 19:24-25; Jon 3:10).

This is further proof that Gen 19 is more about justice and righteousness than homosexuality, in that it shares certain commonalities with themes in *Jonah*. God's justice and righteousness, a peoples' unrighteousness and injustice, and how God reacts are key features of both stories. For God and many of the OT writers, the standard for justice or by which one judges and makes decisions is The Decalogue. The first five or so commands deal with relations to God and the latter commands treat one's relation to another human. Clearly, Nineveh and Sodom have injured others and the injurers' cries for justice reached the Universal Judge. Both *Jonah* and *Genesis* reflect the sentiment of *Jeremiah*:

At one moment I may declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, but if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will change my mind about the disaster that I intended to bring on it. And at another moment I may declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, but if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will change my mind about the good that I had intended to do to it (Jer 18:7-10).

As we observe Abraham's trial with God, the Almighty seeks to investigate the sin before executing the verdict. Abraham desires mercy for his clients, God knows Abraham and both enjoy a mutual intimacy which the other characters in the narrative do not. Abraham has been through his own difficulties with the Lord in order that he might now follow righteousness and justice in the ways of YHWH. Not unlike the nations of the Ban and perhaps as harbinger to Deuteronomistic History, Bera, his people and possessions are off limits to Abram. Abram promised God the Possessor of heaven and earth not to take anything from Bera for it is the Possessor himself who can give possessions (and his creation) in order to make

Abram rich (Gen. 14:22-23, NRSV). Abram's oath to shun the wicked goods and people is taught to his progeny. The Levitical Law and even Joshua's subsequent actions enhance the separate and holy nature of the chosen or known people of God, i.e., Abraham's offspring. Neither Abraham nor Israel are to enter ritualised relationships with other deities or peoples outside their social/geographical boundaries. God instructed Joshua that Jericho was under 'a ban' (*cherem*) (Josh. 6:17, NASU). All the people and possessions belong to the Lord for utter destruction. With the exception of some precious metals, Rahab who subscribed to YHWH being God of heaven and earth (2:11) and who 'hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho' (6:25, cf., v. 17), the men and women of all ages, livestock, the city, and 'all that was in it' was put to the sword and burned with fire (vv. 21, 24, cf., v. 26). It is the way of the Lord not to be involved in the ways of the unrighteous or unjust. Jericho and Sodom follow in this counter-consecrated way. Abraham cannot comingle with the wickedness of the Sodomites. Only those who follow Abraham's teachings of Yahweh-Elohim are righteous and just and must be consecrated from the unrighteous and unjust.

Another important observation rests on the focus of the narrator. In the preceding verses and the discussion between Abraham, Melchizedek, and Bera the emphasis focused on people *and* goods (q.v., To Structure and Classify). However, in Abraham's deliberation with God in chapter 18, then later in chapter 19 (especially v. 13), the focus shifts to a discussion on *people* only. Like the Ninevites the acts of the people of Sodom are the focus of discussion between God and his human intermediary. Abraham and God deliberate not the facts of the

accusation or how Sodom arrived at this juncture, but the rationale and people's actions behind the verdict and the sentence instead. The first implication is that the reader and people of the time already know some indisputable characteristics about those who live in Sodom and Gomorrah. Even so, can the righteous actions of a segment of the populace be enough to stay the sentence – even if there are only a few people? Sodom and Gomorrah's sin is very grave but the sentence may be stayed if even ten righteous people are found in the cities (Gen. 18:32).

The Lord and Abraham close their deliberations and the reader later learns that the verdict stands even after Genesis 18:33. It is not until an example of Sodom's injustice against another 'man' is presented, that the reader confirms her/his current understanding of the outcry. Divinely and socially, it is agreed that the very grave sin is itself unrighteousness and injustice. But does the now-legal verdict warrant a sentence of destruction for all of king Bera's people and the accompanying cities of the Plain? This court conference becomes a bargaining or pleading by Abraham to spare the city because of the possible righteous people who live in it. In the end Lot and his daughters were spared. Were Lot and his daughters spared because they were righteous? If they were righteous then God would have spared the city as per Abraham's pleadings. However because they were *taken* from the doomed city their righteousness may not have been commendable enough to stay the destruction. Abraham may have thought Lot was righteous in accord with his debate with God. In the end Abraham was ill-advised about Lot's state with God. He was wrong, as evidently the city was not saved and Lot, with his daughters' unrighteousness, merited *rescue* due to Abraham's intervention.

Although Lot might not have been deemed righteous his earlier actions revealed a level of understanding in the ways of Abraham which were possibly taught by the patriarch. For when the angels approached Lot in Sodom he reacted to them in a similar fashion as Abraham did earlier. Lot bowed down to the men and invited them to stay for a respite (19:1-2). It is curious that in both instances the ‘man of the house’ not only greets the guests but abases himself before the visitors. With all the wealth these men had acquired, surely a servant would have been more appropriate to tend to the needs of guests. This revisits the query of whether Abraham or Lot recognised the true identity of the guests. Nevertheless Lot was not ignorant of the ways or teachings of Abraham or their culture – specifically in matters of hospitality and social justice (Exod. 22:21; 23:9). As Lot bows to these men does he also recognise that they are angels? In contrast with Abraham who noticed the men approaching his home, Lot notices these men as he sat in the gateway of Sodom (19:1). Lot would have had to observe certain characteristics about these men which were different from those of Sodom, or (at the very least) Lot would have recognised that these men were not members of the local community. In either case Lot himself ‘*rose* to meet them’ rather than another person in Sodom greeting the strangers. Something was different about these men and/or something prompted Lot in particular to feel compelled to greet them and insist that they stay with him rather than in the square.

As we discussed earlier, Lot’s understanding of hospitality contributed to his persistent invitation. The Semitic invitation of hospitality then makes the Sodomites’ later reaction culpable of violating the protections granted by the

invitation. The men of Sodom became guilty of attempts to transgress this law by their abuse towards the strangers, insult towards the travellers, and inhospitality towards the needy.⁴³⁶ Hence as observed, Ezekiel's and Isaiah's claims against Sodom of pride, xenophobia, and judicial offences (and the rejection of God's messengers).⁴³⁷

Why was Lot so adamant in having the men stay with him rather than staying in the open square? Likewise, the old man in Judges 19 was just as adamant with the Levite. Does this act and the ensuing one contribute to Lot's righteousness as he aided those in need of shelter (cf., Ezekiel 16:49, NRSV) and did not want his guests involved with the adultery, evildoings, and culture of wickedness of Sodom (cf., Jeremiah 23:14, NRSV). Being a resident in Sodom himself, Lot would have been privy to the cultural values of the natives. Having been taught by Abraham before he decided to live in Sodom, Lot would have known Abrahamic values as well. As we discussed earlier it seemed apparent to the people of the region that Sodom and Gomorrah had a certain reputation. We concluded that according to Abrahamic values this reputation would not have been appropriate within his sect, society and seed. As noted above, the Books of Ezekiel and Jeremiah allude to the well known morals (or lack thereof) of the cities of the Plain. Ezekiel describes the guilt of Sodom as pride, excess food, prosperous ease, the failure to aid the poor and needy, haughtiness, and similar things abominable in God's view (16:46, NRSV). Jeremiah lists adultery, walking in lies, strengthening the hands of evildoers, and not

⁴³⁶ Kenneth A. Locke, "The Bible on Homosexuality: Exploring Its Meaning and Authority," *Journal of Homosexuality* 48, no. 2 (2004): 130.

⁴³⁷ Ibid.

turning from wickedness are the shocking images likened to Sodom and Gomorrah (23:14, NRSV). Sodom's very grave practice of unrighteousness and injustice warranted a response from God and his angels. Even when the angels arrived in Sodom to investigate the outcry against the city the Sodomites did not withhold their depraved actions. After Lot prevented a possible incident in the square between the men from God and the men from Sodom, the persistent Sodomites brought their assault to the home of Lot and his guests. The story unfolds with haste, for the angels did not even have a chance to lie down before the attack from the men of the city began (Gen. 19:4).

'[T]he men of the city, the men of Sodom, *both* young and old, *all* the people *to the last* man, surrounded the house' (v. 4). The writer expunges all pleasantries as he implicates the entire city in this unrighteous act. Surely a measure of narrative license is afoot as the writer did not actually mean 'all the people to the last man' surrounded Lot's home.⁴³⁸ After all how could the *entire* city assemble around one man's house – the square would certainly be a more suitable gathering place for the large population. Nonetheless the imagery of a large portion of the populace was represented at Lot's home and involved in the strength of this evildoing or very grave sin. Likewise if the visitors were to remain in the square that night a large contingent might have assaulted them there too. What is apparent to the writer is that Abraham's pleas for Sodom were unwarranted, for there really are no righteous ones in Sodom as *both* old and young men of Sodom *and all* the people from *every* quarter wanted to attack the angels (v. 4, NKJV).

⁴³⁸ Recall, our aim is to revisit the narrative, as historical to Israel, in light of Israel's culture rather than a singular interpretation of Israel's theology.

Manipulating divine power

Lot's guests were visitors to Sodom, but did the men of the city recognise them as angels and devise this attack? In Ancient Mesopotamia Martti Nissinen illustrates a cultic and social custom for men who engage in sexual relations with a 'male' priest in order to connect with or become one with the god. In particular the Ishtar cult maintained androgynous 'male' priests (or a 'third gender' from *The Epic of Gilgamesh*) who were transformed by the goddess herself to serve her in the cult, in a sexual fashion and otherwise. It was understood that male-male sexual union with these priests resulted in a union with Ishtar. Now the link between these priests and Ishtar engendered the goddesses' power over death and the underworld, sickness and disease, and demons. If the Sodomites recognised the men as angels or even holy ones then their rationale for male-male gang rape could have been a matter of acquiring divine power or even 'sexual humiliation'.⁴³⁹ Bird contends that in this and the previous Judges account, 'foreigners' or outsiders to Israel are, 'depicted as exhibiting moral depravity in their inhospitality towards visitors' and thus, 'the honor [*sic*] due a guest is violated (at least by threat) in the most objectionable way conceivable'.⁴⁴⁰

According to intermittent introductory addresses within the Holiness Code, the children of Israel are not to take on the actions and customs of foreigners or outsiders. In Leviticus 18 God instructs the people not to 'do as they do in the land of Egypt where lived . . . [or] in the land of Canaan' (v. 2). He also adds the imperative for Israel not to defile themselves as other nations have (vv. 24-30) and

⁴³⁹ Bird, 147.

⁴⁴⁰ Nissinen, *Homoeroticism*, 29-33.

to be holy as He the Lord God is holy (11:44-45). These directives sandwich the much debated ‘homosexuality prohibition’ in the code and will be discussed later.

For now, whether the action is acquiring divine power or disrespecting one’s guest through male-male gang rape, either action violates a holiness standard of YHWH. Now the standard is more about a *distinction* from others than a condemnation of homosexuals in particular. To be a Hebrew Israelite and follower of YHWH at the time one must simply obey God’s directives. Otherwise one is free to be a member of another nation and their corresponding freedoms and laws. While today’s codes, laws, rituals, and an assortment of civil and social customs differ among various nations, with multiple microcosms juxtaposed by geographical, philosophical, historical, political, social, and practical boundaries, they remain, nonetheless, relevant for their contribution to humanity.

Masculinity, power and identity

However, the customs and practices of Israel were incomprehensible with the notion of one man violating another in that sense. ‘[T]he Israelite authors could only conceive of participation in male homoerotic acts as forced.’ ‘[N]o Israelite male would consent to engage in homoerotic relations – at least not as the passive partner.’ Phyllis A. Bird concludes that, ‘the ancient Israelites had no experience or conception of male homoerotic relations’. Likewise one could interpret this Israelite philosophy into the David-Jonathan relationship. If in chapters 19 of the Genesis and Judges narratives we find an alien, and for them, an outrageous concept of homoeroticism then surely the David-Jonathan narrative would not espouse such

behaviour. Even if status and passivity were issues, neither man was forced into a friendship and they attained equal status after the covenant of 1 Samuel 18.⁴⁴¹

When the souls of Jonathan and David were bound or knit together they exchanged outer garments and weaponry in a covenant that would confirm an equality of peers. According to implicit *Middle Assyrian Laws*, ‘neither homosexual acts nor heterosexual acts were considered as being done by equals’.⁴⁴² Where the active male would penetrate a passive male to dominate a defeated enemy or signify status over a lower class in a different social circle (for unknown reasons) the act shifts the passive male to a feminine or lesser role in intercourse and life.⁴⁴³ The narrative of David and Jonathan nowhere reveals that either man considered himself a lesser partner in their friendship itself. Even if one considered the two men of different status then we may observe the Holiness Code for guidance in this case. If one were to invoke the male-male intercourse prohibitions of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 one would observe that these prohibitions apply *equally* to the Israelite as well as the foreigner living in Israel (Lev 18:26; cf., Lev 20:2). Class distinction in this relational case is not divided. For David and Jonathan even the proceeding covenant to care for each others’ families represent an equality of action (1 Sam 20:14-17).

In addition to equality of status, David and Jonathan would have been included among the Israelites who had no popular experience or conception of male homoerotic relations. If so it is likely that they would have had no experience of

⁴⁴¹ Bird, 148.

⁴⁴² Nissinen, *Homoeroticism*, 26.

⁴⁴³ Ibid.

categorical male friendship relations outside close kin relations in the household. Until now, in the OT literary documents, a relationship of this nature has not been explored. One may then propose that likewise it did not occur in the culture either. As stipulated, Bird observes from the style and language of OT texts that Israelite authors had no concept of homoeroticism, and that the authors had no concept of friendship either. In the chapters 19 narratives there are no comparisons or distinctions made of male-male friendships to male-male eroticism. In the Holiness Code (as we will see) the language of men lying with men does not differentiate it from another 'less intimate' male-male relationship of friends. Even as the distinction of whom the Israelite male may or may not have coitus with no consanguineal, affinal, non-familial, or societal role discerns a male-male sexual interaction. A reference to a son having sexual relations with his mother being equated symbolically to a sexual relation with his father (as the two are one flesh, cf., Gen 2:23-24) is made to appear repugnant to the narrator and audience (Lev 18:7-8).

Likewise the narrative language in the David-Jonathan story subsumes a latent novelty of friendship. The Israelite author seemingly knits together a patchwork of friendship from adjoining cultural concepts of love, covenant, treaty, kinship, identity, and camaraderie. He emphasises covenant throughout the story to reinforce its notion in the mind of the listener/reader. The characters also approach this new idea as pioneers when David and Jonathan feel it necessary to repeat their original covenant, as if they were unsure of its value, and create a new one which

extends to their family and descendants – a kinship association within their comfort zone or play.

Outside his *play* or area of influence, Saul hurls accusations of shame brought on Ahinoam (1 Sam 14:50, presumably Jonathan's mother) by his son's association with a non-tribesman/non-kinsman: 'Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan. He said to him, "You son of a perverse, rebellious woman! Do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame, and to the shame of your mother's nakedness?"' (1 Sam 20:30)? Saul contrasts Jonathan's friendship with the non-consanguineal David (i.e., 'the son of Jesse' rather than 'the son of Saul') against Jonathan's own identity as son and as offspring of his mother. The Benjaminite Jonathan fraternising with the Judahite David offended Saul and his family line.

A masculine tragedy

The unrighteous behaviour of the Sodomites and Benjaminites, which focuses on the offensive action of men sexually attacking another man,⁴⁴⁴ does conform to some of the sins listed by Jeremiah and Ezekiel – such as strengthening the hands of evildoers and more prominently pride. More specifically Robert A. Gagnon interprets the 'abominable things' (Ezek 16:50, cf., 18:12) as having a male-on-male dimension of the sex act which significantly compounds the definition of the wickedness of Sodom from the baseline dimensions of coercion and inhospitality to strangers.⁴⁴⁵ Otherwise one recalls the sin of pride which

⁴⁴⁴ Bird, 148.

⁴⁴⁵ Gagnon: 373.

caused the Day Star or Lucifer to be cut down to the ground by God (Isaiah 14:12, cf., NRSV with NKJV). So at the least the Sodomites' pride and attempt to acquire and manipulate Divine Power is a viable infraction to the outcry and 'very grave sin' which causes their ultimate plunge 'to the depths of the Pit' (Isa. 14:15), notwithstanding the element of the male-on-male crime.

Gagnon bases his exposition on the concept of abomination in Ezekiel 16 and 18 and in Genesis 19 on the sin of Ham (progenitor of the Canaanites) in Genesis 9:20-27.⁴⁴⁶ Within his six points of evidence, he manoeuvres this interpretation by way of equating the phrases of Genesis 9:22, NRSV, Leviticus 18:6-18 and Lev 20:11, 17-21: seeing/uncovering the nakedness of Gagnon proposes that Ham's seeing or uncovering his father Noah's nakedness idiomatically translates to Ham homosexually raping his drunken father. This incestuous interpretation is supported by Nissinen as well, while Gagnon furthers his thought by adding a power play of Ham over his father and older brothers. Ham thought that sexually dominating his father would provide him with some authoritative benefit in the family, especially after debasing his father in the act. He was wrong and the reverse happened:

In the new post-diluvian world, it was their ancestor that committed the most heinous act imaginable – not just rape, but incest; not just incestuous rape, but homosexual intercourse; not just incestuous, homosexual rape, but rape of one's own father, to whom supreme honor [*sic*] and obedience is owed. It is, in effect, in the Canaanites' blood to be unremittingly evil'.⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁶ Robert A. J. Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 63-71.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 67.

So not only was Ham implicitly cursed by his father but also all his descendants or seed were cursed just as Ham's seed or sperm was the instrument of this repugnant crime.⁴⁴⁸ It is this seed or the generations of Canaan whom God later instructs the Israelites not to imitate in the Holiness Code (Lev 18:3, 24-30) as their father committed this male-male parental rape when he acted on the prohibition of Lev 18:22.

Now if the men of Sodom identified the visitors as human males then Abraham's plea for Sodom was unjustified. The act of violence would then be male-male gang rape against other members of humanity. Elemental to this act are sexual expressions from multiple aggressors, a focus on men as the object of desire as opposed to women or Lot's daughters, and violent non-consensual rape.⁴⁴⁹ Like the outcry for justice originating with others (more than likely outside Sodom, Gomorrah, and the cities of the Plain) so this one of many unjust acts of Sodom is directed at others and in particular at the visiting men. Abraham then is mistaken in his plea for people within the city because the victims of injustice have been those *outside* the city – including the visitors.

In contrast Lot's actions to prevent the Sodomites' manipulation put him at odds with his neighbours. When Lot pleads with the Sodomites to resist their wicked act against the men and offers his daughters to them instead, the men of Sodom respond in opposition to Lot's suggestion and to Lot himself: 'But they replied, "Stand back!" And they said, "This fellow came here as an alien, and he

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁹ Locke: 129-30.

would play the judge! Now we will deal worse with you than with them” (Gen. 19:9, NRSV). The men of Sodom turn against one of their own – unless Lot is living a lie in Sodom. The men recognise he is different from the rest of them there. Although Lot lives with them, some of Abraham’s values are still a part of him. Lot desired earlier to preserve the men’s safety by insisting they not stay in the square for the night. In contrast the men of Sodom attack Lot’s guests. Further, although Lot lives in Sodom, the Sodomites still consider him an alien (v. 9). For even if Lot came to Sodom as an alien by now he would presumably be considered one of them, however he is still the outsider *playing judge* against them, rather than joining them in the assault or at the very least turning the men over to the men of Sodom. The Sodomites and their local code have been violated. To the men of Sodom, Lot has lived a lie and betrayed them. He will pay dearly for his treachery as they will punish or assault him worse than the visitors.

Intriguingly the focus of the men of Sodom remains towards the visitors and secondarily to Lot. When Lot offered his daughters as a substitute this unholy sacrifice was distinctly disregarded by the Sodomites. The narrator’s emphasis or lack thereof here cast greater weight on the male figures of the visitors and the host. It appears that Lot’s seeming disesteem for his daughters and the resulting disinterest from the men of Sodom are ancillary to the story. How can a father offering his daughters to be raped by multiple offenders be ignored? Kenneth A. Locke submits that, ‘Israel considered the violation of the law of hospitality and male-male rape to be far more serious offences than the rape of women’. Unlike today’s western focus on the individual, the Israelite family was society’s basic

building block and the patriarch had a duty to maintain it as well as enhance it. So husbands and fathers could not callously scorn their family members. As extreme as Lot's offer was such an action would not only be dangerous for his daughters' own well being but also the social and sexual humiliation and financial losses he could incur would be devastating. Neither God nor the Angels rebuke Lot for his decision and 'thus from the biblical writer's perspective, Lot's offer was commendable, not deplorable'. In fact, Locke proposes that, '[t]he rape of a woman was less outrageous than the rape of a man because it involved a form of sexual assault that did not transgress the ancient Jewish interpretation of gender roles: an active man was still penetrating a passive woman'.⁴⁵⁰ For another observation from the woman's perspective, David T. Lamb purports that God is not sexist in this nineteen narrative as in the first instance, the text never endorses Lot's behaviour: 'An absence of condemnation does not constitute an affirmation';⁴⁵¹ in the second instance, the angels sent from YHWH acted dramatically in order to prevent the rape of the women, which presumes that the sender, God, did not want this to happen; and for his third point, the actions of the men being made blind and the city being destroyed represent Yahweh's 'hatred' for rape. In any case, manly honour and Israelite identity were being preserved and commended.

Justice and mercy

In their response to Lot's commendable offer, the men of Sodom would be correct in their assessment against their so called judge. How can Lot play judge? Lot lives in Sodom and has seemingly accepted their ways. How can he play judge

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid.: 132, 34.

⁴⁵¹ Lamb, 61.

if Lot himself is involved in their ways? In more modern terms than the Genesis account, how can Lot remove the speck from his assailants' eyes when he has a beam in his own eye? Further, the men are also right in determining by default that God is Judge in this case. The writer has given this role to the Almighty earlier in the narrative. God is the Judge over humanity and Sodom.

The metaphor 'justice is blind' takes on another meaning here for, before the men of Sodom fulfil their threats, the angels strike the men with blindness and confirm the Lord's sentence in verse 13; Sodom must be destroyed. But the angels, interestingly, do not destroy the men or the city immediately after their own assault. The gang rape itself does not appear to be sufficient injustice or unrighteousness to warrant such a penalty. Also the assault against Lot's daughters seems to be insufficient. The verdict then was levied on the entire city and those in the Plain for numerous incursions over periods which lead to the outcry against them. The angels had discovered no righteous ones in the city (or perhaps not enough righteous ones). They then affirm that the outcry against Sodom had 'grown great' before God (v. 13, NKJV). As the narrative advances the reader's notion of Sodom's sin converging with the characters' experiences, the verdict has been expectedly upgraded from a *great* outcry and a *very* grave sin to a great outcry which has now *grown greater* in light of additional evidence, as opposed to an isolated act.

Literary attempts at rescuing Lot and his family's values are engineered by the narrator. When the angels are willing to take Lot's family it appears that they may be the righteous ones in Sodom for whom Abraham pleaded and which are a sufficient counterbalance in Sodom to stay the execution. But the reader's hopes

and even Abraham's hopes are dashed when many of the family reject the angels' invitation for salvation. Recollecting Sarah's laughter at God's message of life when YHWH spoke of a son to be born, now Lot's family 'laughs' at God's message of death: Lot's sons-in-law thought their father spoke in jest about the destruction.⁴⁵² Lot himself seemed to have reconsidered the angels' warnings too, as a few hours later when morning has dawned Lot hesitates and lingers behind after the angels exclaimed they must depart. But God is merciful to Lot because of his intermediary Abraham and spares Lot. The angels force Lot outside of the city before Sodom's destruction begins (19:16). God's justice and righteousness may have been the impetus for the destruction but Yahweh's mercy was the catalyst for Lot's salvation (v. 16). Neither Lot nor his family were righteous. After all, they were spared merely because of Abraham. The Sodomite members of Lot's family did not accept the angels' invitation, Lot himself lingered in Sodom, and later we learn that Lot's wife rescinds the offer of mercy made to her and is not saved in the end – even Lot's daughters exhibit sins like that of Sodom, after the rescue (19:12-17, 26; 19:30-38).

According to the narrator, the Lord saved Lot and his family because of the Lord's mercy as God remembered Abraham *not* because of Lot or his righteousness (19:29). Lot and his family's resistance to leaving Sodom is both explained and contrasted with why Lot and his daughters were saved. The narrator sums up the story by describing the final moments of Sodom and Gomorrah in verses 24-29. God answered the outcry of the people by raining sulphur and fire on the cities from

⁴⁵² Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, ed. G. Ernest Wright *et al.*, trans. John H. Marks, 3d impression, 2d ed., The Old Testament Library (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1970), 214.

his heavenly vista. Despite the angels' warnings Lot's wife looks back at the destruction and becomes a pillar of salt herself (19:26). Then in the morning Abraham looks out at Sodom, Gomorrah, and all the cities of the Plain only to see the residual smoke. In a final commentary the narrator shifts focus from devastation to salvation: ' . . . God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow. . . ' (v. 29). Abraham's righteousness and relationship with YHWH are again essential to the plot of the story. As God is righteous and just he sends intermediaries like Moses, Job, Jonah, Jeremiah, and Abraham on potentially impossible missions of justice and mercy. Recipients of God's justice might even reject him, but the possible futility of the mission does not negate an effort by the Judge to save or deliver the accused. Yahweh raises up a servant who follows in his ways and teachings to stand between the verdict and the humans involved. In this case, God's friendship and admiration of Abraham merited him the distinction of solicitor on behalf of Sodom and Gomorrah – the accused in this case. Lot's rescue was a rewarding eventuality as God and the angels' original intent was to investigate the outcry against Sodom, but noteworthy is the placement of key phrases earlier in Genesis. Lot separates from Abram to live in Sodom then a comment is made on the wickedness and sinners in Sodom (13:13). This then precedes a story about Sodom's defeat by their overlords and Abram's defeating those same overlords. Finally Abram's victory is punctuated by the narrator confirming Abram's success as from the Lord: 'After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, "Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great' (15:1, NRSV). Simply put, the narrator's primary aim is

not to discuss ‘homosexuality’ in Genesis 19. The intention is to explore concepts of Divine Justice and how YHWH relates to human individuals and groups.

A discussion on Leviticus 18:22, 20:13

I treat this discussion with special care because the Holiness Code and its implications are often a source of great contention today. While there are those who are fervent supporters of killing men who have intercourse with other men, there are others who are proponents of not using a woman’s bed during male-male sex. Based on specific verses of the Holiness Code modern translations have taken on a life of their own. While many today overlook the sociological and religious relevance for the Code for Israel in their time, humanity today tends to reinterpret the Code to suit a certain political, visceral or ideological agenda in order to condemn certain groups in society or to rationalise personal preferences. Simply stated, the Holiness Code was established for early (and exilic) Israel – although many Jews, Muslims and Christians today still choose to conform to some variation of its legislation.

With limitations on sexual activity within and without the family household, the deference of power or control in the household lies in the seat of the primary conjugal unit. With restrictions imposed on intra-family and extra-family sexual relations the responsibility for procreation defaults to the key husband and wife. So not only would there be a lighter burden placed on other members of the household for creating human resources, but also passive members of the household should enjoy safety from compelled sexual activity in close quarters. Such restrictions are found in the Holiness Code. There are numerous analyses and discussions on The

Holiness Code, Leviticus 18 and 20, and matters of homosexuality. One may begin an investigation with scholars like Jacob Milgrom (2000 and ABD), Frank Moore Cross (1973), R.K. Harrison (1980), Howard Eilberg-Schwartz (1990), Mary Douglas (2008), David Biale (1997), Jeremy Cohen (1989), or John E. Hartley (1992), as our discussion's parameters are limited to the scope of the data and word limit.

Excursus: Mary Douglas

A student of Sir E.E. Evans-Pritchard, the social anthropologist who coined the phrase 'translation of culture'⁴⁵³, Dame Mary Douglas was a social anthropologist who was considered a 'translator of custom'⁴⁵⁴. Douglas focused much of her study on the meaning of cultural symbols, although her interests included Old Testament and Semitic studies, pollution, food, Politics, Philosophy, Economics, and Ecology. As a late 20th century Social Scientist, Douglas was influenced by Robertson Smith and Durkheim's works which she merged with that of Evans-Pritchard. Douglas became what we acknowledge today as the leading anthropologist in comparative methods. '[S]he extended Durkheim's search for *systems of classifications* and the bases of *social experience* [as] Douglas discussed how this exploration of accountability provided a comparative angle that was sensitive to *local* realities yet recurrent in *all* human societies' [emphases mine].⁴⁵⁵ In other words, her systems or methods compared various cultures or peoples in order to discover those human concepts which are universal. Evans-

⁴⁵³ See *Nuer Religion*, 1956.

⁴⁵⁴ Fardon, xiii.

⁴⁵⁵ Jerry D. Moore, *Visions of Culture: An Introduction to Anthropological Theories and Theorists*, 3d ed. (Plymouth, UK: AltaMira Press, 2009), 272-73.

Pritchard might have introduced his students to the teachings of the founder of anthropological studies of religious practice, Robertson Smith, but it was Douglas who utilised the Old Testament as a source of examples for her anthropological work.⁴⁵⁶ Among her peers, Douglas contributed the most to both anthropology and theology. Like her predecessor Robertson Smith, Douglas chose not to employ a deconstruction of texts or a systematic scepticism to the material, instead she stressed, ‘the contribution that an anthropological method might make towards reformulating the problems of theology in *comparative* terms, and showing how anthropologists can contribute to reading Biblical sources as *cultural texts*’ [emphases mine].⁴⁵⁷

Douglas’ fieldwork on the Lele of Zaire provided a basis for her later exploring the connections between religious symbolism and social systems among various cultures. Specifically, Douglas entered the discussion with a focus on pollution: the sacred and profane. Her analysis of abominations in Leviticus and life in Early Israel is a rich example of her tendency to synthesize religious and social systems in order to explain Israelite holiness. The religious rituals Israel performs reflect the people’s desire to be one with Yahweh while protecting the social/corporate and individual body from outside contamination.⁴⁵⁸ So then religious rites actually reflect or symbolise an internal, personal or even social need designed to guard against outer profane things – whether the external is that contrasted to one’s body/being or to one’s society/culture. In such a system as

⁴⁵⁶ Fardon, 42, 86.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid., 44.

⁴⁵⁸ Moore, 277.

Israel, Douglas would observe a grid/group society replete with symbolism. Although not a new method of classifying societies at the time, Douglas' unique use of the grid/group incorporated, 'other dimensions of culture, such as economic and political expressions of differing social contexts; symbolic structures relating to the human body and society; and cosmological statements regarding nature, time, human nature, and social behaviour [*sic*]'. Using these or 'other dimensions of culture' Douglas was able to interpret relationships between certain classifications and certain societies.⁴⁵⁹

She was also able to integrate the culture's system of authority or hierarchical structures into these classifications. Her analysis of the Lele proved fruitful in determining the effects on a society of the presence of a hierarchy or even the absence of a hierarchical system.⁴⁶⁰ Douglas' general thesis postulated that dangers in an environment correlate with social concerns.⁴⁶¹ So, when Douglas discovered that levitical sacrifices must be kept holy or distinct and that types of animals, types of fabrics, and sexual roles also be separated accordingly, the overt or implied ritual becomes the 'frame of experience, and therefore increases the experiences to which the individual has been prepared to be receptive'⁴⁶² in both time and space. Thus, for the Israelite system a closed group system is observed which lends itself to a high incidence of ritualism and where social boundaries are

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., 279, 281.

⁴⁶⁰ Fardon, 54.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid., 70.

⁴⁶² Ibid., 90.

associated with power and danger.⁴⁶³ Here a high value is placed on ‘symbolic performance’.

Now, by *ca.* 1000 BC, early Israelite culture was in flux. Douglas postulates that societies re-evaluate their identity when confronted with wars, social upheavals, technological change and the like.⁴⁶⁴ Clifford Geertz holds a similar understanding which can be applied to Iron Age Israel and cultural changes in relationships like that of David and Jonathan. Applied, the relationship creates a new social avenue for membership within the local group and meta-group. Rituals from the religious and social systems equate certain relationships with covenants (and covenant language), parts of the human body (i.e., the heart), and political, militaristic, and kinship/social garments. So while Israelite society was in flux, local elements in culture were changing too, including new associations and relationships being accessed through existing rites. Elements of human nature, political hierarchy, economic abundance, family ties and the like collide in Israel’s transition to statehood. Douglas’ grid/group system of analysis is not without its flaws but it does encourage the observer to look beyond the face value of ritual and relationship, profane and sacred.

These social systems suggest an inherent connection between the individual and the environment (like a society in transition), and aids in the explanation of *why* people behave as they do.⁴⁶⁵ Although not the only means for understanding any

⁴⁶³Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* (London: Routledge, 1996), 14.

⁴⁶⁴Mary Douglas, *Thinking in Circles: An Essay on Ring Composition*, The Terry Lectures. (London: Yale University Press, 2007), 144-48.

⁴⁶⁵Moore, 283.

society, this approach contributes to our perspective on both the collective group and its individual members. Douglas describes this as a level of justification and explanation, or a social accounting level. It is at this level which this thesis observes the environment of Early Israel and the ANE, its affect on tribal groupings, new relationships, and the reverse corollary. Furthermore it is our goal to consider and re-examine pre-existing concepts held individually or socially as we embark on the research to examine Israel. Whether we discuss times past or distant places our own rituals or customs today in the West hold expressions not that distant from our human siblings. Douglas' notion of 'human similarity' is striking in how the behaviour of our cousins coincides with Western society.⁴⁶⁶

In her seminal work on pollution or matter out of place in *Purity and Danger*, Mary Douglas explored the levitical dietary laws of the OT. Those land animals which have cloven hooves and chew their cud are classified as pure and avoiding others outside this category in the diet conforms to God's order. 'Through a dietary observance God is made holy – separate and whole. By respecting God's established order Israelite society affirms its own cultural identity, just as we affirm ours by putting things where they belong, utensils back into the kitchen, and our shoes under the table.'⁴⁶⁷ For Early Israel, adherence to their dietary laws indicated that the society was well ordered and *civilised*. For us today, putting things where they belong indicates that we are well ordered and civilised. So, too, in the past. However when societies change and the relation between the social environment and cosmology evolves, rituals change with the rejection of the old in favour of the

⁴⁶⁶ Fardon, 84, 79.

⁴⁶⁷ Lang, 9.

new; but the *new* rituals may not appear to be rituals at all, for a social revolt or change may be underway.⁴⁶⁸ In times of flux, whether the culture is our own or another, human beings do not easily identify the difference or change, for the milieu would be too highly charged.

The H Material

Before we endeavour a personal exploration of some of those levitical laws and rituals within the Holiness Code, it is important to discuss the concept of the H material. Jacob Milgrom in his commentaries on *Leviticus 17-22*⁴⁶⁹ and the ‘Priestly Source’⁴⁷⁰ describes a mostly late 8th century society of religious reform surrounding the redaction of the P material in Leviticus 17-26 or the Holiness Code, specifically designated as H. The H material relies heavily on P, but differs dramatically on some theological issues and is stylistically different (e.g., employing considerably more chiasmic structures and parallelism than its predecessor).⁴⁷¹ Milgrom supports H intersecting the pre/post socioeconomic and religious reforms of King Hezekiah of Judah. Hezekiah, often named in the DH as one like David and Josiah, did right in the sight of the Lord by tearing down the high places and associated anti-Yahweh worship things, and renovating the temple (2 Kings 18). Where deviation from centralised Yahweh worship through idol worship and other unholy practices (like Molek worship) were rampant, the H (P, and DH) decidedly edited the text to reflect holy, life-giving practices in the

⁴⁶⁸ Fardon, 119-20.

⁴⁶⁹ Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, ed. William Foxwell Albright and David Noel Freedman, 1st ed., The Anchor Bible, vol. 3A (London: Doubleday, 2000).

⁴⁷⁰ Jacob Milgrom, "Priestly ("P") Source," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (London: Doubleday, 1992).

⁴⁷¹ Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, 1319-47.

Yahwistic traditions and connects the Israelite historical records of *Samuel* and *Leviticus*, for example.

H articulates clearly the nascent P theology of ‘the rationale of holiness and the equation of blood and life . . . [and that] impurity and holiness are antonyms, [thus] the identification of impurity with death must then mean that holiness stands for life’.⁴⁷² However, H diverges on P’s theology regarding pollution in general. While P believes that impurity can be rectified through ritual cleansing, H believes impurity must be expelled from the land. Stunning as that may sound; it is compounded by H’s desire to extend holiness practices to every Israelite, resident alien, and all the land, whereas P limits it to priests, Nazarites, and the temple.

In addition to life, death, blood, and Molek worship, Jon Levenson suggests other changes to the theology of the time which impacts on our later discussion on child sacrifice and connectivity of the books, as he proposes to *transform* the child sacrifice. The Holiness Code (Lev 17-26), Deuteronomy (and eventually the DH), Jeremiah, and Ezekiel share similar 6th and 7th century commentaries on the horrors of child sacrifice (in the historical past and present), the abhorrence of serving other gods, and the substitutionary etiology of animal sacrifice,⁴⁷³ in contrast to most 5th century Priestly material and Christian material from the late 1st century AD which both treat the death and resurrection of the beloved son as an established ritual.⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁷² Milgrom, "Priestly."

⁴⁷³ Including the apotropaic charm of the *blood* of the paschal lamb

⁴⁷⁴ Jon D. Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity* (London: Yale University Press, 1993), 43-45.

A context: life and death vis-à-vis holiness and impurity

While observing the sequence and context of the Book of Leviticus some key features are portrayed. In chapters one to nine Yahweh instructs his separated or different people on various commandments, particularly those related to offerings to the Lord. Throughout the segment Moses is often instructed to ‘speak to the people of Israel’ regarding the format and rationale for offerings made to YHWH. If appropriated correctly the offerings would be received as ‘a pleasing odour . . . to the LORD’. So Moses did ‘as the LORD commanded’. Eventually the reader learns that Aaron and his sons (the priests), and the people also did as the Lord commanded (Leviticus 8:31-36; 9:22-24, NRSV). And all was pleasing to the Lord, as particularly affirmed in Lev 9:22-24 when ‘the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people’. The repetition of these three statements in this segment emphasises an obedience-reward cycle of this different people in the Yahweh religion. When Moses receives the message from God and he ‘speaks to the people of Israel’ and Moses, the priests and the people do ‘as the Lord commanded’ as promised by God himself earlier in chapters 1-9, it would be ‘pleasing . . . to the LORD’. The final outcome was God blessing his people for their obedience through his priests, and by his presence (Lev 9:23).

However chapter 10 takes a turn for the worse as the sons of Aaron the High Priest disobey the Lord’s commands. Leviticus 8:35 exemplified an instance of not following the Lord’s commands or ‘keeping the LORD’s charge’: one would die. And the narrator clarified in v. 36 that Aaron and his sons obeyed, but 10:1 exposes two sons of the High Priest who did not obey and suffered the penalty: ‘And fire

came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the LORD' (Lev 10:2). So it is very clear to the reader and the listener what is the reward for obedience and the penalty for disobedience. Disobedience causes death (10:2) but obedience for those who choose to be 'near' God will see the Lord's holiness as he is glorified before all the people (v. 3).⁴⁷⁵ The author and editor of Leviticus set the stage for the rest of the book – including the Holiness Code. There should be no doubt as to God's reaction to the people's initiative, even if you are the son of the High Priest. The rules are the same no matter who you are in Israel – leaders do not get to opt out.⁴⁷⁶ Thus no matter what is presented in the following chapters (with or without explanation) the precedent has been established and must be remembered when approaching chapters 18 and 20 also.

Chapter 11 resumes the list of instructions from Yahweh as Moses is directed to 'speak to the people of Israel' again. Now matters of clean and unclean things are discussed as opposed to the previous variety of offerings. Strikingly, noted is that until this chapter *things* and *places* (and once YHWH himself) are here referred to as holy or not. However 11:44-45 not only refers to *people* being holy but it is the first placement of the directive from God for the people of Israel to 'be holy, for I [YHWH] am holy' in Leviticus. Continuing from chapters 10 and 11, Leviticus 12 also discusses the distinction between, 'the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean . . .' (10:10). Again the aspect of people is stressed. When a woman bears a child and her accompanying biological fluids from the *inside* are exposed to the *outside* then the woman herself is unclean. As

⁴⁷⁵ Compare the blessings and curses of Deuteronomy 28.

⁴⁷⁶ See also Lev 4:22 (and 24:16). The same law applies to the alien as well as the citizen.

previously discussed, Mary Douglas⁴⁷⁷ would classify the exposed fluid as matter out of place and hence pollution, with an accompanying danger and taboo. (It is fascinating that no commentary is issued for the status of the child as though s/he is assumed clean and thus no purification for the newborn is necessary.) The ensuing chapters follow a similar program of clean-unclean, outside-inside matters. Chapters 13 and 14 describe how people with sores with inner fluids or properties are unclean once they are exposed to the outer. Chapter 15 stipulates that once fluids from inside the fe/male genitalia are exposed to the outside then the person is unclean.

Chapter 16, however, deviates from the program of fluid emissions for an intermission. Chapter 10 is revisited by reminding us of Nadab and Abihu's death. Their death is contrasted with the one day each year in which Israel can atone for her sins. The elaborate preparations described ensure, by implication, life – as, 'on this day atonement shall be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins you shall be clean before the LORD' (v. 30). This day provides Israel with a comprehensive means of life and union with their Deity and contextually a mechanism for perpetual cleanliness.

Chapter 17 interweaves blood into the clean-obedience-life tapestry. For if blood from the inside is exposed and consumed then the person consuming blood will be 'cut off' (vv. 10, 14) or perhaps not be 'near' like Nadab and Abihu were. Similar to the person sacrificing an animal to other gods (as done in Egypt or

⁴⁷⁷ Further study can be had by reviewing Douglas' chapter on 'The Abominations of Leviticus' (2008).

Canaan) rather than bringing the sacrificial blood to the designated place for the Lord's sacrifice (vv. 1-9), his being cut off signals a separation, spiritual or physical death from the Lord and his community of people (i.e., the near equivalent or gradient of not being near for this particular offence). God's rationale is that life is in the blood (vv. 11, 14b) or blood is life (v. 14a). So, to maintain one's own life then the life-blood must be reserved for sacrifice to the Lord and prohibited from consumption. This is the ordinance for all persons, citizen or aliens living in Israel for cleanliness, obedience and life in the Yahweh religion apart from the Egyptian and Canaanite religions.

Whereas chapter 17 began with a directive to the 'sons of Aaron', the recurring formula 'speak to the people of Israel' (rather than the Egyptians or Canaanites) is again used to begin chapter 18 after a powerful preface stipulating that 'the LORD spoke to Moses' (v. 1). Contrary to the specificity in the previous directives, the following life instruction is prefaced as the General Directive Number One is, or the first of the Ten Commandments is: 'I am the LORD your God' (v. 2b). God's first words of the Decalogue established him and his authority in the lives of the Israelites. Now the authoritative preface is reiterated for the same effect in Leviticus 18. This formula is used only once before in 11:44-45 in the entire book. So the sparing use of this formula does incite the reader to take care in the following directive as there should be no mistaking who the authority is on the following instruction. Like the instruction following the formula in Exodus 20:2, Leviticus 18:3 also refers to Egypt. In Exodus God reminds the Israelites that by his Divine authority the people were brought out of Egypt and slavery and so they

should not have other gods before him (Exod 20:2-3). Now in Leviticus the Divine authority commands that these people whom he brought out of Egypt should not do as they did in the land of Egypt, where they lived (18:3a). By implication the parallel of not having any other gods apart from Yahweh would be at the forefront of the listener's and reader's mind at this juncture, however with the additional directive of not following the practices and statutes of those in Egypt and Canaan. Instead the Israelites are to follow not only the Ten Commandments from Exodus or all the previously stated commands, but also to observe Yahweh's ordinances and keep his statutes – in particular those that follow this imperative.

According to verse 5, the benefit of following these directives is *life*.⁴⁷⁸

Immediately the imagery returns to chapters 9 and 10 when the two priests disobeyed God, and died. The additional image of being cut off from chapter 17 and whatever implication therein also pervades the listeners' and readers' thoughts. The life-death contrast reasserts itself here for the reader and listener not unlike Deuteronomy when the two priests, who as priests were given additional instructions from the Lord and thus should have known better, disobeyed God whom they were not 'near' God (10:3) and were consumed in fire. Contrarily being near God (10:3) and following his ordinances (18:3-5) benefits the people as God will show himself holy (10:3) and reward the people with life (18:5).⁴⁷⁹ One might conclude that being near God and following his ordinances are means to being holy (11:44-45) and ultimately worshipping Yahweh-Elohim alone. Leviticus 11:44-45

⁴⁷⁸ Observe physical death is the object here. Modern Christians may discuss aspects of spiritual death but the focus is the former in this text.

⁴⁷⁹ Leviticus 24:10-23 comprises a list of offenders who are not near God. Those who blaspheme God's Name or in essence reject his authority and law are more equivalent to those who kill another human being ,etc., and are subject to death rather than life.

uses the same 'I am the LORD' formula as chapter 18 and Exodus 20 do. Further, Leviticus 11:45 employs a similar reference to Egypt in 18:3 and quotes the Egypt citation from Exodus 20:2. Then the three directives following the formula are:

You shall have no other gods before me (Exod 20:3),

You shall be holy, for I am holy (Lev 11:45), and

You shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where you lived, and you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you (Lev 18:3, NRSV).

Is this a repetition of the same directive? Are the Leviticus directives a means to adhering to General Directive One? At the very least these directives carry a similar weight in import based on the preceding formulae. It can be reckoned that if the Israelites and those foreigners within their tribes reject the laws and traditions of Egypt and Canaan and separate themselves unto holiness then it would become equivalent to worshipping YHWH only. Thus highlighting a relationship between holy things, holy people, and a holy God which are quite unique in itself and quite prominent in the compact language of Leviticus 11:44-45. Adhering to Yahweh's restrictions ensured Israel's obedience to these divine, unique morals in *The Law and The Prophets* and The Holiness Code which is worship of the LORD GOD.

Simply put God's standard of holiness in effect separates Israel from the other religions and nationalities in the ANE just as nations and religions in the modern world are separate or holy from one another. Holiness does not mean one is *better* than another, just different. In English speaking western civilisation a

number of nations such as The United Kingdom, The Republic of Ireland, Canada, and The United States of America evolved independently from a shared origin.

For example the Magna Carta served as a national organising document for England and later the US. However the USA diverged into another constitutional document and to another geo-political land mass. The US Constitution is a distinct document and provides for a different way of life than life in the UK and other nations. Simplistically speaking, the USA can be considered holy or set apart from the UK. Likewise the organisational differences in the UK to that of the US would also justify the UK being considered holy or set apart from the US and even from other countries. One nation is not *better* than the other. Israel is a holy nation because among other things its founding documents include the Decalogue and the Holiness Code. Like Israel's origins which developed out of Mesopotamian culture and the early life of Abram in Ur and Haran, Israel has been set apart from its neighbours – even to the extent of Israel separating from or being holy from the Hebrew people. Israel's distinctive characteristic in the Code is her demand for holiness which becomes her 'governing theological principle and links the demand for holiness with separation from the peoples'.⁴⁸⁰ Israelites worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses and strive to follow his Law and commandments.

The OT reader might recall how Moses later reiterates similar themes in his closing remarks as leader to the Israelites. Deuteronomy 30:15-20 connects the concepts of life, death, obedience, disobedience, blessing, and cursing with the

⁴⁸⁰ Bird, 154.

worship of Yahweh. These are concepts which Israel would hear repeatedly and hopefully practise or at least acknowledge:

See, I have set before you today **life and good, death and evil**, in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may **live** and multiply; and the Lord your God will **bless** you in the land which you go to possess. But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are **drawn away**, and **worship** other gods and serve them, I announce to you today that you shall surely **perish**; you shall not prolong *your* days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess. I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, *that* I have set before you **life and death, blessing and cursing**; therefore choose **life**, that both you and your descendants may **live**; that you may love the Lord your God, that you may **obey** His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He *is* your **life** and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them. [Emphases mine.]

Now the Israelites would not follow the ways of the goat-demons (Lev 17:7), the Egyptians, or the Canaanites (18:3). Israel's cleanliness and holiness depended on their differentiation and separation from the (religious and social) habits of the other cultures in the ANE. Again the writer/editor connects imagery from previous directives, adds emphasis, and explicates that the following is just like the previous essentially. Cleanliness, obedience and holiness unto the Lord and his ordinances are paramount to life. So that maintaining a separation between inside matters and outside matters is indicative of maintaining a separation between Israel's matters and Egypt's or Canaan's matters.

Abomination or vile thing

Jerome T. Walsh observes an intra-cultural separation of actions based on the use of the term 'abomination' in Lev 18 and 20. In Leviticus abomination is

used in conjunction with violations of dietary laws, sexual laws, and participation in pagan worship. Now the Israelites are called to be a holy or separate people from other cultures, but within their own culture there are separate holy things in these three areas to be observed. Walsh unites the typical creation theology of the Priestly tradition with a similar underlying motive for the Leviticus proscriptions: ‘to respect the separation of creatures into groups according to their kinds’.

Furthermore, the sexual prohibitions against incest separated the group of potential sex partners from the group of kin. And the prohibitions against idolatrous worship separated the creature from the Creator. In Creation God separated or made distinct creatures of the air, sea and land, creatures of male and female, and standards of obedience distinguishing good and evil. Now in Leviticus separate or distinct laws are developed regarding which animals can be consumed, when and with whom men and women participate in sexual intercourse, and standards of how to worship Yahweh apart from those gods considered evil.⁴⁸¹

Then, in a similar vein, Walsh synthesises the works of Douglas and Thurston as he proposes two instances of sexual category confusion in the Holiness Code. Walsh extends the debate to include ‘adultery, which confuses the categories of one’s own sexual property and one’s neighbor’s [*sic*], and bestiality, which transgresses the boundary between human and animal’.⁴⁸² So within Israelite society separation of sexual property and human/animal creatures must be maintained. For bestiality, the confusion may not be so simple but may lie with,

⁴⁸¹ Jerome T. Walsh, "Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13: Who Is Doing What to Whom," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 120, no. 2 (2001): 206, 07.

⁴⁸² *Ibid.*: 207.

‘the mixing of different types of semen in the receptive animal or woman, or the confusion of species and social roles’.⁴⁸³ Now within aspects of sexuality and sexual property the ultimate gender confusion where the free male citizen takes on a feminine role⁴⁸⁴ as noted in other cultures is considered abomination or an act which is necessary to separate from. Thus Israel’s distinctiveness is to be observed apart from outside cultures⁴⁸⁵ and inside the culture itself.

In like manner, Stephen F. Bigger assimilates, Fortes’ student and descent theorist, Jack Goody’s analysis on kinship into his own discussion on a prime concern regarding Israel’s incest prohibitions. Within the patrilineal Israelite culture an intra-family sexual offences category is observed which prohibits intercourse with a member of the same patrilan. To absorb this prohibition in modern terms one deduces that this proscription applies to both intra-family heterosexual relations as well as homosexual relations in one’s agnatic sphere. However Sigmund Freud hypothesizes that men exhibit strong sexual desires for female family members and especially their mothers; thus mooting the point of intra-family male-male sexuality, particularly for Israelite society. For within the Hebrew culture, ‘incest prohibitions relate to a man’s sexual intercourse with a woman who bears a specific relationship towards him at the time of the offence. This would naturally prevent marriage since no society – and certainly not the

⁴⁸³ Stephen F. Bigger, "The Family Laws of 'Leviticus 18' in Their Setting," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 98, no. 2 (1979): 203.

⁴⁸⁴ Walsh: 207-08.

⁴⁸⁵ According to Walsh’s analysis of Levine he finds that in the original laws of Greek, Roman and Assyrian societies a free adult male citizen who took on a receptive role would have been condemned as transgressing the boundaries of male and female (p. 208). Perhaps then Israel’s distinctiveness was to be defined more strictly than surrounding cultures as we observe distinctions between active/passive roles.

Hebrews – segregates sexual and martial roles’. Then with the cultural understanding of marriage leading to sexual intercourse the male citizen in Israel would have been restricted from marrying another male (at the first an agnatic male) as by default he would not have been permitted to interact in male-male coitus according to the Holiness Code. The outgrowth then is the levitical standard which limits all male members in Israel to male-female sexual unions in ‘marriage’.⁴⁸⁶

Bigger adds that although the prohibitions given in Lev 18:22-23 are determined to be abominations and perversions, these value judgements associated with our interruptions are homogenized with the Molech prohibition and may be interpreted in a legal and religious context of idolatry. Male-male sexuality and bestiality both deal with the (mis)use of semen. As in the previous prohibitions, semen and menstrual blood were defiling agents and when comingled presented a double threat or danger to the offenders (primarily female) and community. Then when semen from one affair with a woman was mingled with semen from another man in the same woman the pollution danger was extolled, social disruption occurred, and an ensuing prohibition against adultery and incest is enacted.⁴⁸⁷ Thus with male-male coitus the (mis)use of semen in another male, rather than the female wife, or the mingling of semen with rectal waste and bodily fluids returns to purity violations for the offenders (primarily the receptive one) and community. Resultantly the semen or seed intended for the propagation of offspring for a particular patrilineage would be misdirected in an adulterous affair, act of bestiality, or the lying of a male with another male. Likewise the seed or children of a

⁴⁸⁶ Bigger: 194.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid.: 202.

patrilineal family would be misdirected if towards the Molech sacrifices. Personal purity now becomes idolatrous sacrifice by the misuse of the seed. ‘The [Levitical] redactor has argued that these child-sacrifices abused God’s blessing and involved the community in the dangers of idolatry.’ As male-male coitus and bestiality involved misuse of the seed these abominations or perversions may have been connected with idolatry as well thus placing the offenders and society in great ritual danger. Hebrew Bible examples allude to the male-male rape in Genesis 19 and Judges 19 as abominations and thus may be viewed as early Israel’s value judgments against idolatrous actions.⁴⁸⁸

Chapter 18 returns to a discussion on sexual and genital matters as the reader moves from matters on a creature’s blood or fluids to a similar inner-outer discussion on sexual fluids from chapter 15. The treatment of bodily fluids being inside or out, in relation to Douglas’ research, should not be forgotten in understanding this chapter. The inner-outer implications of human sexual intercourse are addressed to the male gender in general. From chapter 15 we learn that if a man has sexual intercourse with a woman (his wife?) and he ejaculates in the process, both persons are unclean until evening. So the inner-outer focus here is not that a man and woman have intercourse but that if the natural process of emission occurs or inner fluids are emitted then this causes uncleanness. Likewise when a woman has a ‘regular’ discharge of blood (interesting NRSV translation in v. 19) or the equivalent fluid emissions during natural childbirth she is unclean (ch.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid.: 202-03, n.37.

12). Again the issue is not focused on childbirth or a ‘regular’ menstrual cycle but the inner fluids being exposed.

Now within that context, chapter 18 focuses on ‘abominable’ actions or unacceptable sexual choices of male (and female) Israelites. As before, the male is permitted intercourse with a certain female (wife), but he cannot have indiscriminate intercourse with a multiplicity of females (consanguineal, affinal or otherwise), other males, or animals. So the male is restricted to the acceptable sexual partnering of his wife *inside* his family household and *inside* his patrilineage. Sexual relations *outside* his domestic group and creating another patrilineage, or even misusing the outer or the other, is an abomination and must not be mixed with the inner of his patrilineage. The confusing of the paterfamilias line is not acceptable and cannot be defiled. Then, for the paterfamilias his obligation is to secure the inner continuity of his patrilineage. In doing so the social and religious laws of early Israel assist him to promote safety of the women bearing the seed in the family and set restrictions on his male children against incest and adultery – as well as those same restrictions for himself.

Life as fertility, productive coitus and offspring

Conscientiously, prohibitions on coitus with women during their menstrual cycles and offspring (seed/descendants as opposed to just ‘child’) sacrifices are abruptly included in this context. Or are they abrupt? Chapter 15 has already discussed and reiterated several times within those few verses that touching or sexual relations with a woman in her menstrual cycle are unclean activities. It is

likened to a man who has an emission of semen. So an emphasis on female and implicitly male emissions are made and reiterated at this juncture.

The combination of this inner-outer sexual fluid imagery with indiscriminate intercourse must be essential for the (fe)male reader and listener to understand. It is likely that as a man and his wife (a certain woman) engage in sexual intercourse and become unclean, then as a man engages in indiscriminate intercourse not only is he and the other unclean but they are also both engaged in a prohibited and an ‘abominable’ act as well (18:29, 30). So from chapter 15 to 18 the act of intercourse during a woman’s cycle has been elevated to abominable. Moreover the multiplicity of sexual partners (if it also appropriate to say this of an animal) apart from the one woman is perverted, abominable, an act of defiling the land, and a statute or ordinance practiced in other ANE nations which is neither acceptable for Yahweh’s people nor all inhabitants of the land of Israel.⁴⁸⁹ Ultimately obeying God’s statutes bring life (18:4; contra 18:24-30).

Our second intrusion to the flow of the text which involves sacrificing offspring to Molech⁴⁹⁰ is inserted at a life-giving intersection. The previous actions of indiscriminate intercourse are separated from the final few as the possibility of conception or life is virtually nil. The Molech sacrifices, intercourse with a menstruating woman, intercourse between two males, and the unproductive nature

⁴⁸⁹ An intriguing discussion on the land imagery and its importance to Israel in the ANE within this context is viable yet beyond the scope of this thesis.

⁴⁹⁰ George C. Heider (*JSOT* Sup 43, 1985) and John Day (1987) contend that Molech is the name of a god. Following them, the juxtaposition of ‘offspring sacrifice’ and ‘Molech’ creates a doublet or unique nuance, which Levenson elaborates on regarding Jeremiah 19: ‘The point, rather, seems to be that child sacrifice is something that YHWH finds unacceptable, so that those who indulge in the practice must be worshipping another god’ (p. 4). Thus in the double entendre, ‘offspring sacrifice’ could mean worshipping another god, and ‘Molech’, could mean ‘offspring sacrifice’.

of intercourse with an animal destroys the potential of family, a male heir, a hold on land, and patrilineal descent.⁴⁹¹ After earlier (categorically) abominable acts such as Lot's sexual union with his daughters (Gen 19:30-38)⁴⁹² and Judah's intercourse with his daughter-in-law (Gen 38) the 7th century reader might recall the offspring produced and the land and people group conflicts which ensued. Inserting a prohibition on murdering offspring concludes the list of perverted acts which cannot produce life and children.

Howard Eilberg-Schwartz contends that the P source greatly influenced this idea of preserving descent lines and perpetuating a lineage by structuring human sexuality, reproduction, and fertility.⁴⁹³ So for Israel, the loss of menstrual blood by a woman or semen by a man represents a loss of life or potential life.⁴⁹⁴ Taken from the male perspective, acts such as coitus with a menstruating woman (Lev 18:19) or acts of masturbation 'cannot result in conception' and are categorised as wasted seed, 'a missed opportunity for creating life anew', and an abomination or 'perversion'. Likewise adultery (v. 20), offering one's children to Molech (v. 21), male-male sex (v. 22), and human male-animal (and human female-animal) sex (v. 23) are perversions and 'pose a threat to the integrity of Israelite lineage' – where

⁴⁹¹ Sarah J. Melcher, "The Holiness Code and Human Sexuality," in *Biblical Ethics & Homosexuality: Listening to Scripture*, ed. Robert L. Brawley (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 98.

⁴⁹² From a possible gang rape of Lot's daughters to two-fold intercourse with their father, these proximate incidents violate the Holiness Code taboos. Having these vignettes juxtaposed to the Sodom narrative reiterates at least one aspect of Sodom which was not favoured: coitus outside the husband-wife relationship. Whether it be male-male sex, gang rape, or daughter-father sex, these are not acceptable in the socio-religious code. Sodom's plague was fiery sulphur and Israel's plague was Lot's progeny, 'to this day' (Gen 19:37c, 38c).

⁴⁹³ Eilberg-Schwartz, 166-67.

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 182-83.

male-male sex, male-animal sex, and female-animal sex ‘cannot result in conception’ either.

As Israel secures its lineage, the specificity of *offspring* sacrifice rather than child sacrifice cannot be overlooked. In the religious structure, identifying the offspring, particularly the first born, as belonging to Yahweh (Exod 22:28-29)⁴⁹⁵ is as important to the reader as Israel being Elohim’s first born (Exod 4:22-23)⁴⁹⁶ and being created and fathered by Yahweh (Deut 32:6).⁴⁹⁷ In the societal structure identifying the child here as one’s seed or descendant being sacrificed draws the reader’s attention to the import of the consanguineal and affinal relationships in Israel’s patrilineal culture:⁴⁹⁸ ‘None of you shall approach anyone near of *kin* to uncover nakedness: I am the Lord’ (Lev 18:6; emphasis mine). For the most part the text of chapter 18 is addressed to sons (and his associated familial roles such as that of nephew) in the first and then fathers (husbands, brothers) secondarily. The writer refers to the prohibitions based on a son’s perspective in the family and as the litany continues to switch, where appropriate, to fathers, husbands, and brothers. The language here focuses on notable roles in the family structure or kinship-based organisation,⁴⁹⁹ rather than generic unidentified roles in the community of man, woman, or child. So when the listener/reader is instructed not to give ‘*your* offspring’ (v. 21a), reiterated by Moses as ‘sons and daughters’ (Deut 12:31, 18:10),

⁴⁹⁵ Levenson, 15-17.

⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 36-42.

⁴⁹⁷ Also of note is Levenson’s proposal that the [blood] ritual of circumcision is a substitution for the [blood] ritual of first male sacrifice and should be included in Israel’s religious structure (Ch. 6).

⁴⁹⁸ The source of Israel’s patrilineality is of course the eponymous ancestor, Israel, or Jacob himself (cf., Lev 18:2, ‘people of Israel’).

⁴⁹⁹ Bird, 150.

for sacrifice, the personal relationship is made emphatically and the prohibition specified.

Unlike the identity involved in child sacrifice, the other interruptions in this litany are addressed to a generic set. For example the Israelite male, broadly speaking, is prohibited from intercourse with another male in general or all males. Could the non-kin relationship affirm the societal or even cultic implications behind this law? In other words, Yahweh directs the male Israelite to avoid male sexual associations found in the Ishtar cult.⁵⁰⁰ Bird observes a shift in our interjections from a family ethos, as we noted above, to a concern for ritual purity.⁵⁰¹ As male-male incest seemed unlikely or abhorred at the least in this and other ANE cultures the other recorded male-male sexual relations would have existed in temple worship, over a defeated foe, and possibly in societal relationships. In any case observing the audience's identity and the sacrificial or societal restrictions contributes to understanding the message from the Lord.

Now a child sacrifice stands in contrast to an animal sacrifice, but animal sacrifices have been discussed several verses earlier in chapter 17. In Leviticus 17:4 if an ox, lamb, or goat are slaughtered and not offered to the Lord then a cutting off from the people is to occur as in Leviticus 18:29. One is reminded of the separation or death of Nadab and Abihu as it relates to these improper sacrifices and methodology: a sacrifice of unholy fire (10:1), animal sacrifices to other gods (17:3-9), and child sacrifices and indiscriminate sexual practices (18:24-30) – plus

⁵⁰⁰ God affirms this in Deuteronomic Code where he specifically instructs 'sons of Israel' not to be temple prostitutes (Deut 23:17-18).

⁵⁰¹ Bird, 150.

the prefaced sacrifices in 7:11f. But the animal sacrifices have an implication of offerings to other gods apart from YHWH. Verses 5 to 7 in chapter 17 provide the rationale that slaughtering animals outside the confines of the newly established rituals is equivalent to worship of the ‘goat-demons’. Specifically when one offers sacrifices in an open field and does not bring the sacrifice to the LORD the priests are unable to perform their duty, the sacrifice becomes unpleasing to GOD and the people of Yahweh end up prostituting themselves – which is quite an evocative word to use for worshipping another god. The equation of religious and sexual prostitution becomes conspicuous in the Holiness Code. Recall in Genesis 38 Judah identifies Tamar as a prostitute to justify sexual relations with her but later realises that she is his daughter-in-law and instead he prostitutes himself. Like Judah and Tamar the Israelites may have already, or could sexually prostitute themselves, by offering religious sacrifices to goat-demons and other gods apart from Yahweh alone. The implication of sacrifices to goat-demons relative to sacrifices to Molech is equally prohibited as acts of illicit intercourse.

Offspring sacrifices and animal sacrifices by implication involve the spilling of blood. The code already discussed certain instances when and how blood may be let from an animal. And blood let from one’s children is not an appealing circumstance. As blood is a key component in the text of these sacrifices and life is in the blood (Lev 17:11, 14) the writer draws the conclusion for the reader that issues of life and death are governed solely by YHWH: ‘. . . the life of the flesh is blood . . . The life is sacred, outside of the prescribed human bounds, hence, bounded and set apart . . . [also] Yahweh has given the blood to be used on the altar

– to perform *kipper* [atonement; ransom] . . . as life is in the blood.⁵⁰² Not unlike ritual sacrifice, structures for life giving blood related emissions such as a woman's menstrual cycle or preserving the blood and life of a child are equal codes of life by the life giver Yahweh himself. Thus, as Levenson's child sacrifice theory implies, all sacrificial and sexual systems are Yahweh's to control.

Juxtaposed are the prohibitions against offspring sacrifice and sexual relations with animals, and the prohibition against lying with a male. As discussed earlier a close relationship of animal sacrifices to other gods could exist with the practice of sexual intercourse with animals. If this is so then offspring sacrifice, coitus with animals, and male-male coitus could all be implied categorically in the worship of other gods or cultic practices apart from Yahweh's code. As an exception to the common subject matter of sexual violations, the Molech prohibition has the effect of identifying our interjections with alien cultic practices and alien gods.⁵⁰³ Identified earlier were cultic practices of male-male coitus. Just as animal sacrifice to goat-demons was not exemplified as being practised in the cult's temple, so male-male intercourse may or may not be specific temple practice. The prostitution act itself like that of sacrifices to goat-demons (Lev 17:7b) represents an association with other gods so male-male intercourse does not need a temple setting to be perceived by YHWH as worshipping other gods. Whether in the temple of a neighbouring ANE nation or in one's tent in Israel, Israelite male-male sexual relations are viewed as worship towards the likes of Ishtar and not the LORD God

⁵⁰² Gorman Jr., 187.

⁵⁰³ Bird, 151.

of Israel. Thus a religious and social prohibition is established simultaneously to bar these acts of prostitution in Israel.

Intriguingly this harlotry is presented as an analogy for a man lying with a male *as with* a female or in another translation ‘to lie with a male as a woman would’,⁵⁰⁴ is made in 18:22 (and 20:13). Saul M. Olyan confirms that the analogous phrases specifically refer to intercourse.⁵⁰⁵ He observes that, ‘anal penetration was seen as analogous to vaginal penetration on some level, since “the lying down of a woman” seems to mean vaginal receptivity’ and male-male couplings would involve an insertive and a receptive partner.⁵⁰⁶ Now why should this analogy even be made? Why not have a specific Hebrew phrase already in the language of discourse which both author and reader would have understood? This suggests that such an axiomatic phrase might not have existed in this culture because such sexual activity did not exist in the culture hitherto. Further a modern and anachronistic implication of homosexual behaviour in Early Israel would also be inappropriate historically.

The reader/listener in Early Israel would understand the social and historically relevant imagery of male-female sexual intercourse. Thus when the link is made to male-male coitus a readily established sexual relationship is used as a basis for explaining another or even new concept. The author’s diction here suggests that a male being penetrated by another male or anyone/thing else is new to Israelite culture and thus to the language. So if a practice is not performed in a

⁵⁰⁴ Walsh: 205.

⁵⁰⁵ Saul M. Olyan, "And with a Male You Shall Not Lie the Lying Down of a Woman: On the Meaning and Significance of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 5, no. 2 (1994): 185.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid.

society then instituting a prohibition for it (even if one may contend in an ancillary position) would go virtually unnoticed as the culture had no need for such a practice before. Fear or other supposed emotional attachments to the human application of this restriction becomes moot as male-male intercourse would simply be a cultural anomaly. What then seems to be rather abrupt intrusions may just be necessary for the early Israelite and the modern listener/reader to fully comprehend what constitutes life giving activities in the religious, social and sexual order of Israel. Practising these intrusions as well as the previously mentioned prohibitions in the Holiness Code causes defilement of oneself, one's nation, and the land (Lev 18:24-30). As the other ANE nations before Israel which participated in the above, Yahweh himself caused the land 'to vomit out its inhabitants' (vv. 24-25). This mechanism of cutting off the people is the general repercussion for committing the abominations in the Holiness Code. It is essentially separation or death. Hence death is the penalty in chapter 20 for these same prohibitions in chapter 18. Even the chapter 18 intruding violations of offspring sacrifice (20:2), male-male intercourse (v. 12), and fe/male-animal intercourse (vv. 15-16) constitute a cutting off (v. 3) and death. Again the life-death imagery is enhanced by the assertion that once these practices occur the violator's blood is upon him/her.

For the early Israelite male, he was prohibited from indiscriminate intercourse with a multiplicity of women, men, and animals. Although permissible in Canaan, as previously observed in Egypt when Israel was enslaved, and across the nations of the ANE the Israelite male is restricted in his sexual activity. Olyan would agree as he supports the view that male-male intercourse in Leviticus 18:22

and 20:13 is associated with other sexual activity, indiscriminate or otherwise. He further espouses that these acts are described in the Scripture as defiling to one's self, the land, described as an abomination, and, more importantly, attributed to the Egyptians and/or Canaanites.⁵⁰⁷

Not to be forgotten are other prohibited sexual, social, and familial acts for the Israelite male. As mentioned earlier, many generations lived in one family household. This living arrangement required certain boundaries especially regarding a woman's (and perhaps other men's) safety and thus limited human sexual desires. 'The incest laws in [Lev] 18,6-23 seem to be at least as interested in putting limits on predatory male sexuality and protecting females as in asserting the authority of the paterfamilias'.⁵⁰⁸

'Incest, when it occurred, broke social conventions and often prevented domestic harmony, but it also brought pollution or defilement onto the individual and the community'.⁵⁰⁹ The matter of pollution and cross contamination also supports Israel's Holiness Code regarding male-male sex acts. Similar to prohibiting the mixture of a woman's menstrual blood with a man's seminal fluid a likely mixing of seminal fluid with defecation would also be prohibited for the individual and community. Matters of pollution and defilement were focal points when birth and marriage took place. The common feature of sexual discharges invoked a concern for mystical pollution that the Holiness Code could not ignore.⁵¹⁰ Likewise ignoring a male-male discharge exchange without the associating potential

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid.: 188.

⁵⁰⁸ Gagnon, "Old Testament and Homosexuality," 383.

⁵⁰⁹ Bigger: 195.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid.

for birth could not have been missed. Added to the marriage/sexual-union/birth scheme as discussed earlier, the gaps in marriage, and moreover, birth would have been at odds with the traditions of early Israel.

Power is life

Another elucidation of Israel's incest laws is the matter of power and authority. Various texts within Deuteronomy and the Holiness Code specifically prohibit intercourse with agnatic relatives – especially the father's wife. Such coital activity was compared to the offender (son) having sexual relations with one's father – a male-male sex act:

None of you shall approach anyone near of kin to uncover nakedness: I am the Lord. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father, which is the nakedness of your mother; she is your mother, you shall not uncover her nakedness. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife; it is the nakedness of your father (Lev 18:6-8, NRSV).

Within a patrilineal society like early Israel such violations against one's father had the effect of polluting the descent line, destabilising the family authority structure and a complementary disharmony within the domestic sphere.⁵¹¹

Saul incriminates his son Jonathan in a similar perceived disharmony. In this case the matter of Saul's power and his family's lineage ruling Israel were at stake. From the time David defeated Goliath and the people ascribed to him victories in the ten thousands, but for the current Israelite king they only accredited him victories over thousands, Saul despised David and the threat he posed to his *kingdom* (1 Sam 18:5-9). Later Saul hurls accusations and spears at his own son

⁵¹¹ Ibid.: 196-98.

when he arraigns Jonathan for aligning with David, at the shame of his mother's nakedness (20:30-33). As Saul believes Jonathan allies himself with a usurper of the throne and power of Israel, Saul rejects Jonathan's birth and lineage in the Saulide dynasty and family. The king's fear was justified, however, for Jonathan later admitted to David that not only would David be king and Jonathan his second but also that Saul was threatened by this outcome (23:17). Saul's paternal and monarchical authority has been eroded. Explicit in the David story is a son's attempt to destabilise David's authority as paterfamilias amongst the kinsmen and his power as king. The Holiness Code outlines prohibitions against male-male sexual intercourse and male incest against a father's wife. Now the David story nowhere treats authorial or divine abhorrence of male-male coitus or even the act occurring itself. However both the act of incest against David's wife (wives and/or concubines) and the author treating this issue with disdain are presented.

With the lingering impression of Jonathan opposing his father Saul, Absalom rebelled against his father David in 2 Samuel 16:21-22. Part of that revolt included Absalom having sexual intercourse publically with David's concubines/wives in order to strengthen his and his follower's position and ultimately to usurp his father's power as king. Now to acquire a man's wives or concubines here seemed to have been equivalent to taking over the man's position.⁵¹² Notable was an earlier action by Abner against Saul to encroach upon his command through sexual relations with Saul's concubine (2 Sam 3:6-8). In Absalom's case his actions were directed towards David not only as king but as his

⁵¹² Ibid.: 198-99, n. 29.

father who failed him regarding the assault of Absalom's sister – among other things (2 Sam 13-15). His intention to destabilise David's family and kingly power was not well received as several characters in the plot felt justified at Absalom's demise and encouraged to aide in it (2 Sam 18-19). Maintaining the father's authority in the family and in patrilineal Israel was elemental to their culture. The abhorrence of the circumstance of a male son committing a sexual act with his mother and resultantly father was concomitant to an upset in the household, an attempt at the power inherent in the male leader, and a divine curse; hence 'abomination' being associated with incest and male-male intercourse. Imagine then a coincidental attitude towards male-male sex as revealed in Lev 18:22. Such sexual activity would, as prescribed above, destabilise men's authority in the society and incite a cultural disharmony in early Israel.

This theory on instability in Israel is not that far-fetched, as some of the original incest laws may not have been restricted to kin only.⁵¹³ One aspect of incest against the father's wife or kin is the direct challenge of the paterfamilias' authority in the household, hence the metaphor of uncovering the father's nakedness. The matter of the male father being the senior kin and family authority is prominent here. The fact that he is *male* in a *patrilineal* culture is also relevant to the discussion of another male prohibited from uncovering his wife or kin's nakedness/skirt and eventually his own.⁵¹⁴ The equivalent as stated is sexual intercourse between a male son and a male father. Such male-male activity would

⁵¹³ Ibid.: 197.

⁵¹⁴ Although it might be implied it is interesting that a prohibition addressed to daughters against incest with their fathers is not taken up by the levitical author – even though the reverse is cited.

be prohibited from a basis of power and secondly of gender in a male focused kin network. Thus the close proximity for the death penalty of incest against the male towards his father's wife (20:11) and male-male coitus (20:13) in Leviticus 20 is evident in that native writer's thought-process.

As discussed, this patrilineal society tends to protect women from being violated sexually, among other things. So, when certain Israelite women were jeopardised by incidents of incest or adultery [e.g., Dinah (Gen 34), Tamar of Jacob (Gen 38), Tamar of David (2 Sam 13), and Bathsheba (2 Sam 12)], such actions would have violated the Holiness Code and implicated the actions of the men involved. According to their own code, such transgressions are not acceptable in an Israelite context (18:2a). Leviticus 18 addresses the prohibitions as abominations within the nation and people of Israel specifically. The term 'abomination' (*tow'eebaah*) is used generally for an abhorrent, socially constructed violation;⁵¹⁵ in this case one instituted by Israel's Deity. Then the abominations are contrasted by Yahweh himself with the other nations' abominations. This comparative example is directed to the Israelites and the foreigners living within her boundaries and is part of the restrictions in Yahweh's code of life (18:26). Practising the taboos listed are incompatible with Yahwistic practices,⁵¹⁶ defiling, unthinkable in Israel, and unacceptable in Israelite culture.⁵¹⁷ The specifics of Lev 18:22 and 20:13 'prohibit male-male intercourse without qualification, in contrast to other ancient cultures,

⁵¹⁵ Olyan: 180, n. 3.

⁵¹⁶ Bird, 151.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid., 151, n. 20.

where status, coercion, and other issues play a role in the bounding of licit and illicit sexual behavior [*sic*] between men'.⁵¹⁸

Israel attempts to maintain her socio-religious identity throughout the generations. If the *Book of Judges* could serve as a microcosm of Israelite life over the centuries, one observes that as Israel has her years of turning away from Yahweh she always returns to a life identified by the covenant and the requisite social deference expected of her. In the case of the Holiness Code, ritual and religious purity are the factors which separate Israel from her neighbours: 'Purity played a central role in ancient Jewish life, for it enabled Israel to differentiate itself from other nations'.⁵¹⁹ Thus when Leviticus condemns male-male coitus it safeguards Jewish identity despite Canaanite influences.⁵²⁰

A rationale

Bird postulates that fear intimidated early Israel towards prohibitions from homoeroticism. She explains that what stands behind the prohibition is 'a fear of deviation from the socially dominant pattern of male-female intercourse, a biologically favored [*sic*] pattern grounded in reproductive needs but by no means limited to them . . . In the final analysis it is a matter of gender identity and roles, not sexuality – which must conform to the socially approved gender patterns'.⁵²¹ While a bit simplistic and reductionistic the complex cultural environment of any society and that of Israel cannot be relegated to one's abrupt reaction or sterile analysis on fear and gender identity alone. Within a society is a multiplicity of

⁵¹⁸ Olyan: 205.

⁵¹⁹ Locke: 132-33.

⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*: 133.

⁵²¹ Bird, 157.

factors, past and present, which contributes to what that society develops into and how it develops. Limiting one's observation to the habitus or descent system (as two among multiple methods and factors), as we did earlier, can reveal clues about said development. However, for a scholar to imitate a modern popular method of using pedestrian or sweeping language such as **fear** to describe a phenomenon or a reaction to a phenomenon, which one disagrees with, does not seem helpful.

Although proposing an overall useful contribution to the discussion, Bird neglects the complex integration of theology in the societal life of Israel and in part of other nations in the ANE. Widely known are the origins of early societies centring on religion and cultic practices before evolving into political governments and nation-states. What was once a religious practice becomes a foundation for a moral code weaved into the culture. Even today Israel finds it difficult to separate their moral, societal, and theological imperatives. What is crucial to this discussion is the stark differences in the *worldview* of Israel, the ANE and modern Western civilisation.

Herman C. Waetjen begins the preface to this contrasting dialogue with the proposal that early taxonomic classification by the natural fact of sex predominated historical thinking and regarding this matter: 'genitals determined gender'.⁵²² One example is the biological receptive nature of the female so thus gendered female or feminine.⁵²³ 'In Israel as elsewhere the distinction between active and receptive

⁵²² Herman C. Waetjen, "Same-Sex Sexual Relations in Antiquity and Sexuality and Sexual Identity in Contemporary American Society," in *Biblical Ethics & Homosexuality: Listening to Scripture*, ed. Robert L. Brawley (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 103.

⁵²³ Olyan: 188.

sexual roles was conditioned by gender'.⁵²⁴ Not only early Israel would have held to this but later rabbinic traditions also held to creation's scheme in which the male was created 'to do' and the female 'to be done to'.⁵²⁵ Consequently, '[t]he modern invention of sexuality has superseded the natural fact of sex and has been constituted as a "principle of the self"⁵²⁶ in determining sexual preferences today. Gagnon agrees that 'gender differentiation, not status differentiation, took precedence' in the biblical record.⁵²⁷

Gender differentiation was manifested in the Genesis 2-3 account where the Yahwist treats the one-flesh union or re-union of 'complementary gendered beings, while relegating to God's curse at the fall the husband's rule over his wife (Gen 3,16)⁵²⁸ – status in the second instance due to sin. But was it merely a male/female gender distinction in play? Jerome T. Walsh extends the argument to include a social construction of masculinity as well. Walsh contends that like Israelite culture, Assyrian, Greek, and Roman culture are societies where matters of honour and shame are foundational social values. However early Israel, like many contemporary Mediterranean societies, does not make an explicit distinction in the Lev 18:22 and 20:13 prohibition to active or passive partners.⁵²⁹

Attitudes towards male-male sexual intercourse are less based on a social construction of relational sexuality (that is, that sexual activity is proper to gender-differenced partners and not to same-gendered partners) than on the social construction of masculinity (that is, that status-superior males penetrate and are not penetrated).

⁵²⁴ Walsh: 202.

⁵²⁵ Olyan: 189.

⁵²⁶ Waetjen, 112.

⁵²⁷ Gagnon, "Old Testament and Homosexuality," 377.

⁵²⁸ Ibid.

⁵²⁹ Walsh: 203, 06.

Israel's laws need not imply any broader prohibitions than there would have been, for instance, in Rome. So then for Israel past and present, *genitals determine gender*.⁵³⁰

Furthermore the *fear* Bird rationalises does not consider the OT's contrasting valuation of homosexual and heterosexual bonds. 'It is better to say that the OT shows some interest in affective bonds but that the prerequisites for marriage must first be met'. So apart from differing worldviews this *a priori* conjecture regarding a *fear* of homosexuality in OT times also fails to interpret the observed cultural priority on prerequisites for marriage. Gender identity alone without regard for the philosophy behind early Israel's view on gender, status, and sexuality – if any – is necessary for a more complete vantage in addition to the 'environmental factors – including family and peer dynamics, geography, education, degree of cultural sanction, early sexual experimentation, and incremental choices . . .'.⁵³¹

Kenneth Locke synthesises the views of Thomas E. Schmidt, Richard B. Hays, and John Stott regarding a biblical perspective on marriage and sexuality rather than the typically analyzed prohibitions associated with marriage and sexuality.⁵³² He proffers the opinion that reproduction is good and that homoeroticism short-circuits the process of creation and salvation; and that the Bible endorses male and female unions as sexual completeness. This is developed as male and female were once *one* in the *adam* then separated into genders (recall the *adam*'s sleep) and now can resume that union in sexual intercourse – within the

⁵³⁰ Ibid.

⁵³¹ Gagnon, "Old Testament and Homosexuality," 370, 90.

⁵³² Locke: 144-47.

context of marriage; he emphasises: ‘Whether one agrees with [Locke], Schmidt, Hays and Stott or not, they have a point when they argue that the Bible presents a more or less negative view of at least male homoeroticism,’⁵³³ and coitus outside the ‘marriage’ union of one male and one female – as opposed to indiscriminate heterosexual sex.

If the biblical authors were exposed to the research and culture regarding marriage, sexual unions, and homosexuality today perhaps a modern western view could be added to their discussions, one which encourages the Abrahamic Faiths to love those who choose not to abide by a Holiness Code *per se* or even God’s guidelines for those who choose to follow him. As free human beings people have the right to accept or reject religious or biblical instructions. Those making the decision either way should tolerate and more so love the other regardless of her/his decision. Marti Nissinen reminds us that as Christians a primary charge from our Lord is to love others. He adds that the sacrificial love of Christ is important as, ‘Love is not about striving towards an objective good but about putting oneself at risk for another human being’. Although the biblical authors wrote based on their culture and identity, and the Judeo-Christian ethic is based on those writings within the context, adding modern philosophies and ‘scholarship would have been foreign and incomprehensible’ to them. The emotions of the narrator, the DH, and the religious culture of Early Israel cannot be exorcised from understanding; social and

⁵³³ Ibid.: 147.

historical emotions and concepts of husband-wife coitus, for example, are inherent to and part of the totality of the Israelite phenomena.⁵³⁴

Another change in philosophies from early Israel to the modern West lies in the idea of intimacy. Not long ago in our own history we defined intimacy as ‘close familiarity or fellowship; nearness in friendship’.⁵³⁵ Even the Oxford English Dictionary defines intimacy in its first entry as ‘the state of being personally intimate; intimate friendship or acquaintance; familiar intercourse; close familiarity; an instance of this’, and *secondly* as a euphemism for sexual intercourse.⁵³⁶ So if two men are intimate with one another then they share a close fellowship or friendship. Examples to consider elsewhere are Gilgamesh and Enkidu, Achilles and Patroclus, and David and Jonathan.

However in our modern sexually charged society, as we observe intimate male relationships of the past we default to our own connotative views of sexual intercourse and penetrate the historical integrity of the narratives with experiential motives. Reinterpreting the past becomes a cultural analysis of how we define and interpret our actions today (cf., ethnocentrism and anachronism). More so, it makes any form of intimacy between men complicated and problematic for our culture today.⁵³⁷ This becomes exemplified in analyses with key yet profuse usage of words like *fear* applied to historical humanity in order to elicit emotions of

⁵³⁴ Nissinen, *Homoeroticism*, 139, 26, 25.

⁵³⁵ 1828 edition of Webster's American Dictionary of the English Language: <http://1828.mshaffer.com>. 2009. Online: <http://1828.mshaffer.com/d/search/word,intimacy> [13 April 2009].

⁵³⁶ Oxford English Dictionary. 2009. Online: http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50119926?query_type=word&queryword=intimacy&first=1&max_to_show=10&single=1&sort_type=alpha [13 April 2009].

⁵³⁷ Daniel Boyarin, "Are There Any Jews in 'the History of Sexuality'," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 5, no. 3 (1995): 355.

intolerance and anger from the author and modern reader towards ancient humanity regardless of the cultural differences. A broader and liberal interpretation of historical data is necessary to interpret its meaning. In fact a liberal perspective would open the reader to unconventional views not previously considered, such as a non-sexualised male intimacy between David and Jonathan.

With respect to sexuality in a self-identified Israelite society, the OT does offer clues as to the unique ideology and religious practices of this group of Hebrews separate from their neighbours. Although sexual actions are part of the story in the nineteen narratives, contextual clues provide alternative foci for the purposes in writing these stories (e.g., Divine justice). As such an attempt to adhere to Yahwehistic standards of living including a Priestly or Deuteronomistic limitation on multiple coitus partners, and what they deemed as lawful partners with opposite genders who promoted their Israelite ideology of *life*, are set as the contextual bedrock. This cultural and chronicled basis coupled with no discernible sexual activity between David and Jonathan reveal the deficiency in discussions promoting pro/anti-homosexual behaviour between the two. In fact the purpose for writing this story does not reflect our modern understanding of sex. Regarding sexual references to David, one record of his sexual sin was made clear in the story of his adulterous act with Bathsheba. As it violated Yahweh's law and the socio-religious customs of Israel the editor reprimanded David in his commentaries on the story. The DH shamed the Israelite folk-hero as he ignored the custom of going to war at a certain time, murdered Uriah, covered up his 'sins', and experienced the death (contra-life) of his offspring. So if David and Jonathan were involved in a sexual

relationship then the DH would have noted it and made the appropriate literary admonishment. Likewise if David and Jonathan's relationship was the epitome of a strict male-male friendship as seen in modern times then the editor would not have included references to war, ritual, monarchy, kinship, and such. These observations can expand the scope of the usual interpretations of the text, story and culture, and prompts us to investigate more liberal ideas and philosophies within an early Israelite context. In the next chapter we will discuss further the identity of Israel and kinship followed by the impact of ritual and monarchy in the following chapter.

As discussions on David and Jonathan's perceived homosexuality are rampant in modern western discussions of the biblical text, the purpose of this chapter was to present the pro/anti-homosexuality views to the narrative and to show the viability of alternative views which might contribute to the promulgation of the warriors' brotherhood concept. Anthropological concepts were also used to validate the alternatives to homosexuality and will be used in the next chapter to examine concepts of kinship in Early Israel. This chapter served to move the discussion forward from perceived sexuality in the relationship, to an asexual view of the relationship, and to our proposal of the warriors' brotherhood. Also since chapter three, we have seen a variety of male-male asexual loves and intimacies which are credible explanations for the love which surpasses that of women (e.g., generational, kinship, heroic, of life, Divine). In addition, we proposed some of this author's own ideas as to what issues are at play in the perceived homosexual activity in the OT, and tied it into Israel's cultural identity on issues of life and offspring, which we will discuss next.

Chapter 6 – A Culture of Premonarchical Israel

The story of David and Jonathan in 1 and 2 Samuel has become the focus of much debate in modern society. Theologians, scholars from other disciplines and various members of society engage in passionate disputes about the sexual orientation of the two men. While investigating such claims many fail to include an understanding of the self-identified, eponymous Israelite culture. This chapter will discuss the culture surrounding the characters of David and Jonathan. Specifically, we will probe family life and domestic groups in Premonarchical Israel. Then we will move to the impact of this environment on David, Jonathan, their relationship, and their paternal figures.

Family Household in Premonarchical Israel

One cannot deny that the unit of association western society labels ‘family’ is the crux of most civilisations. Families in Premonarchical Israel or Early Israel were essential to its society and its own development. As implied in the beginning of this paragraph, the sociological question lies in what a culture labels as this particular unit of association. Additional questions concern those who comprise this unit of association and the nature of its function. These queries are further complicated by a misunderstanding of Premonarchical Israel. Formerly Israelites in the Iron I period (*ca.* 1200 BC) were categorised as a tribal league or amphictyony. A definitively Greco-Roman concept, the amphictyony is a group or tribe united politically or religiously. More specifically derived from the sacred league which

surrounded the shrine of Apollo at Delphi in 6th century BC, the classical amphictyony was adapted to the Ancient Near East (ANE) by prominent Bible scholars such as Alt and Noth.⁵³⁸ Martin Noth in particular institutionalised Premonarchical Israel as a religious entity focused on the worship of Yahweh. The entity was the covenant people of Israel gathered into organised tribes. Scholars now focus on Premonarchical Israel as a more appropriate classification than the amphictyony or tribal league. It seems Israel may not have been as strictly organised as Noth first stipulated, furthermore his conclusions from a comparison of the Greco-Roman model with Early Israel may have been premature and lacking some anthropological-sociological foundations.

It is interesting that many have also confused the definitions of family, clans, tribes and other units of associations within early Israel and the biblical material itself. J.W. Rogerson contends that the term tribe ascribed to Israel was coined from an ancient Germanic religious practice. The Franks and Saxons were Germanic tribes which extended their power over neighbouring tribes. These unified tribes also formed a religious union. So comparatively, 'Just as the Saxons worshipped the God Saxnot, so the Israelites. . . adopted the worship practised by the original tribe Israel.' Thus as with the expanding Germanic tribe so too with Israel's religious tribe, it expanded throughout its peoples who worshipped the same Deity. Hence similarities from Germany to Israel result in adopting a similar term: tribe.⁵³⁹

⁵³⁸ A.D.H. Mayes, "Amphictyony," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (London: Doubleday, 1992), 212-16.

⁵³⁹ Rogerson, 90.

The sociological similarities resonate within both cultures but the specific understanding of Israel's tribes and units of association must engender further study. Of great importance is the Hebrew term *mispahah*. The village *mispahah* or kinship group of Premonarchical Israel is generally understood as the inhabitants of a village. More useful however is the term 'family household'⁵⁴⁰ for this unit of association which serves as a protective association of extended families.⁵⁴¹ 'Combining *family*, with its kinship meanings, and *household*, a more flexible term including both coresident and economic functions, has [*sic*] descriptive merit.'⁵⁴²

The economic impediment becomes especially apparent when investigating the agrarian society of early Israel. Premonarchical Israelites were diversified agricultural farmers of their time. They cultivated lands along the coast of the Mediterranean, the large valley of Jezreel and the environmentally unfriendly rocky wooded central highlands of Palestine. This makes one's work more difficult in sustaining life in the region. For the ANE, and perhaps Israel, the difficulty of cultivating such arid terrain is superseded only by the strategic location of the land. The military and commercial benefit of the land was its location on the route between Egypt and Mesopotamia and between Phoenicia/Anatolia and the Arabian Peninsula. The land had no valuable minerals, other natural resources, nor extensive grain-producing fields. The agricultural obstacles would then preclude the necessity for additional or innovative resources to tend the land; thus the need to define the coterminous element of the family household by its coresident factor. The

⁵⁴⁰ Carol Meyers, "The Family in Early Israel," in *Families in Ancient Israel*, ed. Leo G. Perdue, The Family, Religion, and Culture (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 13.

⁵⁴¹ Norman K. Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh: A Sociology of the Religion of Liberated Israel, 1250-1050 B.C.E* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1979), 257-58.

⁵⁴² Meyers, 13.

functionalist approach of the premonarchical family directed the *mispahah* and family household towards the universal goal of obtaining sustenance. Multiple individuals working together became a necessity in farming the land for survival. The family household was established not only along consanguineal or affinal lines but functionally for the development of the land.⁵⁴³

The family household or *bet ab* dwelt in pillared houses. Once entering the home the visitor came upon a large multifunctional courtyard segmented by a row of pillars on one or both sides. The courtyard would serve both nuclear families of the pillared house. More specifically, ‘. . . the ground-level space in the pillared dwellings represents a specialized layout that met the needs of the agriculturalists with important agricultural and pastoral components to their subsistence strategy.’ This emphasises the economic significance of the coresidents in the pillared house. In addition to the farming requirements and social structure of the family unit (as we will soon examine), the house architecture accentuates the primacy of economic sustainability of Premonarchical Israelites. The nuclear families lived together as an extended family of modern day. The family household consisted of the leading spousal couple, their children and grandchildren, and siblings with their spouses. This domestic unit was usually augmented by more distant kin, family groups who had met disaster, military captives, transients, and supplementary workers. A family household could include up to four generations of kin, distant kin and non-kin groups. The number of members in the family household depended on the resources needed to work the land. Even though a family household could extend

⁵⁴³ Ibid., 3, 8, 9.

well beyond fifteen members, the necessity for a manageable number would also be important. For the unit must be able to develop a means of economic and agricultural sufficiency, but also serve the needs of the unit's members.⁵⁴⁴

With the likelihood of so many human beings dwelling together, the need for order was essential. Apart from the senior spousal unit, the Decalogue and other laws governed matters such as incest regulations. In this case, as one adheres to the pattern of prohibitions against harming others in the Decalogue (e.g., do not kill another, do not steal from another, do not commit adultery with another), so too members of the household should not harm another individual sexually. From close kinsmen to non-kinsmen and old to young, members of the family household should be able to dwell together for the economic benefit of the unit.

Focus on the Kinship Group

The individual family households rather than the residential kinship groups or *mispahah* managed the region's farmlands. The constituent farm families who shared the common settled space earned their livelihoods in the fields, orchards and vineyards surrounding the village site. Essentially the family household is the primary focus of Premonarchical Israel. Formerly scholars would focus on tribes and larger kinship groups in the study of this culture; however in this brief discussion one observes the more appropriate focus. The family household is not to be confused with the modern nuclear family. Instead one may say that the family household is comprised of at least two nuclear multigenerational families and some

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid., 19, 15, 17.

non-kinsmen. The male child would have experienced close non-sexual male-female and male-male relationships. He would have become very interdependent upon his family economically and residentially. In doing so he would have become very close to others, socially. One would even say he would have become denotatively intimate with the kin, extended kin, and non-kin members of his household. Today connotatively, one would associate sexual expressions with the term intimate, as discussed previously.⁵⁴⁵

Early Israel's Patrilineality

The often translated 'father's house' for *bet ab*,⁵⁴⁶ now defined as family household, was configured patrilineally and patrilocally.⁵⁴⁷ The principal kinship relation was the father-son line. Furthermore territorial inheritances were transferred to the households' sons, for daughters had become part of their husbands' family households. So, coupled with Premonarchical Israel's focus on economic sustainability was the land component. Sons would inherit the land of their fathers in perpetuity. Sons would be the most viable choice as they would have previously worked with their fathers cultivating the land. Also, sons would remain in the family household even after taking wives, so the males are available and present for parents to choose them to inherit family property. Extrafamily land transfers were even prevented through legal (and biblical) stipulations. Among the regulations were levirate marriages, jubilee provisions, and redemptive procedures.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid., 13.

⁵⁴⁶ Gottwald, 285.

⁵⁴⁷ Meyers, 19.

Each regulation had the effect of retaining or recapturing property for a family household.

Patrilineal focus of Saul

Patrilineality, patrilocality, and land tenure can enlighten the 1 and 2 Samuel reader to the possible conflict between Jonathan and his father Saul. Of significance here is the 1 Sam 20:30-34 pericope in which Saul conveys his anger to Jonathan regarding David:

Then Saul's anger burned against Jonathan and he said to him, 'You son of a perverse, rebellious woman! Do I not know that you are choosing the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of your mother's nakedness? For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Therefore now, send and bring him to me, for he must surely die' (1 Sam 20:30-31, NASU).

As patrilineal descent is a factor in Premonarchical Israel, Saul's concern could well fall within the bounds of his father to son relationship. Was Saul concerned with his male lineage? Would the David-Jonathan covenant circumvent or confuse Jonathan's inheritance of his father's land? More so would the covenant circumvent Jonathan's ascension to his father's throne? Would David then be a possible heir to Saul's property and his kingdom under the covenant? These sociological questions entertain the rationale for Saul's anger in the above passage.

Clearly Saul was concerned for David's intervention in the Kish patrilineality. Observe Saul's declaration to Jonathan: 'For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established.' The binding of the covenant may well give David access to Jonathan's inheritance and

kingdom. Furthermore, it seems that David is within his legal rights to *usurp* Jonathan's claim to the kingdom, hence Saul's concern. Saul's distress is clarified by the preceding exclamation: 'Do I not know that you are choosing the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of your mother's nakedness?' Not only does David have a legal right to the kingdom but he has not usurped Jonathan's rights. Jonathan has relinquished his claim to the Kish family inheritance and the kingdom which results in the shame Saul speaks of. The corresponding shame of 'your mother's nakedness' refers to Jonathan's birth into the Kish patrilineal descent structure.

The question of who secures the Kish inheritance is compounded by David's marriage to Saul's daughter. In the preceding chapter readers learn that David's wife Michal helped her husband to escape Saul's advance. Recall that Michal is the woman David chose after Saul strategically offered his oldest daughter to David as a reward for defeating the Philistines. In 1 Sam 18:17-19 Saul plans to give David his daughter Merab if he becomes a 'valiant man' for Saul and 'fights the Lord's battles' for him (1 Sam 18:17). The scheme comes after Saul realises 'all Israel and Judah loved David' (1 Sam 18:16) and is intended to cause David's demise at the hands of the Philistines rather than Saul's own hand. Besides Saul already attempted to 'pin David to the wall' with his spear on two occasions and failed (1 Sam 18:10-11).

Saul's plan detoured in v. 18 when David declined the invitation to be the king's son-in-law: 'But David said to Saul, "Who am I, and what is my life or my father's family in Israel, that I should be the king's son-in-law?"' Saul then learns

that his other daughter Michal loved David (v. 20). So Saul again invites David to become the king's son-in-law (v. 21). David's initial response resembles the former as he explains that he is a 'poor man and lightly esteemed' in Israel (v.23). Then Saul realigns his motive and offers David Michal as his wife if he 'takes vengeance' on the Philistines and presents a hundred male foreskins as a dowry for Michal (v. 25). This pleases David. However Saul's plot is again thwarted as an unharmed David defeats the Philistines and offers a dowry of *two* hundred Philistine foreskins for Michal (v. 27). Now Michal sides against her father as she plans David's escape (1 Sam 19:11-13). It is Michal who learns of Saul's new plan to kill David in his home. Michal advises David to escape. Then she assists her husband's escape and places a dummy in David's bed. When Saul enquires of David Michal covers for her husband and informs her father that David is sick (v. 14). When Saul orders his messengers to apprehend David from bed, Michal's deception becomes clear and she excuses her actions (vv. 15-17).

Saul further squanders the Saulide-Kish inheritance when he himself accepts David. In 1 Samuel 18, before the event when Jonathan covenanted with David, Saul took David into his household: 'Saul took him that day and did not let him return to his father's house' (1 Sam 18:2). So Saul not only accepted David into his household but the writer emphasises that Saul would not let David return to his own home. Saul evidently brought David into his kinship group which became magnified by the Jonathan-David covenant.

Corporate Goals of the Family Household

With families living and working so closely in Premonarchical Israel it is likely that shared values were developed under the senior spousal unit. Unlike modern concepts of individuality, the family unit and its members meld into a collective, group-oriented mind-set where the individual's values are inseparable from that of the group.⁵⁴⁸ Thus corporate goals took precedence over individual rights.⁵⁴⁹

Economics and human resources

As previously discussed, economic sustainability was a major focus in Premonarchical Israel. In order to sustain the needs of the family household these 'extended families' lived together in an agrarian society.⁵⁵⁰ Before considering the family household as a workforce one must consider the production, or in this case, reproduction of the workforce to sustain the household.

The role of women in child bearing was essential to the expansion of this workforce. With the interdependent tasks of the entire family household, the integral role of child labour in these agrarian households became more fundamental to the family's survival than simply female biology.⁵⁵¹ 'It is no wonder that biblical texts contain injunctions for human fertility – "be fruitful and multiply" is addressed

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid., 21.

⁵⁴⁹ Again we will see how these corporate goals influence a national brotherhood.

⁵⁵⁰ William G. Dever, "Ethnicity and the Archaeological Record: The Case of Early Israel," *The Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 60/61, no. The Archaeology of Difference: Gender, Ethnicity, Class and the "Other" in Antiquity: Studies in Honor of Eric M. Meyers (2006/2007): 54-55.

⁵⁵¹ Meyers, 27.

to males and females – and narratives about females overcoming infertility.

Economic conditions mandated large families.^{552 553}

Apart from the economic needs for older workers in Premonarchical Israel, younger workers were needed to perform lighter but time-consuming tasks. ‘As early as age five or six, both boys and girls might be assigned tasks of fuel gathering, caring for younger children, picking and watering garden vegetables, and assisting in food preparation.’ As children grew older lighter tasks were exchanged for more age appropriate ones until the early teen years when more adult tasks were suitable. Older male children inherited necessary ecological skills from their forebearers while older female children inherited more technological skills. Older males were apprenticed by their fathers, uncles and grandfathers and acquired their predecessors’ knowledge and experiences regarding the land: soil type, terrain, climate, tool types, crop choices, and livestock management. Similarly older female children acquired more technical skills from their respective mentors: gardening, food processing, meal preparation, food distribution and textile production. Interestingly it was these technical skills which contributed to a woman’s societal worth. The woman’s technological skills would be more transferable than the man’s ecological skills. Since the man’s understanding was limited to his particular region it became more pragmatic for daughters to marry out and adapt their wealth

⁵⁵² Ibid.

⁵⁵³ Phyllis Bird, "The Place of Women in the Israelite Cultus," in *Community, Identity, and Ideology: Social Science Approaches to the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Charles E. Carter and Carol L. Meyers, Sources for Biblical and Theological Study (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 520-21.

of knowledge to a slightly different habitat. However limits to marrying out were mitigated by perceived advantages to the family household.⁵⁵⁴⁵⁵⁵

In a sense, adult children were bound to their family through the assignments they performed and contributed to the family household. With the multiple jobs young and adult children performed there would be little time for boredom, *juvenile dalliance* or even extracurricular activities. Children's loyalties to the family and the family's goals were entrenched. Stepping outside the bounds of the family and the parental authority were governed by legal-biblical codes and frowned upon (see also Deuteronomic and Deuteronomistic writings). 'The extreme penalties attached to legal strictures that aimed at ensuring parental authority (Ex. 21:15, 17) are most likely a function of the critical importance of establishing the household authority of mother and father, especially over adult children.'⁵⁵⁶

Human resources in Saul's household

This understanding also contributes to the explanation of the conflict between Saul and his adult son over David. King Saul was considerably upset with his son over the bond with David. Furthermore recall Saul's insult at Jonathan over his birth. Clearly Saul did not feel Jonathan's loyalties were entrenched in his own family. Saul may have even thought his son was involved in juvenile dalliance by having the time to befriend someone outside of the family household. If Israel did not enter the monarchical phase when they did and Jonathan was simply to

⁵⁵⁴ Meyers, 27, 30.

⁵⁵⁵ Susan Ackerman, "Household Religion, Family Religion, and Women's Religion in Ancient Israel," in *Household and Family Religion in Antiquity*, ed. John P. Bodel and Saul M. Olyan, *The Ancient World: Comparative Histories* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), 144.

⁵⁵⁶ Meyers, 31.

apprentice his father and inherit his father's land then introducing an outsider to the family household reorders Jonathan's priorities away from his own family. Adult children both men and women had key functions in the family.⁵⁵⁷ Even certain adult females were maintained within the family household due to her technical skills. So Jonathan's learned skills would have been necessary for the security of the family and in this case Saul's kingdom in perpetuity. Jonathan may have violated some legal stricture and inherited the wrath of his father instead of the land and kingdom.

Even if Saul thought Jonathan was engaged in frivolity the narrative shares another story. It was written repeatedly in the narrative's pericope that Saul had been rejected as king (1 Sam 15:10-11, 23, 26, 35). After Samuel's pronouncement on the monarch, God told Samuel to go to the house of Jesse to find a king *for God himself* (1 Sam 16:1). As Samuel conducted the royal selection process among Jesse's sons David was not available. In fact David was actually busy on assignment 'tending the sheep' (v. 11). Furthermore God seemed to have liked what he saw in David's heart in order to choose him over Saul who disobeyed (v. 7). In other words David obeys legal-biblical codes and the outward appearance is not a predilection for or predictor of obedience. So what God saw in David's heart may not have been frivolity or dalliance but compliance.

Compliance with God is also noted in a litany of brave acts. The narrator discusses many heroic and godly actions of David and Jonathan individually. Apart

⁵⁵⁷ Leo G. Perdue, "The Israelite and Early Jewish Family," in *Families in Ancient Israel*, ed. Leo G. Perdue, The Family, Religion, and Culture (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 166-67.

from the David and Goliath story, one such event for Jonathan occurred when he decided to battle the Philistines without telling his father (14:1). Not only was Jonathan victorious but he recognised the Lord's desire to deliver the enemy into his hands and those of Israel (vv. 6-15). Although Jonathan may have dishonoured his father without asking permission, the narrative composition contrasts that with Jonathan's sensitivity towards the Lord's guidance. This compositional element might also be used to foreshadow Saul's contra-godly desires and actions.

From the Family Household to the Village Unit

Honouring the authoritative and educative roles of parents were both determined and dominated by the economic functions of the household. However minor a parental function might be, each were treated with importance. One major function was how the family related with other family groups in order to affect survival of one family unit. In a sense, 'the cultural heritage of a farm family served to mediate and solidify the relationship among families that lived in close proximity and that understood themselves as kin.'⁵⁵⁸

Although archaeological evidence precludes definitive answers to the interrelation between family households within the village *mispahah*, some studies reveal associations in this larger kinship group. Clearly women marrying out, consanguineal and affinal kin outside the family household, and extended generations were among those in the village unit. These relations in addition to many who shared similar work spaces, water sources and the like, inevitably exchanged dialogue and assistance on challenges to life with limited resources in the

⁵⁵⁸ Meyers, 31, 32.

region. Shared economic and familial responsibilities were accompanied by religious, psychological, social and militaristic alliances which contributed to the solidarity of the village. This camaraderie engendered ‘shared blood’ descriptions of those in the village which is evidenced in the litany of shared biblical genealogies: ‘People everywhere tend to think of themselves as kin, or use kinship language to characterize their commonality, if they have some historical experience, standards, and life patterns in common [*sic*].’⁵⁵⁹

A consequential commonality among early Israel was their socio-religious beliefs and practices in Yahwism. It is unclear how Israel’s religious relations evolved, but what is clear is that the biblical (DH) emphasis of one God for the Israelite community was concomitant with daily life. The basic elements of Yahwism (e.g., The Decalogue, The Mosaic Covenant) served as the glue for Israelite society, although specific practices and versions of Yahwism amongst the people were dependent on one of Israel’s historic periods, from the Jacob sagas to premonarchical times, one is observing, and on a certain social grouping which ranges from a family to a ‘national’ level. Whatever the case, the essential Yahwistic covenant served as the basis for family and group worship.⁵⁶⁰ Unlike modern western cultures with individual religious choices, early Israel, the Ancient Near East, and even modern Palestine, viewed religion and the worship of a deity as a family commitment. This household covenant and faith ‘extended beyond the nuclear and compound families and included the local community – the kin group,

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid., 37.

⁵⁶⁰ George E. Mendenhall, "The Hebrew Conquest of Palestine," in *Community, Identity, and Ideology: Social Science Approaches to the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Charles E. Carter and Carol L. Meyers, Sources for Biblical and Theological Study (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 168.

or *mispahah*.⁵⁶¹ The god of one's father was often the deity of the village descent line (e.g., the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob). Multiple holy days were celebrated throughout the year. 'Such occasions contributed to and preserved the sense of common heritage and destiny and helped cement the feelings of interconnectedness among households and thus of social responsibility across household boundaries.'⁵⁶²

According to historical, ethnographic and biblical data she gathered, Carol Meyers, scholar in Near Eastern and Judaic studies and women's studies, observes that common gender specific tasks developed social intimacies among households and villagers.⁵⁶³ With the specific ecological skill set of men it was likely that they cooperated in harvesting neighbouring fields during peak seasons or even mended terraces – similar to the villagers of Rocky Roads, Jamaica, rural Auvergne, France, or rural Andalusia, Spain in a previous chapter. Male villagers formed militia-type forces with other regional villagers at the required periods. Women would have learned and performed common ritual activities like dirges and songs for both mourning and celebration – as described when the women of Israel sang about David's militaristic victories. Women shared a common biological process in birthing procedures. It was common for one or more village midwives to aid others in the physical and emotional moment of birth. Although such a personal event would have created a deep intimacy among women, men's shared intimacies were not to be discounted.

⁵⁶¹ Meyers, 39.

⁵⁶² Ibid., 40.

⁵⁶³ Ibid., 38.

Care within the villages and families of David and Jonathan

David and Jonathan shared similar experiences as warriors and Yahweh worshippers although they were from different regions and did not personally know one another at that point. David was from Bethlehem in the tribe of Judah (1 Sam 17:12); and Jonathan's family was from the tribe of Benjamin (1 Sam 10:21). Benjamin was a small tribe which bordered Judah to the northeast; and Bethlehem was a city in the northeast of Judah. It was possible for both men's families to participate in their regional militia-type forces against Israel's enemies, and as the land within this general region of Judah/Benjamin was mountainous, both families would have experienced similar ecological phenomena. Of paramount import is how dedicated to Yahweh the writer portrayed the two men as being. These factors would have served as an essential base for the David-Jonathan relationship. Saul accepted David into his household and Jonathan covenanted with David as a form of welcoming David into the Kish kinship group. As both families commonly shared historical experiences, standards and life patterns, merging David into the Saulide household would not be difficult or farfetched. However family disharmonies are inevitable (in any human household) and David falls from grace by Saul's jealousy.

Another consideration is Saul's care when he becomes elderly. The reproductive imperative to 'be fruitful and multiply' has implications for not only breeding new offspring for resources but also ensures that 'higher fertility means greater old-age security.'⁵⁶⁴ Sons who inherited their father's estate were also responsible for caring for their aged parents when the time approached. Recall that

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid., 33.

early Israelite families were unlike families in modern western civilisation. Today some would *provide for* nursing care or assisted living rather than *providing* the care themselves. Early Israel did not have this option. As long as their parents were alive the children and their families who inherited the land would *provide* the care. By the time the David-Jonathan narrative reached 1 Samuel 20:24, when the family had a meal at the time of the new moon, Saul might have realised that his own future, notwithstanding the future of his family line and property, may be in jeopardy. If David were to become the heir apparent over Jonathan who would care for Saul? Saul may not have been confident in David's integrity regarding the promise to Jonathan's household. More likely Saul did not know of the new David-Jonathan covenant as Saul himself was not aware of David's planned absence from the meal. Instead Saul thought that David was ritually unclean (v. 26). Then Saul asked Jonathan of David's whereabouts. When Jonathan executed the secret plan between him and David, Saul realised Jonathan's deception and accused his son of treachery. It was perhaps then that Saul grasped his own future inconsequence. Saul would not be cared for appropriately when he grew older if David inherited Jonathan's rite. Following this rationale, Saul would not experience the royal care of a retiring monarch when his son became the new sovereign.

David's lineage

The need for extended families to reside together and the need for reproduction reflect a clear need to secure a viable population and society. It becomes apparent why the sin of Onan, Ruth's marriage to Boaz, and the birth of

Samuel in Premonarchical Israel were among relevant stories in the biblical narratives – both patrilineally and economically.

In Gen 38:6-10 Onan's older brother dies early and leaves his widow Tamar childless. Judah instructs his son Onan to marry Tamar and provide a male heir for his deceased older brother, but Onan interrupts the sexual encounter with Tamar, again leaving the widow barren and Judah's inheritance, through two sons, unsecured. Onan's actions constrain Judah from conceding his land and property to a suitable male heir and inhibit the family's economic livelihood with a lack of new workers in the household. Tamar is forced to take action for herself (Gen 38:11-30). Judah has a third son who is not yet old enough to accept Tamar as his wife. Judah promises his son, when he is grown, to Tamar but does not fulfil his oath later. After Judah's wife dies Tamar disguises herself as a prostitute and manages to have sexual relations with Judah. When Tamar becomes pregnant the ruse is revealed and Judah accepts responsibility for his former daughter-in-law. Tamar gives birth to twin boys Perez and Zerah, and we later discover that Perez carries the line of Judah through the new Perezite Clan.⁵⁶⁵

Similar to Tamar's peril, Ruth's husband dies without a male heir to Elimelech, his father's line (Ruth 1:1-5). Ruth and her mother-in-law, Naomi, happen upon Boaz, a close wealthy relative of Elimelech. Ruth begins to work for Boaz who becomes attracted to her. Upon Naomi's advice, Ruth later implies to Boaz that he marries her (3:9-13; 4:4-6), and Boaz agrees but first must consult

⁵⁶⁵ See subsection on 'abomination or vile thing' and discussion on the *goel* and levirate customs.

another relative who is closer than he is. It seems this relative has acquired rights to Elimelech's land. Boaz negotiates with the closest relative by stipulating that one of the two men must acquire both Elimelech's land and Ruth as a wife. The latter acquisition is not suitable for the other relative, for it would cause him to jeopardise his own inheritance. Instead he relinquishes his rights over Elimelech's property to Boaz, and Boaz acquires or redeems all of Elimelech's land and property – and that of Elimelech's sons too – in honour of Naomi. Boaz then announces that he is taking and redeeming Ruth and Elimelech's line, 'in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance' (Ruth 4:10). The reader then learns that Elimelech is in the Perez lineage, who happens to be the son of Tamar and Judah. Of further note is that Ruth and Boaz bear a son, Obed, who has a descendant, named Jesse, who is the father of David, who is befriended by Jonathan, and who gives his kingship rights of Israel to David, the one whom Samuel had anointed as king of Judah and Israel.

However, before the premonarchical story of David, Samuel's mother experiences complications bearing children (1 Sam 1:1-20). Considering the importance of securing the family line and economic stability, it is understandable why Samuel's mother Hannah endured such grief as a barren woman. Her plight was aggravated by the fact that her husband's second wife had already birthed children. Now the focus seems more about Hannah's self-worth⁵⁶⁶ and contribution to society than a need to secure the genealogical line and land ownership. This

⁵⁶⁶ A study into women's self-worth and emotional reaction to the society's priority of economic stability with land and land owners (i.e., heirs) is inevitable but beyond the scope of this discussion. Clearly several of the aforementioned female characters exhibit reactions worth investigating.

concept is apparent in both her husband's love and care of Hannah while she suffers.

Consequently the story's importance becomes relevant as it relates to David. Although Samuel is in a different genealogical line than David he becomes a transitional figure with regard to the childbearing issue. Observe throughout the ancestry of David this same complication. The above stories of Tamar and Ruth in Premonarchical Israel are key examples which contribute to the importance of land and its ownership through childbearing.

Be Fruitful and Multiply

As commented earlier other, biblical narratives emphasise the need to maintain a population and property. A most effective way mentioned was how the household's corporate goals were reflected in the 'be fruitful and multiply' mandate to Adam and humanity in Genesis 1:28. The mandate included another instruction which was to subdue the land: God placed Adam in Eden to cultivate the land (2:5-8). Another is God's promise to Noah, humanity and all creatures never to extinguish the earth's inhabitants by flood again (Gen 9:12-17). In Genesis 17:1-8, God promises Abraham a fruitful line and a land to occupy. Later, as Israel travels to the land to occupy it, God promises Moses to populate his lineage extensively and to cause it to flourish (32:10). But, at Moses' behest God promises instead to preserve Israel's current population (v.14) and transfer land ownership to their descendants (33:1-6). Symmetrically in 2 Samuel 7:8-17 God promises David to secure a place (or land) for Israel to settle and assures David that all will be well with his descendents and kingdom.

The canonical stories reveal a pattern in God's discussions with Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and David. The above discussions centre on perpetuating life or preserving life tied to the notion of land ownership through covenants (e.g., the lineage and land of Ruth's deceased husband). The importance of the land is a theme throughout the Old Testament and is treated fully by other authors. The concepts of land owners and populating life are also germane. In the Old Testament and Premonarchical Israel, in particular, the rehearsal of preserving and perpetuating life is reiterated on numerous occasions. The converse view of taking life and limiting life is not only subsumed but instructions against such practices are delineated in the Decalogue and other laws. The God of Israel in this period clearly endorses a society which avoids population control.

Population control in Mesopotamia

Contrarily, other gods of an earlier period endorsed population control. In other areas of the Ancient Near East overpopulation was a societal issue requiring appropriate management. It was said that the gods feared that humanity would become so powerful that humankind would overrun the gods themselves. The deities would inflict humans with natural disasters like a global flood, starvation and death to diminish the population. Then ongoing population control was invoked through processes of celibate priestesses, barren women and male-male coitus.⁵⁶⁷ With a limit on the population there would be no need for the clamour of tending land, owning it and genealogical lineages.

⁵⁶⁷ J. N. Postgate, *Early Mesopotamia: Society and Economy at the Dawn of History* (London: Routledge, 1994), 295.

From the Babylonian epic poem 'History of Man' and other relevant Sumerian materials, the creation of mankind is explained.⁵⁶⁸ The lesser or labour gods on earth who maintained the world, rivers, mountains and the like called a general strike against the managerial gods. An assembly was called to hear the complaints of the labour gods. The agreement which was reached directed the Mother Goddess to create a special being to perform labour for all the gods. The human being's flesh and blood would be a mixture of god and man with 'Spirit' from the flesh of god. And so men and women were created. Humanity developed quickly over a period of less than twelve hundred years. Although humankind was well engaged in the purpose of working for the gods on earth, a 'noise' from the labourers coupled with, or translated as, their great number became a disturbance. The noise of mankind prevented some of the gods from sleeping: '[A]n ever-increasing population had resulted in such a din and racket that sleep became impossible. . .'⁵⁶⁹ So the gods decided to bring 'pestilence' on humanity. The purpose of pestilence was to decrease the numbers of humanity. It is noteworthy that in limiting mankind's numbers the narrator uses repeated imagery which describes how the rebellion of the earth's womb caused the people's womb to constrict: 'Let the earth's womb rebel. . . [In order] That the [people's] womb may be constricted and give birth to no child.'⁵⁷⁰ Whether mankind's noise was from a rebellion against the gods or an outgrowth of a multitude gathered in one area, humanity must be controlled. The rationale for a numerical increase is preferred as

⁵⁶⁸ A.D. Kilmer, "The Mesopotamian Concept of Overpopulation and Its Solution as Reflected in the Mythology," *OrNS* 41 (1972): 160-77.

⁵⁶⁹ W.L. Moran, "Atrahasis: The Babylonian Story of the Flood," *Biblica* 52 (1971): 56.

⁵⁷⁰ W. G. Lambert, A. R. Millard, and M. Civil, *Atra-Hasis: The Babylonian Story of the Flood* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 109-11, S iv 46-61.

humanity intensifies their worship of the gods through rigorous care of the earthly shrines in order to quell the pestilence.⁵⁷¹ Humanity's adulation appeases the gods for a time, but mankind's numbers had continued to increase. The gods sent famines, droughts, salinisation of the soil, the itch and starvations on humankind.⁵⁷² With each successive pestilence over a period of up to six years, 'mankind becomes more distressing, more rebellious, and even more physically repulsive to the gods.'⁵⁷³ More importantly the gods realise that, 'the people are not diminished; They have become more numerous than before.'⁵⁷⁴ Man's procreative powers went unchecked.⁵⁷⁵

So in the seventh year the gods devise a 'final solution'. Apart from growing in numbers, mankind's key rebellious act was now refusing to do the work s/he was created to do: that is building and maintaining the deities' shrines. For humanity's defiance the gods forgo additional punishment of mere pestilence (which mankind repeatedly overcomes) and instead the gods decide to kill what they created by sending The Flood or The Deluge. The storm lasts seven days and seven nights, and only a portion of humanity and creation are spared in an ark by the hand of a sympathetic god.

Counter-gods are angered by the treachery of their colleagues and devise a new reorganisation of the life system. Included in the reorder is the establishment of a third-category of people (apart from male and female), a segment of women

⁵⁷¹ Kilmer: 167.

⁵⁷² Ibid.: 168.

⁵⁷³ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid.: 169. Cf. Lambert, Millard, and Civil, 109, line 39.

⁵⁷⁵ Moran, "Atrahasis Review," 58.

who will be barren and a few cults with priestesses who will be cut off from child-bearing.⁵⁷⁶ The new classification ‘amounts to a theological explanation of divinely justified barrenness among women and infant mortality.’⁵⁷⁷ Chastity, celibacy and methods of intercourse that would avoid pregnancy⁵⁷⁸ are then the gods’ means of birth control and population control for humanity in Ancient Mesopotamia.

For some ‘a third category of people’ and alternate ‘methods of intercourse that would avoid pregnancy’ are clear signs of what we know today as homosexuality. However homosexuality in the two cultures and two periods should not be confused. In the context of the Babylonian epic the third category of people are included in a pericope surrounded by religious language. Although religious jargon is sometimes used as a cover for societal explanations, cultic life in Mesopotamia illuminates understanding of sexual practices of the past. If the gods instituted ‘homosexuality’ as a method of intercourse that would avoid pregnancy it leads one to enquire as to the role of the ‘homosexual’ in the cult(s) or even in society.

In the cult of the Babylonian/Assyrian goddess of fertility, love, and war, Ishtar transformed physiological males into androgynous gendered priests.⁵⁷⁹ Once involved with inventing the procreation of man and subsequent sexuality,⁵⁸⁰ Ishtar, the temperamental and erratic⁵⁸¹ courtesan goddess, utilised her priests as sexual

⁵⁷⁶ Kilmer: 171. Cf. Lambert, Millard, and Civil, 103, vii 1-8.

⁵⁷⁷ Kilmer: 172.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁹ Nissinen, *Homoeroticism*, 28.

⁵⁸⁰ Lambert, Millard, and Civil, 63-65, lines 277-305.

⁵⁸¹ Cf. Gilgamesh’s rendering in N. K. Sandars, *The Epic of Gilgamesh: An English Version*, Rev. ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972).

partners – along with other people and animals. Asexual herself, Ishtar sometimes threatened humanity with the curse of transforming a male's masculinity into femininity.⁵⁸² The specifics of the masculine-feminine metamorphosis are unknown, but what we do know is that many of these priests were eunuchs who were castrated as a lifelong devotion to the goddess. These eunuchs also served in high military and civil offices.⁵⁸³ But their otherness and actions on behalf of Ishtar, exceeded normal conventions, and engendered demonic abhorrence in many.⁵⁸⁴ Although it was likely that male sexual contact with these asexual men (when the 'promoter' took on an active role and the priest served in a passive or more effeminate role) was considered union with Ishtar herself.

It is difficult to determine whether these priests volunteered or were pressured into their service of Ishtar; and to ascertain if the passive sexual roles were a voluntary or forced means of population control in the society.⁵⁸⁵ What is clear is that moral debate ensued in ancient society as it does today about similar although not exactly the same understanding of sexual practices. Although more acceptable in cultic practices, feminized [*sic*] masculinity⁵⁸⁶ was a despised form for Mesopotamian men socially.⁵⁸⁷ Nonetheless male-male sexual contact existed in Ancient Mesopotamia and has been a part of their mythos and society – a mythos which explains one of the three methods of population control by the gods.

⁵⁸² Nissinen, *Homoeroticism*, 31.

⁵⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁵⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁵⁸⁶ Gagnon, "Old Testament and Homosexuality," 374.

⁵⁸⁷ Nissinen, *Homoeroticism*, 28, 32, 147 n. 45.

A divergent view in the cultic traditions is observed in Early Israel. Because the service of Yahweh was different from other cults in the ANE the priests and eventually the people were directed to avoid practices leaning to population control. As the asexual priests of Ishtar honoured her through male-male sexual contact, the Levitical priests of Yahweh honoured him through avoiding these customs. Leviticus 18:22 and Lev 20:13 instructs the priests (and eventually the Israelites) that men ‘shall not lie with a male as with a female’ (18:22). Several context areas should be observed. First the instruction is part of the Holiness Code. As observed previously God admonished Israel: ‘You shall not do what is done in the land of Egypt where you lived, nor are you to do what is done in the land of Canaan where I am bringing you; you shall not walk in their statutes’ (Lev 18:3, NASU). So the priests and the people were to serve Yahweh differently from the way other ANE peoples served their gods. In doing so they would be separate from the other nations and not mix Yahweh’s practices with customs of other cults. Such is exemplified in the repeated phrase throughout the Code and the book of Leviticus: ‘You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy’ (Lev 19:2; cf., 11:44-45).

Contrary to Early Israel, population control in Ancient Mesopotamia is a balance to be maintained by god and man. Fertility then ‘may be seen as a privilege and not as a right.’⁵⁸⁸ ‘[W]hereas man is ordered to limit his increase in the Mesopotamian story, the biblical text indicates the opposite command with the repeated phrase “Be fruitful and multiply”.’⁵⁸⁹ This reinforces our observation of

⁵⁸⁸ Kilmer: 173.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid.: 174.

the clear distinction between the two cultures and the divergence of their respective divine-human relations.

In the particular form we have in the Mesopotamian tradition, the post-diluvian order represents a *correction* of an earlier imbalance in the cosmos, an adjustment necessary to achieve stability and to overcome an inherent disorder. The correction is the *limitation* of man's growth. Viewed in this light, Gn 9,1 ff. looks like a conscious *rejection* of the Atrahasis Epic. God's first words to man after the Deluge are a repetition of Gen 1,28, the command to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth [emphases mine].⁵⁹⁰

Furthermore the Greeks seem to have a parallel to the motif of overpopulation and its control.⁵⁹¹ The lost post-Homeric epic, *Cypria*, attributed to Stasinus, explains that Zeus first *lightened the burden of the Earth* by the Theban War which killed many people. Later Zeus was advised to have the goddess Thetis marry a mortal (whose union produced Achilles) in order that a beautiful daughter (i.e., Helen) would be born. Both of these strategies resulted in the great war between the Greeks and the Barbarians, killing many men. And so we read in *The Illiad* and *Cypria* how the great struggle at Troy caused the 'load of death' to 'empty the world'.

In Premonarchical Israel the position can be summarised as land and land owners: Who owns what piece of land? Premonarchical Israel obviously goes to great lengths to maintain ownership of land within the domestic unit (e.g., Ruth and Boaz, Saul and Jonathan). So if land and ownership are of import and reproducing rightful owners to maintain the land is a natural step in securing the land then all or most aspects of population viability must be considered or accepted. Additionally

⁵⁹⁰ Moran, "Atrahasis Review," 61.

⁵⁹¹ Kilmer: 176.

the Genesis 1:28; 9:1 pericopes evoke a rejection of the Mesopotamian notions of population control.

Integrating celibate priestesses, barren women and homosexuals as methods of population control into the premonarchical society would significantly limit Israel's need for workers and the economic base. Population increase was considered a contingent desideratum in Premonarchical Israel.⁵⁹² Introducing population control would decimate the culture and the household families would not be able to survive. Already difficulties abounded in the area of childbearing. Infant mortality rates were high and families rarely reached five or six surviving children out of seven or eight births as, for example, in typical American farm families in the nineteenth century.⁵⁹³ Women of the premonarchical period would have nearly two pregnancies for every child who survived to the age of five.⁵⁹⁴ 'Unremittingly hard labor for both males and females and a nearly continuous sequence of pregnancies for the females were the salient features of existence . . . [*sic*]'⁵⁹⁵ Carol Meyers, Professor of Biblical Studies and Archaeology at Duke University, sanctions a reading of Genesis 3:16 which illuminate God's thoughts on childbearing: 'I will greatly increase your toil and pregnancies; along with travail shall you beget children.'⁵⁹⁶ If this is the case God foresees the need for women to bear more children and thus endorses population increase for the time.

⁵⁹² Meyers, 29.

⁵⁹³ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁵⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 29.

Male-male intimacy

So for Premonarchical Israel to entertain the wide-spread notions of celibate priestesses, barren women lacking any alternative, and homosexuality in their culture, would be highly unlikely endeavours. Even the notion of population control within the David-Jonathan story is unlikely, as the monarchical, economic and militaristic needs of a society migrating to statehood are paramount. In a precursor to the David-Jonathan story the people asked Samuel, their last judge, for a king instead. Samuel replies in terms of the needs of a state and monarchy in 1 Samuel 8:10-18: The king will require men in the military chariots, as horsemen, and on foot surrounding the chariots. He will appoint commanders and captains of his military. He will require people to plough and reap his harvest, to make his weapons of war and to make equipment for his chariots. The king will take women to be perfumers, cooks and bakers. He will take the best of the people's fields, their vineyards and their olive groves and give them to his servants. He will need a tenth of their seed and their vineyards to give to his officers and his servants. The king will require the people's male servants, their female servants, their best young men and their donkeys to use them for his work. He also will take a tenth of their flocks and the people themselves as his servants. Nonetheless, the people replied that they would prefer a king to judge them and fight their battles (vv. 19-20). With such labour intensive demands for a military, bare funds and human resources to maintain the monarchy and central government, food and support for military members, officials in government and servants in the royal household, even more people would have to maintain and increase their standard of living for the sake of

their families and for the sake of the new state. If homosexuality is a method of population control then it is unlikely that the David and Jonathan story is a homosexual novel of homoerotic love. There may be homosocial tendencies within the story but sexuality is not an obvious theme given the aforementioned premise. Guesses to the contrary often fall within a late modern worldview of common practices and choices. This being the case, where on the continuum of friendship does the David and Jonathan relationship lie? On what some may call the 'left' of the continuum are male-male sexual relations. On what others may refer to as the 'right' are male-male acquaintances. Commentators on 1 and 2 Samuel agree on a political association between the two men but their actions do include a more intimate or left-ward leaning bond than a mere political or professional alliance. In addition we discussed the importance of the family household in Early Israel and how Saul as a father might be concerned about the integrity and power of his patriliney. In light of this new evidence, another classification of male-male intimacy must be explored, not previously discussed in the academic or public spheres.

In this chapter we have examined the relevance of the classification of the family household in Israelite culture. We have used concepts in kinship and comparative studies to identify the *mispahah* and its role in society and among societies' individual members in light of Israelite influences and a compliance with taboos and other sexual proscriptions. We incorporated ideas from previous chapters, used anthropology and biblical matter to understand patriliney in *Samuel*, and proposed viable explanations for the action in the Jonathan-David narrative. Striking was our discoveries of how corporate goals within the family household

serves as a precursor for national brotherhood in monarchical times, and of how relevant and important women were in OT times, in contrast to popular modern views that they were always considered irrelevant. And we noted how taboos were used to protect people and their rights. In another comparison, we examined how the David and Saul characters stood in contrast to one another with respect to Israelite laws, customs, and religious codes; and also that David resembles Jonathan in his compliance with the legal and socio-religious codes. We have seen the relevance of previous social structures come to light in the structures of Early Israel: The structure of the warrior and other militaristic concepts in Israel came to the fore, and considerations for family care of the elderly and levirate marriage customs were highlighted, but moreover the underlying concept of securing the family's lineage was of utmost importance. The ritual of the warriors' brotherhood provides for that guarantee and complies with this Israelite social structure. Also recall the discussions in previous chapters as to the focus on this same idea in Early Israel in contrast to other cultures, mythos, and religions of the ANE. In this chapter we discussed the likelihood of how the warriors' brotherhood would play into a *unisexual* society, and from the larger social scheme in this chapter, we will move to the micro-structure of the Jonathan-David relationship next.

Chapter 7 – Brotherhood: Of Power and War

As we discuss how Early Israel interacts with the Deity, we look to the story of David and Jonathan and attempt, ‘to put man in his place, where he was and where he is, at the origin of himself and, from there to compare and explain the diversity of the forms of society and culture and the particularities of their histories’.⁵⁹⁷ In doing so, we can explore and postulate another classification of the David-Jonathan relationship: a warriors’ brotherhood.⁵⁹⁸ Set between the pro/anti-homosexual views of the men’s relationship, the warriors’ brotherhood better explains the impact of the socio-cultural time and space, geo-political forces, and religious phenomenology of the narrative and the David-Jonathan relationship. In this chapter, we will examine these anthropological and religious concepts as it relates to David and Jonathan and identify the warriors’ brotherhood as a conceptual point on the continuum of affective/amiable relationships. First, we will examine the text *in time and space* or within its historical context. While our goal is not to determine the historicity of 1 and 2 Samuel or the *Former Prophets*, our discussion will treat the available text as valid documents allowing some form of access to the culture and the type of society Early Israel represents. Next, we will outline a higher order *theoretical* view of how relationships are viewed and contextualised by a society. Diverse theoretical models from historical peoples to present cultures

⁵⁹⁷ Maurice Godelier, *The Enigma of the Gift* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 198.

⁵⁹⁸ The scholarship of Meyers, Stager, van der Leeuw, and Godelier will feature as key resources in this chapter. These scholars represent significant voices in their respective research areas, and as such are important for me to synthesize their works and use them as discussion partners to develop my proposal.

have dominated this work – of note are the people and culture of the Baruya of New Guinea. Periodically we will compare their customs with that of Early Israel's customs and then describe their culture in more detail. Simultaneously, we will investigate the corpus of culture surrounding the books of the *Former Prophets*, and observe Israel at war with other nations and experiencing internal struggle to statehood; while David synthesises power and relationships from the cultural replicas of the Judges (individually and collectively) and the premonarchical period. Afterward, he duplicates and legitimises a neo-Judge power structure in the new state through the roles of mighty warrior and the practices of fraternity, which we will classify as a warriors' brotherhood. The following discussion favours this tendency of fraternity and power over those models in previous chapters, in order to understand the relationship of the two *mighty men* or brothers-in-arms in Israel. However, the examples of military-monarchy and kinship-kingship power from the previous chapters remain in the background of this discussion. Furthermore, an extensive discussion on power can be treated in future research, as we approach the inherent limits on a thesis, and those of this thesis.

David's Inchoate Power

Previously, we reviewed how Saul accused his son Jonathan of disharmony when Saul's power and his family's lineage in ruling Israel were at stake. From the time David defeated Goliath and the people ascribed to him victories in the ten thousands and to Saul as the current Israelite king they only awarded him victories over thousands, Saul despised David and the threat he posed to his kingdom (1 Sam

18:5-9). Later Saul hurls accusations and spears at his own son when he accuses Jonathan of aligning with David at the shame of Jonathan's mother's nakedness (20:30-33). As Saul believes his son allies himself with a usurper, Saul rejects Jonathan's birth and lineage in the Saulide dynasty and family. Saul's fear was justified for Jonathan later admitted to David that not only would David be king and Jonathan his second but also that Saul was threatened by this outcome (23:17). Saul's paternal and monarchical authority has been eroded.

In the greater narrative of the History of David's Rise (HDR) the fact of Jonathan embracing the Deuteronomistic Historian's (DH) intended favour of the Davidic king is just one of the many factors which lead to David as king of all Israel from Dan to Beersheba, in a feat existing alongside the events of David's betrothal, and the fact of marriage to Saul's daughter Michal, with the support from Saul's own leading men and military captains, within a culture in social and political transition, inseparable from the Divine element, and the people's support for and pleasure towards David. We also spoke of investigating the David-Jonathan relationship within its cultural context of Premonarchical Israel and Yahwism, and we have observed cultural classifications, studies and anthropological methodologies. However what *is* context itself, apart from biblically textual cues? Richard Fardon addresses context as he proposes that, 'in order for ethnographers to provide an adequate description of people, where they live, their categories and context of life one must employ a holistic discussion of social categorizations [*sic*],

spatial discriminations and ideas of time'.⁵⁹⁹ Having treated the first of Fardon's discussion values we move to the secondary and tertiary values of space and time.

Sacred Time

Time as a concept is often considered chronologically and marked by a clock or calendar. However the *duration* of time considers broader concepts of power inherent in time and how it comes to its authority in the calendar. As time passes it is the actual marking or setting aside of time which infuses it with power:

'Duration, then, is the great stream flowing relentlessly on: but man, encountering Power, must halt'.⁶⁰⁰ The social anthropologist, Pierre Bourdieu, integrates the concepts of the passing of time (*tempo*), and power, within its social construction,⁶⁰¹ in his understanding of gift exchange; for a certain 'political' power in one's own judgment rests in the agents of the gift: The giver has the power to decide *when* to offer the gift, after which the recipient determines *when* the appropriate time has elapsed in order to reciprocate the gift.⁶⁰² Likewise in an exogamous exchange the suitor also has the power within the immediacy or delay of his response to the father of the potential bride: 'Thus time derives its efficacy from the state of the structure

⁵⁹⁹ Fardon, 40.

⁶⁰⁰ Gerardus van der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*, trans. J.E. Turner, 2 vols., vol. 2 (Gloucester, Mass: Peter Smith, 1967), 385.

⁶⁰¹ Pierre Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), 213.

⁶⁰² The power involved in the timing of the ritualistic Ban (*h-r-m*) within Deuteronomistic History and Bourdieu's concept of power in the timing of vengeance is observed, but will not be treated here.

of relations within which it comes into play (which does not mean that the model of this structure can leave it out of account)'.⁶⁰³

With respect to power and its relation to the calendar, modern and ancient cultures can demarcate a point of reference quantitatively or mathematically,⁶⁰⁴ but for cultures to set aside a certain season or *sacred time* for celebrations, harvesting, or fruitfulness can bring life and potency to that period on its own or regularly (e.g., annually).⁶⁰⁵ The phenomenologist of religion, Gerardus van der Leeuw, explains that the Christian ecclesiastical year, for example, is replete with power and divine life. It is a time filled with value commencing with Advent which signifies salvation or life and *renews*⁶⁰⁶ the participant even through the death-life schema of Good Friday-Easter Sunday; so that when one rehearses the historical-biblical events it brings life, memory, and renewal. Likewise, for writers to mark a period of history by recording it and rehearsing it for their readers also brings life and renewal to that past/present duration. In fact one of the fundamental traits of sacred time or sociocultural time is that it does not flow evenly in the same group and in different societies; life can flow on with or without any striking event(s), day in and day out.⁶⁰⁷ But when those striking moments occur, one can punctuate the end of that rhythm.

⁶⁰³ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 106.

⁶⁰⁴ Pitirim A. Sorokin, *Sociocultural Causality, Space, Time: A Study of Referential Principles of Sociology and Social Science* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1964), 187.

⁶⁰⁵ van der Leeuw, 384-86.

⁶⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 387.

⁶⁰⁷ Sorokin, 171-72.

It is this type of punctuation which we discussed with Robert Alter earlier. For it is not the even-ness of time which biblical writers report, but the striking or critical events of the life flow in Israel, so when one encounters the punctuation in what is called the David-Jonathan story, one realises the significance of this time. The story becomes a punctuation in Israel's meta-narrative with Kyle McCarter calling it the History of David's Rise (HDR). David's rise to monarchy provides Israel past, historical present, and present with an orientation to something – according to the DH that reference point is Yahweh. So the point becomes not what the David-Jonathan relationship means to us but to Israel. As the writer and DH chose to demarcate and narrate this period in Israel's history, one observes another reference or a greater period when this was a time when there *was* a king in Israel (contra Judges 21:25). The social rhythm in the HDR and the relationship of David and Jonathan is taken in context of this rhythm which includes concepts as a strengthening of inchoate powers. Furthermore, while the nomenclature 'HDR' is a modern convention, a more appropriate description of the HDR in its context is the label 'in these days there was a king in Israel', or perhaps 'in the days when there will be or *is* a king in Israel'. Nonetheless the traditional scholarly descriptor 'HDR' will serve us in our discussion in addition to other labels like 'Premonarchical' Israel and 'Early' Israel. Thus, when critical times or sacred times interrupt the continuity of time and are recorded, this division or slice is to a great degree a *social convention* of that people and time:⁶⁰⁸ noteworthy for our discussion is the interruption in Premonarchical Israel by the David-Jonathan ritual in 1 Samuel, whereby David is victorious over the enemy and is initiated into the

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid., 183-84.

warriors' brotherhood through the gift exchange. The ritual described in 1 Sam 18:1-5 reflects that striking moment in both Israel's historical present (*ca.* 1000 BC) and editorial present (pre-exilic/exilic period). In that case the DH *re*-narrates the history of Israel, David, and Jonathan in order to *re*-new the power and life from the historical period and *re*-present it to (pre) Exilic Israel and future times (e.g., today). The DH then becomes more authoritative to the story than say a modern western historian or theologian, as he is closer to the social convention of that people and time, and closer to that particular 'social framework of memory'.⁶⁰⁹

A position of success

'Success' in the NRSV is often used for the English translation of the *hifil* verb for the Hebrew term *sakal*. But another understanding of the *hifil sakal* could be invoked. Theologically speaking, David **having** success, prosperity, or wisdom (1 Sam 18:5), and employing these traits, directly corresponds to Yahweh's intervention, hence the causative translation. This interpretation may not be considered specifically Deuteronomistic, but does explain David's care before accepting Saul's daughter in marriage, or negotiating his new relationship with Jonathan, while mediating his interaction with Saul. Apart from the theological rationale for Saul's resentment of and threat from David, this new consideration adds to the social dimension of David's new status and identity in the family, monarchy, military and nation. It further contrasts well with the rash, impetuous and volatile social responses of Saul to the temperate, deliberate, and measured social responses of David – which is editorially Deuteronomistic.

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid., 185-86.

David's *cunning* (*sakal*) reaction was not used to usurp the throne, but his misinterpreted strategic responses in dealing with Saul and his own identity may very well have been the Divine's superintending power and influence over him. But human reactions come to the fore in the DH's account. The verse 5 prologue is spelled out in the action of verses 13-15 and punctuated in verse 16. Saul is rash, throws a spear at David and impulsively reassigns David from his place to the presence of the people. In this pericope, note the contrast between Saul and David with *sakal* as the featured verb and adjective:

Saul is rash and removes David ...

A – David's response is measured by tactically using his new assignment as a way to associate with and *touch* the people rather than temperamentally responding to Saul or the people.

B – The term *sakal* is used to describe David's measured strategy.

B' – The term *sakal* is used in Saul's own observation of David and in contrast to his own temperament. Saul is annoyed, but David did not act intemperately.

A' – In David's new assignment his strategy pays off in relating well with the people. Now the contrast is punctuated by the people's reaction to David: *All Israel and Judah loved David.*⁶¹⁰

Then in verses 17ff, Saul tries to employ David's own tactics, cunning, and wisdom against him. Rather than the usual volatile move Saul deliberately plans his next step as David would have considered carefully his own options. The tactic is to have his eldest daughter marry David. The marriage would, customarily, have sealed the *unique* covenant of David and Jonathan and solidified David's status in the family and monarchy. But David was hesitant again, revealing he was not sly as some noted, but cunning, successful or full of *sakal*, instead. David would then be affinally related to the Saulide kin group – a recognised custom in the Ancient Near East and Israel.⁶¹¹

However in the proposed exchange David considers wisely or cunningly, 'Who are my kinfolk'?⁶¹² Are they Eliab, Abinadab, or Shammah, my brothers (see ch. 16), or is Jonathan my brother? Are either Merab or Michal to be my wife and affinal kin? Who are my father's family in Israel? Is Saul my father through Jonathan or father-in-law through Michal? Or is Jesse my father? Who am I? What is my identity? Where is my place? With *sakal* David again acts judiciously,

⁶¹⁰ One might recall that when the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked rule, the people groan (Prov 29:2).

⁶¹¹ Compare Solomon's affinal relations to other nations.

⁶¹² As David rediscovers his identity and develops this new relationship with Jonathan, and the relationship's associated power, the *Gospel* reader may find familiarity in the Christ redefining established relationships and power structures: 'But to the one who had told him this, Jesus replied, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" And pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."' (Matt 12:48-50).

discriminately, and temperately to Saul's tactic. From a cultural perspective, this ritual that Jonathan performs (1 Sam 18:1-5), which seems new or different to premonarchical Israel, creates what many cite today as a crisis of identity within David. David, like his militaristic predecessor, Gideon (Judges 8:22-23), when originally faced with 'the crown' was culturally unaccustomed to anything other than theocracy through the priestly class. Saul being the new warrior chief, with Jonathan to inherit his role, now redefines identities and long standing customs in Israel. The people asking for a new type of leader over Israel did not understand the repercussions and changes which could have taken place (1 Sam 8:1-18).

Ritual power

As the spheres of the physical and non-physical touch, the Jonathan and David relationship forms a new symbol in Israel as the culture itself is undergoing transition. This David and Jonathan innovation is an attempt, through ritual, to define or articulate a new social-structural relationship.⁶¹³ We observe the newness or formless nature of the 1 Sam 18 covenant and ritual in David and Saul's actions after the ritual as David takes great care to understand what has happened between him and Jonathan – arguably he is confused at this new custom. The narrator reiterates the discretion and wisdom David uses in all his dealings. Also, observe Saul who was also not aware of the consequences of the 18:1-4 ritual at that time. Not until later was his articulated power threatened by David's newly developing, formerly unformed, inchoate power. Disorder occurs as the two men clash through the rest of the story: the danger for Saul's power is that David's inchoate powers

⁶¹³ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concept of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 2008), 124.

are for the moment out of order. The David-Jonathan relationship puts the two *brothers* at odds with the powers of Jonathan's family.⁶¹⁴ The David-Jonathan ritual incited contradictions of allegiance to king and father as secondary relations to the primary ritual kinship/friendship.

For the moment, however, the culture has not yet classified the phenomenon. One way the editor confronts this anomaly is 'to create a new pattern of reality' or framework by 'mediating the experiences of the characters'.⁶¹⁵ In doing so, the culture or the DH in 1 Samuel takes the private union of David and Jonathan and moulds it into a public or community ritual. The representative of the people or king along with the Deity witnesses this sacred public ritual. This sacred union may not only represent the powers of sentiment, conscience, the will, and the moral,⁶¹⁶ but also that of a jural nature as well. In defining the phenomena, David becomes identified with the power and rights of a father's son and a king's heir. Jonathan does not merely choose David out of will or sentiment to become a friend, but through the symbolism of the ritual the two become brothers with like authority. The ritual here involves the symbolic meaning in the gifting of one's body (Jonathan) to another (David). All that Jonathan *is*, is now who David will be. Not unlike the case where Yahweh informed Moses that he was the *I am* (Exod 3:14), or when Joseph becomes the authority of the Pharaoh (Gen 41:40-46), or even when Abram becomes Abraham (Gen 17) and Jacob becomes the eponymous Israel (Gen

⁶¹⁴ New Testament readers might recall a similar contra-affair when the Christ validated the new relationship or kinship in the Kingdom of God over traditional kinship structures of the domestic group (Matt 10:32-42; 12:46-50; Luke 14:25-35 within 9:21-18:34). Paramount to the traditional family, the Markan ritual (e.g., Mark 1:14-15) advises one to repent and believe in order to gain membership in the Kingdom of God and Christ's family.

⁶¹⁵ Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 47-48.

⁶¹⁶ Pitt-Rivers, 94-96.

32), so it is that a similar social re-introduction takes place as Jonathan informs David that he is being re-identified. Mary Douglas explains that, ‘Certain cultural themes are expressed by rites of bodily manipulation . . . The rituals enact the form of social relations in giving these relations visible expression they enable people to know their own society. The rituals work upon the body politic through the symbolic medium of the physical body’.⁶¹⁷ The symbolic meaning of Jonathan’s person is bestowed on David through the gifting of garments so that the internal is expressed and defined for the society.

The editor takes great care to spell out the ritual of 18:1-4 both in the symbolic garments Jonathan gave David and in the accompanying heart/soul knitting. The DH here attempts to codify or structure formerly ambiguous roles of Premonarchical Israel into a controlled social structure coherent to Exilic Israel. Observe the contextual clues:

A – The soul of Jonathan was bound/knit to the soul of David

(v. 1)

B – Jonathan *loved* him as his own soul (v. 1)

C – Saul *took* David (v. 2)

B’ – Jonathan made a covenant with David because he *loved* him as his own soul (v. 3)

⁶¹⁷ Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 158-59.

A' – Jonathan gifted his garments to David (v. 4)

The DH seems to use the literary chiasmic structure in 1 Sam 18:1-4 to embed in the text some social or cultural influence on the David-Jonathan relationship and ritual. Elements A and B express the *non-physical* orientation or internal state of the crown prince; while B' and A' reflect the corresponding external action. Item C is a transition for the first and last pairing (AB:B'A'), just as the king in transition himself (a relation of the crown prince sanguinely and royally), witnesses the covenant and endorses this internal-external expression and position. Simultaneously elements B and B' reflect the *physicality* of the covenant in action, in so much as Jonathan presenting his garments and himself to David in covenant (v. 4) is equivalent to Jonathan's soul being bound to David's soul, which results in David becoming part of Saul's domestic and royal group. Verse 5 punctuates the covenant and the move from Jonathan to David as the next leader-figure. Essentially the cause of David's success and new power is the covenant of soul and body in the previous verses. Now that David is a member of this special or elite group(s), he can be charged with leadership of the armed forces – a literary and power shift from (or in addition to) Jonathan's leadership of the forces in previous chapters.

However, Saul changes his mind and the DH magnifies his violent reaction to the new system which accepts men as *brothers* from outside one's jural authority. The change occurs when David becomes an apparent threat to Saul's system. Of course anyone in his position would be upset, but the DH proposes that Saul should

not be upset because Jonathan, all Israel, and the reader accept the implications of the covenant and the new system formed in the 18:1-4 ritual. These events reveal the DH's validation of David's new interstitial power through the telling of the Divine intervention in the lives of our actors.⁶¹⁸ Until David's power is solidified and takes on a more culturally and politically common role (e.g., king), elements of the Divine blessing, David and Jonathan's union, and the Divine's superintending power over David's rise to monarchy will continue to be major themes of the DH to reinforce the new structure for the reader and the social acceptance of a non-Saulide kinsman inheriting the Saulide dynasty.

Gifted Weapons

‘Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that he was wearing, and gave it to David, and his armour, and even his sword and his bow and his belt’ (1 Sam 18:3-4, NRSV). Not so long ago Israel made Jonathan's father, Saul, the first *king* of Israel, but instead his heir apparent secures the crown for another in the action Jonathan takes to clothe David in his own robe, or the robe of the kingdom, which was ripped previously from Saul in 1 Samuel 15:27-28 – as predicted by Samuel.

As Mary Douglas concludes:

There are no items of clothing or of food or of other practical use which we do not seize upon as theatrical props to dramatise the way we want to present our roles and the scene we are playing in.

⁶¹⁸ Ibid., 124-28.

Everything we do is significant, nothing is without its conscious symbolic load.⁶¹⁹

So an investigation into Jonathan's robe, and the other gifts he offers to David, is an important step to discovering how the theatrical props of the robe, armour, sword, bow, and belt become significant symbols in the theatre of Premonarchical Israel and the David-Jonathan relationship.

The robe of kingship and kinship

The narrator made ritual and metaphor clear priorities in the opening lines of the David-Jonathan narrative. One may consider that the narrative represents either a ritualistic and metaphorical understanding of Jonathan welcoming David into his royal family, or a relinquishing of Jonathan's role as future king. Of note is the DH's intention to pair David's robing in chapter 18 with Saul's 'disrobing' in chapter 15 (q.v., biblical concepts on the robe in *The Story before the Text*). . What is not clear is whether Jonathan intentionally relinquished the rights of the crown prince.

In chapter 15, Saul again disobeys the command of the Lord (see also chapter 13) and Samuel declares, in parallel, that because Saul has rejected the word of the Lord so the Lord has rejected Saul as king (v. 23). This declaration is coupled with Samuel's earlier declaration that the Lord will not establish Saul's kingdom and that God has sought another man who has been appointed to be king (13:13-15). The matter is grievous for Saul and, in an attempt to stop Samuel from leaving the scene, Saul grabs hold of Samuel's robe but rips it in the process.

⁶¹⁹ Ibid., 124.

Samuel metaphorically compares this tearing with how God will tear Saul's kingdom or kingly robe from him and give⁶²⁰ it to another (15:28).⁶²¹

Now the royal robe in Israelite culture appears throughout the Old Testament to signify identity and power. In Esther 6:7-11, Mordecai's status was changed with a robe. In Psalms 93:1, the reigning Lord, YHWH is robed with majesty – a distinguishing feature of the sovereign. In 1 Kings 22:10 and 2 Chronicles 18:9 the kings of Israel and Judah distinctly clothed themselves in their royal robes. Later in 1 Kings 22:30 and 2 Chron 18:29 the narrator made clear who the kings were despite their ruse. The king of Israel was to disguise himself by not clothing himself in his royal robes while the king of Judah would maintain his presence by wearing his royal robes. In doing so their guise would fool the opposition. In Genesis 41, the prominent ancestor, Joseph, was also clothed in royal robes. When Joseph was the only one to interpret the Egyptian Pharaoh's dream, Pharaoh not only accepted the interpretation, but also Joseph's accompanying proposal and the boy himself. Like David later, Joseph pleased the king *and* his servants. Also of a familiar tone is the fact that Joseph was observed to be wise and discerning. Joseph was made second to the Pharaoh in all the land. In making him so, the Pharaoh gifted to Joseph his signet ring, a robe, and a gold chain (v. 42); and like David, Joseph was offered a royal bride. The ritual seemed to include identifying elements of a political and familial nature. Earlier in the OT narrative, robes are used to convey close family relations. Jacob made a robe of many colours for his favourite or chosen son Joseph whom he loved greatly (Gen 37:3). However Jacob's other sons

⁶²⁰ The narrative stipulates that God *had given* the kingdom to another, at this juncture.

⁶²¹ Interestingly, instances of torn robes in the OT can refer to periods of mourning.

were not so amenable to their father's choice. Joseph's brothers disowned him and devised a scheme to kill and later separate Joseph from the family. They stripped Joseph of his coat and perceived kinship rights and cast him into a pit (37:23). Rather than killing him they decided to sell Joseph into slavery and concoct a false story for Jacob. For the brothers, Joseph is no longer part of their family, but later for Pharaoh, Joseph's family identity was exchanged for a royal one.

In 1 Samuel chapters 1 and 2 Hannah could not conceive a family and prayed for the Lord to open her womb and God granted her request. Hannah bore a son named Samuel, and after she weaned him, she gave him to Eli the priest to minister to the Lord in the house of the Lord. Annually Hannah would visit Samuel and bring with her a robe she would make for her son (2:19). Although Samuel served the Lord, separated from his mother, he was still part of Hannah's family and a new robe each year confirmed this relationship.

These examples show that certain robes in Israelite culture can represent kinship or kingship. In the case of Jonathan, clothing David in his robe is, I propose, a gesture or ritual representing both. In Israel's social consciousness this item of clothing is used to present the roles of a chosen or special family member or of being a king or royalty. These actions of OT figures are presented as significant and not without their conscious symbolic load. Observing the culture of Early Israel and this pericope's context one observes the significance of the robe as power.

First the DH intentionally pairs the tearing of the robe by Saul with Saul's son clothing David with his royal robe. Saul's kingdom will not continue and the

Lord has appointed another ruler over Israel (13:14). Saul is rejected as king (15:23). Saul tears the robe and his kingdom is torn from him and given to a neighbour (15:27-28). Samuel is sent to the neighbouring tribe of Judah, chooses, and anoints David as king (chapter 16). Saul, his servants, all the people, and Jonathan choose David or accept him (18:1-5). As with Jacob giving a special robe and associated powers to Joseph, Jonathan chooses David, loves him, and clothes him in a special robe – in this case a kingly robe one belonging to the king's son and the crowned prince⁶²² (18:1, 3-4). But the imagery of the heir apparent clothing another in a royal robe may be more for the audience's benefit than for the other characters. For Jonathan may not have intended at that stage to relinquish his intended role as king. For him the robing resembled the chosen place Joseph and Samuel experienced in their respective families – in particular with their parents. Jonathan loved David. Their souls became intertwined and, in an outward expression, Jonathan unites David with his family by clothing him with his own robe and gifting to David his armour, sword, bow, and belt.

Jonathan's bow

Interestingly the bow reappears throughout the narrative. When Jonathan and Saul die, David directs the people of Judah to learn the bow or the Song of the Bow (2 Sam 1:18). Within the song itself David extols Jonathan's use of the bow and Saul's use of the sword (v. 22). But these mighty men have fallen and their weapons of war have perished (v. 27). The TWOT discusses the bow or *qešet* as an integral part of Israelite history. David's lament became a permanent part of

⁶²² Saul admitted Jonathan was the heir apparent in 1 Sam 20:31.

training Israel's army (2 Sam 1:18) and possibly even Israel's national weapon in Jeroboam's time (Hos 1:5, 7). 'The conjoining of "sword" and "bow" often represents all weapons, and even war itself (Gen 48:22; Josh 24:12)'. Such can be seen in Jonathan gifting both sword and bow to David in 1 Samuel 18. Here we also recollect the militaristic space and context of both the Goliath defeat and the ensuing ritual between the two men in chapter 18. The TWOT reports that customary to Israel, YHWH controls the bow and guides the arrow (Gen 49:24; 1 Kings 22:34; 2 Kings 13-16). Where, conversely, a broken bow means divinely imposed defeat (1 Sam 2:4).

'Jonathan's bow figures most importantly in his covenant with David. . . a symbol of proper manliness and Jonathan's skill and pride, it makes a fine token of their friendship'.⁶²³ Although indicative of pre-Iron Age I, the bow seemed to be one of the few weapons available for our hero. Archaeologically, it was not until the 9th century that Israel used the bow within cavalry units from the rear or flanks unlike the traditional infantry.⁶²⁴ First Samuel 13:19-22 notes that the Philistines impeded the Israelites making and wielding weapons inherent to Iron Age I. With the exception of Saul and Jonathan the Israelite forces did without swords and spears (v. 22). So then for the DH to list Jonathan's bow (and his sword) as one of the gifts he presented to David in chapter 18 and then to reiterate Jonathan's bow in the eulogy (2 Sam 1:22) cannot be coincidental to the relationship.

⁶²³ James Hoyle, "The Weapons of God in Samuel," *This World* 7, no. Winter (1984): 127.

⁶²⁴ Yigael Yadin, *The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands in the Light of Archaeological Discovery* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1963), 297.

Gerardus van der Leeuw, in an application of philosophical phenomenology to religion, discusses the particular power and manifestation held by weapons.⁶²⁵ A three staged process occurs where the weapon, in this case the bow, manifests its power in stage two and then to power in general in stage three. Further associated objects not only manifested power for the tribe or realm but also for the family too. Items like clothes, weapons, and jewels were bequeathed from father to son and connected the family's welfare with the power of the sacred object. The bow is a weapon for hunters and warriors, which later became associated with leaders and kings⁶²⁶ (Gen 27:3; 1 Sam 31:3; 1Kings 13:15ff; cf., 2 Kings 9:24; Psalms 18:34). The bow was not a common weapon in Israel as it is a long-range weapon often used from chariots and difficult to make in mass quantities.⁶²⁷ We discussed earlier that Israel was not permitted to make weapons and was not as advanced as their contemporaries. Weaponry then was organised on a tribal basis and based on aptitudes and traditions.⁶²⁸ The Bow was associated with the tribe of Benjamin (Judges 20; 1 Chron 8:40). Jonathan of Benjamin used a bow (1 Sam 20:20) which he later gifted to David and ritually brought David into his tribe and family. The Philistines had bows but Goliath did not. This proved advantageous for David as he used the sling, another long-range weapon – especially as the bow was not common in the tribes of Israel.

⁶²⁵ Gerardus van der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*, trans. J.E. Turner and Hans H. Penner, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986), 41-42.

⁶²⁶ Yadin, 6-7.

⁶²⁷ Ibid., 80-81.

⁶²⁸ Ibid., 262-63.

The Mighty Men

At the conflict's outset, Goliath suggests a method of warfare familiar to the Philistines but not to Israel: Instead of a battle between two armies the contest shall be between representatives or champions from each side.⁶²⁹ Yigael Yadin observes that Israel later adopts this approach as internal struggles between the House of Saul and the House of David are fought between mighty men or champions from each side. Are these 'mighty men' (*gibbôr*) not the same as the ones Saul sought out in 1 Samuel 14:52? Saul chooses great warriors for his royal troupe, Goliath suggests a duel between the greatest of warriors and later the practice of developing mighty men becomes common in Israel. Archaeological evidence and knowledge of the customs of the time reveal that 'young men' (*ne'arim*) were often chosen to compete in militaristic contests, and that Hebrew scholarship should reflect this aspect of how the term *ne'arim* is translated and used in the OT.⁶³⁰ Rather than being translated as youth at play as in football, it should imply militaristic assault units or basic elite units skilled in one-on-one struggles.

In the ANE, duels between two warrior-heroes date back to the Middle Bronze Period in Canaan, later with the Aegeans, and much later with the Mycenaeans. Notable are comparable duels between warrior-heroes in *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, *The Iliad*, *1&2 Samuel*, and *The Tale of Sinuhe the Egyptian*.⁶³¹ In fact, the Middle Bronze account of Sinuhe's victory over the 'mighty man of Retenu' parallels the David-Goliath narrative in many ways: a threatening foe who

⁶²⁹ Ibid., 264-66.

⁶³⁰ Ibid., 266-67.

⁶³¹ Ibid., 72-73.

challenges the holy tribe, an inexperienced hero blessed by the deity, and a single strike which fells the foe.

Israel's divine champion

The gifts Jonathan gave David in 1 Sam 18:4 were limited to Jonathan and his father the chief and could have contained both tribal and familial power depending on the object: Saul gave David weapons and clothing of tribal warrior and power: the armour included a helmet, a coat of mail, and a sword (1 Sam 17:38-39). The power of the armour and weapons limited to the military leaders of Israel were initially rejected by David for a more familiar power: a staff, five stones, a shepherd's bag, and a sling (17:40). David's rationale was that these implements, although not found powerful for the warrior class, were tried and tested as powerful for the hunter-shepherd class. David had found divine success using these implements previously in defending his sheepfold. Now he would have to defend the fold of Israel.

The use of the staff and other farming implements are observed in the narrative. First Jonathan used the staff in an initial unknown act of defiance against the chief's orders. In 1 Sam 14:24ff, Saul commanded the troops not to eat any food, but when Jonathan and his troops approached a honeycomb Jonathan unknowingly ate of the honey using his staff (14:27 cf., v. 43) and then denounced his father's orders once the men had told Jonathan of Saul's oath. Both in this and David's use of the staff, a contrary power to that of the warrior-chief is expressed.

Secondly the ploughshare, the mattock, the axe, and the sickle – like the staff are other hunter-farmer implements which Israel was restricted to in order to fight the enemy. These tools are not traditional weapons of war. This can indicate Israel's development compared with their contemporaries or even the enemy's strategy. But it can also imply David's inexperience with Saul's armour as David and the populace are not considered part of the warrior class. The *hunter* or more agrarian class in Israel derived their power for their specific work from the Divine through non-battle ready tools. Hence another indication as to why Israel's agrarian men were uneasy in fighting the warrior Goliath and the Philistines with non-battle ready tools.

Whether it is the power of the hunter's tool or the power of the warriors' weapon, sacred power from the deity is associated with sacred objects necessary for personal survival and tribal survival. Just as women have power to give birth to children, so men have power to farm and fight, in such less industrialised societies. More specifically, for men, the god(s) may bequeath tools imbued with power so that they might succeed in their task. For Israel, God caused success in battles despite the people's pastoral-agricultural tools: the crown prince and his aide use swords and spears to defeat the enemy and a shepherd boy uses a sling and stone to defeat a giant. Where it is humanly possible for one or two men to defeat an army or even a goliath, the power from the deity intervenes to effect the victory. Thus the Deity is the true warrior-chief and victor, not that unlike the deity of the Baruya which grants the power for victory, as we will discuss below.

Now Jonathan's gifts, like Saul's to David contained the armour and sword but also included perhaps more familial and ensuing monarchical power such as the robe and/or belt. Saul's gifts to David were clearly intended to use in battle and reflected the chief's intention to take mighty men or valiant warriors into his service (1 Sam 14:52). But Jonathan's gifts were not only militaristic in nature but also adjoined royal and lineal powers which would explain the effect of the covenant the two made and Saul's later regret for Jonathan handing over those powers to David.

The powers of gifted sacred objects⁶³² and the associated *office* or status bestowed on David within the Saulide family and dynasty imposed an impersonal dignity on the man David.⁶³³ Comparatively speaking, in Melanesia, the son of the chief not only inherits his father's chieftainship but also the chief's dignity symbolized through the notion of *mana*. Sacred objects such as the insignia for the Roman Imperium or snake for the Egyptian Pharaoh or even the orb and sceptre for the British Monarch also represent manifested powers for the holder. Jonathan's robe and/or belt which he gifted to David might have been another source of contention for Saul against his unwitting son. Van der Leeuw explains that the robe among other types of raiment exudes its own kingly or religious power. In Hellenistic times, the Middle Ages, Germany, Egypt, and other times and places, cultures around the world attributed power to the king or Pope with a corresponding assertion of his potency in his dress or 'the living garment of God'.⁶³⁴ The robe can then represent the status of the wearer as a god or the son of god. When one wears

⁶³² See Godelier, *Enigma*, 171.

⁶³³ van der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*, Vol. 1, 115.

⁶³⁴ *Ibid.*, 120.

the robe one holds the power. Furthermore the wearer has the authority to invest others with power. For Jonathan, therefore, to gift such apparel to David would incite any sane father and king, for if the Israelites observed some of the customs of their Egyptian counterparts in the ANE (and it is likely this is so in part) then for Jonathan to include David among those holding royal and divinely appointed power would spell trouble for King Saul. It is not to be missed that the DH previously mentioned David's Divine appointment by God and Saul's loss of the appointment by the same heavenly and earthly power figures, Yahweh and Samuel.

As Saul's favour with Yahweh waned so did his favour with the people. As king for any unforeseen waning of power to reveal itself might be detrimental to the whole of life and could not be tolerated.⁶³⁵ The army prohibited Saul from unjustly killing his son, Saul sinned publically before all Israel and was no longer endorsed by the Prophet, Saul could not defeat the enemy, and thus the writer punctuates the king's failings with the score from the women of Israel who chant that David has killed his ten thousands and Saul only his thousands. The narrator, writer or editor clearly has lost favour with the chief and thus Saul would have lost that power from the people. 'Faith sees a person to whom something has happened; and Phenomenology describes how man conducts himself in his relation to Power'.⁶³⁶ While the DH emphasizes Saul's failings to the religious community he also describes Saul's decline from kingship. Once Saul's life was touched by Power, and to be powerful or 'participate in sacredness' in that way, meant that his life no longer belonged to himself but to that of the *Community*. Then once the elders asked

⁶³⁵ Ibid., 123.

⁶³⁶ Ibid., 191.

Samuel for a warrior-chief to fight for them (the Community) and the Divine through or in addition to the religious representation of his power in human form chose that military/kingly power, Saul's life became the Community's life and the Divine's or the Power's life. Thus when Saul's objectives fell outside the parameters of the Community and the Divine one or both had to replace the chief with another whose heart was after the Divine's. This movement away from Saul in the narrative reflects the decline of his now diminishing power.

The bow Jonathan gives to David and which is mentioned throughout 1 and 2 Samuel seems to hold some power within the ANE culture. If the Song of the Bow or the use of the bow was taught to Israelites in a particular way, as suggested, then the people might look to this weapon or even the hero who wielded it (i.e. Jonathan) as mighty or powerful. The Baruya tribe of New Guinea also taught their people the significance of the bow as they preserved the fingers of a deceased warrior hero who was skilful with the bow.⁶³⁷ It was believed that his supernatural powers would give future warriors a similar strength. Likewise Israelite warriors or Israelites themselves who are taught the bow or the Song of the Bow (dedicated to Saul and Jonathan) would inherit the power of the hero Jonathan and his skill with the bow – something David already acquired in initiation. The sacred powers of the bow and other weapons and items gifted to David could also be a part of the cultural iconography in Early Israel developed in narrative.

The other gifts Jonathan offers David may also contain transformative powers. Immediately after Jonathan provides David with his robe, armour, sword,

⁶³⁷ Godelier, 111.

bow and belt the narrator indicates how successful David became: success which the story attributes to his relationships with Jonathan, Saul, and the people, but also success in militaristic matters. David grows in Jonathan's company like the Baruya boys grow after initiation. Their sacred objects *re-engender* the boys into men and warriors outside their mother's womb.⁶³⁸ Like the possible impact of the Song of the Bow on Israelites, the names of the Baruya's sacred objects translate into such terms as 'man', 'to make grow', and 'apprentice shaman' which indicate the boys' transformations.

The Baruya's male god gave them these transformative sacred objects⁶³⁹ just as the Israelite's Yahweh gave them the Decalogue and the Ark to contain it. Without the divine element the objects may not retain the value the Great Men or mighty men ascribe to it. The initiates and their Great Men are the ones endowed with the power of the sacred objects, their god, and their heroes and the only ones who will designate future warriors and initiates to replace them: 'Even the boy's own father does not have this right, proof, were it needed, that initiations partake of a higher social order than kinship. And this is the order of male solidarity, and the political and ideological unity of the whole tribe'.⁶⁴⁰ From the divinely given sacred objects to the initiations these apprentices endure, the rights and benefits of their new social designation outweigh family influences as these men are transformed and accepted into the brotherhood.

⁶³⁸ Ibid., 114-15.

⁶³⁹ Ibid., 115-16, 19.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid., 118.

Initiations into an elite group of men are not uncommon in today's culture. Sandhurst or Boot Camp initiate a portion of the male population into a fighting body. The initial training indoctrinates and reengineers or re-socialises 'boys' into warrior men. Once resocialised the men have another opportunity to be initiated into an elite corps of warriors, but first one must prove oneself worthy. Similarly initiations into sport societies, teams, gangs and U.S. Greek fraternities engage in selection processes, acts of commitment (e.g., hazing), and resocialisations into the specialised body. David was certainly 'hazed' as he killed the undefeatable enemy and was reengineered from a boy tending sheep into a manly warrior king.

Using some aspects of the Baruya as a cultural model for the David and Jonathan encounter in 1 Samuel 18 one can postulate an informed anthropological premise. Having just defeated the enemy David is embraced by Jonathan's company or brotherhood of mighty men. As a Great Man himself he is authorised to initiate the young lad into the group without his father's permission – even though Saul seemed to be in agreement with the action. Jonathan offers David several objects which have been instrumental in his own militaristic successes in the past: successes which have been superintended by the people's and Jonathan's own personal Deity (1 Sam 14).

Already, Israelite religion ascribed sacred power to the stone tablets of the Decalogue (i.e., Covenant) primarily, the manna of the wilderness, and Aaron's rod preserved in the Ark of Yahweh or Ark of the Covenant.⁶⁴¹ The Ark itself was not

⁶⁴¹ Without further study beyond this thesis' focus, it is difficult to determine in premonarchical Israel the contents of the Ark and time specific Israelite tradition (also Priestly material and DH matters) versus later Jewish tradition.

only recognised in the Israelite religion but also in war as well for its militaristic strength by Eli, the Philistines, Samuel, Saul, the people of Israel, and David throughout the 1 and 2 Samuel narratives. So then it is not unreasonable to infer that other areas of Israelite culture could proffer power upon tangibles. Two such areas deal with warriors and relationships and how that is governed by Yahweh. The Israelites and the Baruya also share a reverence for spiritual powers. In the case of the Baruya, their sacred objects from the spirits contain certain powers. Then when on special occasions these objects are shared or exchanged a newly formed legitimate relationship is established under the auspices of the supernatural world:

‘For the Baruya, the organization of society, the rules of conduct, the values they espouse, in a word, the prevailing order, appears to be self-evident, legitimate, the only one possible; and this is because they believe that beings more powerful than themselves invented it and handed it down to their ancestors, who were different from present-day humans. And therefore it is the sacred duty of the Baruya to preserve this order and to reproduce it’.⁶⁴²

The still present supernatural forces coexist with the Baruya past, present and future – outside of time. The real spiritual powers are always with the Baruya working with and against them according to their supernatural will.

While Hoyle’s exaggerated belief that the skill and elastic strength required to wield the bow rather than the brawn it takes to manipulate another weapon satisfies the choice of its use for the David and Jonathan characters,⁶⁴³ one still may

⁶⁴² Maurice Godelier, *The Making of Great Men: Male Domination and Power among the New Guinea Baruya*, Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology; 56. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 123-24.

⁶⁴³ Hoyle: 126.

recognise the bow as not only a Biblical synecdoche⁶⁴⁴ for weapons and warfare but also a symbol of the men's elastic strength and male potency. So it is understandable why the chapter 18 covenant or *initiation* into the family of warriors is placed after a significant military victory over Goliath by the elastic strength of the non-traditional potent sling thrower David. Additionally the imagery of the bow is personified for the warrior Jonathan who is strong to the very end as the bow does not retreat (2 Sam 1:22b, 25a, 27).

Israel's Socio-political Transition

The victory over Goliath is amplified by the military circumstances of the Iron Age. Although not as developed as one might think, considering the reading of 1 Samuel 13:19-22, Israel was still limited in her warfare tactics and weaponry. The Philistines were in their military organisation and hardware vastly superior⁶⁴⁵ to Israel's new tribal chiefdom under Saul. As a proposed anthropological cycle indicated, Israel's early monarchy evolved through various societies from simple bands and/or tribes, to chiefdoms, and ultimately to states.⁶⁴⁶ This theory lends itself well to Saul's and later David's reign as constituting a chiefdom rather than a kingship in particular.⁶⁴⁷ While the Philistine state benefitted from Iron Age technology and utilised this in tandem with the intimidation of their goliath of a

⁶⁴⁴ A 'synecdoche' is a figure of speech used to describe a literary relationship in which the whole represents a part, or the part represents a whole. So, in this literary analysis the bow would represent warfare or even male potency in the narrative.

⁶⁴⁵ Lawrence E. Stager, "Forging an Identity: The Emergence of Ancient Israel," in *The Oxford History of the Biblical World*, ed. Michael David Coogan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 126.

⁶⁴⁶ Carol Meyers, "Kinship and Kingship: The Early Monarchy," in *The Oxford History of the Biblical World*, ed. Michael David Coogan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 178.

⁶⁴⁷ Ibid.

man, the youngest lad of the Jesse household with a sling and stone had no chance against their hero. So, when the boy who followed sheep every day defeated the progressive militaristic forces of the enemy, the host culture was nothing less than impressed and elated. The king must discover who this 'young man' is and reward him accordingly. Correspondingly the crown prince's gratitude for David's conquering an advanced foe and his induction into the brotherhood of special warriors are also understandable when perceived in this light. Apart from the perceived weaker military power, the socio-political power David held would not have been significant to defeat the Goliath nation. Coming from a weaker family than Kish of Benjamin, Judah would not have been considered a power viable for *national* strength. Indicative of the Samuel pro-statehood confrontation, politically and militaristically the tribal elders were looking for a warrior-king to rival those of the other nations.

Now reminiscent of two earlier books in the Tanakh, the Israelite people cry out for a saviour to fight for them and Yahweh provides a warrior-judge as their hero.⁶⁴⁸ For the premonarchical time Saul was the appropriate selection but in Deuteronomistic form David was the better choice. True to form of certain men and women in Israel, who were chosen to be judges, David was the neo-judge selected from obscurity to be the narrator's focus:

Such unpredictable leaders more commonly emerge in a society and a time with little or no central organization [*sic*], when no one is waiting to take the reins. In these contexts, women and outcast men

⁶⁴⁸ Conversely, Hackett proposes that the formulaic cycle in *Judges* with the war hero was actually superimposed on those stories from the premonarchic period (p. 134).

can seize power that would be beyond their reach in a society ruled by a hereditary elite.⁶⁴⁹

The Deuteronomistic choice for David over the tribal elders' elite choice (i.e., Saul) reinforces the fact that David had to prove himself with the populace. The defeat over Goliath and Jonathan initiating him are the means by which David could be recognised in premonarchical society. Not because of his heredity but because of his latent 'power' and 'charisma', David's victory situated him in the new political structure validated by King Saul and his son. Additionally David was validated by Yahweh as a new type of judge for his time. As the Supreme Judge, Yahweh fights for and wins Israel's battles as the ultimate warrior, hero and ruler of Israel; and appoints judges like Deborah, Samson, Samuel, and David as his human representatives. Those judges whom he chooses inevitably, or Deuteronomistically, succeed in Israel's battles. In David's case when Saul was rejected by Yahweh, David became the next warrior-judge to fight for Israel despite Israel's nominations for their representative – even by the tribal leaders. Winning the battle over Goliath and subsequently being initiated and validated by Jonathan and Saul showed the populace that David was truly Yahweh's chosen war hero. The narrator expresses this in the celebration following David's victory over the Philistine when the women of Israel sing a song particularly applauding David's victories over ten thousands (1 Sam 18:6-7).

After Yahweh and the DH validate David, the polity also validates his power despite his appearance. When Saul was chosen to lead, the narrator took time to

⁶⁴⁹ Jo Ann Hackett, "'There Was No King in Israel': The Era of the Judges," in *The Oxford History of the Biblical World*, ed. Michael David Coogan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 134.

describe his appearance: ‘There was not a man among the people of Israel more handsome than he; he stood head and shoulders above everyone else’ (9:2b). Later when Saul was presented to the people his appearance was reemphasized by Samuel and validated by the people: “Do you **see** the one whom the Lord has chosen? There is no one like him among all the people.” And all the people shouted, “Long live the king” (10:24b)! Despite Samuel’s declaration to Saul that YHWH will find another ruler who is after his own heart (13:14), when Samuel searches for the next ruler among Jesse’s sons Samuel himself **looked** at David’s eldest brother and thought surely this is the next ruler (16:6). But the Lord reminded Samuel not to look on his appearance nor his height nor anything on the outward like mortals do but to look on the inward or the heart (v. 7). Even when David is brought before Samuel the narrator describes David’s outward appearance as ruddy, with beautiful eyes and handsome (v. 12). So it seems that in their human natures the narrator and audience look for appearance and charisma as qualifications of leadership while the Divine looks at the heart.

Consequently the brotherhood of these warriors formed the narrative which stood in parallel to the nascent national brotherhood in Early Israelite culture. With the remnants of the Late Bronze Age, Early Israel, like their Canaanite counterparts, move into the Iron Age as disparate tribes centralised around a prominent chief in a socioeconomic mecca of Canaan. Highland settlements from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron II Age show a shift from populations in the outlying regions of Canaan to core groupings around Jerusalem, north of Shechem, Heshbon east of the Jordan,

and Kerak in the southern region.⁶⁵⁰ Apart from Kerak, Jerusalem shows a notable increase in peoples of the region. The increases in Ephraim, Manasseh, and Gilead which later formed the heartland of monarchic Israel are striking.⁶⁵¹ For now it is noteworthy that 2 Samuel 2:8-11 reports that the Saulide family had a power base in Gilead, Ephraim, Benjamin, and a few other regions in contrast to David's one base in Judah. So, geopolitically, it makes sense for the first king or chief of Israel to come from a prominent area with the requisite support to promote one to power and to hold on to that power. Furthermore the text notes the geographic designation 'Gibeah of Saul' (1 Sam 11:4). On its own this reveals the prominence of the Saulide family owning this hill as the founding family and leading lineage there.⁶⁵² Of course in any culture it is also helpful if the contender for national leader is young,⁶⁵³ handsome and tall, but specifically 'head and shoulders above everyone else' (9:2). First Samuel 9:1 notes that Saul's father, the Benjamite, was a man of wealth (NRSV) valour⁶⁵⁴ (NASU), and power (NKJV). This certainly confirms the influence the Kish-Saulide family wields in the region if not in the neophyte nation. Their influence is amplified later by Saul's military victories in the immediate region and beyond. One in particular is Saul's victory over the Ammonites in Jabesh-Gilead east of the Jordan (1 Sam 11). Jabesh-Gilead is a considerable distance north of Benjamin and thus securing the Saulide power base throughout much of 'Israel'.

⁶⁵⁰ Stager, 95-96.

⁶⁵¹ Ibid., 101.

⁶⁵² Ibid.

⁶⁵³ Klein, *1 Samuel WBC* (86), echoes Richter's suggestion that the term 'young man' refers to one who is capable of war, inheritance, and marriage.

⁶⁵⁴ In the Book of Judges the mighty men of valour are often referred to as warriors.

The story further describes the Kish-Saulide family as tending donkeys, and implicitly, as a consequence of such a trade, being powerful. Although like Saul, David was similarly described as young, handsome and later a mighty warrior, neither he nor his family were described as wealthy, powerful, or tending donkeys: for David herded sheep and was not as powerful as Saul or the Kish family. Herds of goat, sheep, cow, and pig in the ANE can evidence local subsistent economies where families raise what they consume.⁶⁵⁵ However, owning domesticated donkeys in the ANE can represent the use of these beasts as pack animals in trading goods.⁶⁵⁶ This raises the possibility of the Kish-Saulide family trading with neighbouring tribes like Ephraim and beyond, and such trade would increase economic and social power and reinforce Saul's candidacy as the first king/chief of Israel (or of a region in Israel). According to the story Kish's donkeys strayed into Ephraim and other familiar areas for the animal. Logically Saul went looking for the donkeys in areas he would have thought they recognised. Then, if the beasts were accustomed to this region as pack animals, the areas may have served as regular trading routes Kish maintained with these likely partners. The Kish trading partners like Ephraim would serve as key supporters for Saul's tenure as chief.

Contrarily, the narrative does not divulge any sort of influence the Jesse-David family inherited. In fact when the famed Samuel visited the small town of Bethlehem to find the new leader among Jesse's sons the elders were in fear (1 Sam 16:4-5). Apart from the insignificance of the town, even David's history could not

⁶⁵⁵ Timothy P Harrison, "Economics with an Entrepreneurial Spirit: Early Bronze Trade with Late Predynastic Egypt," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 56, no. 2 (1993): 82.

⁶⁵⁶ *Ibid.*: 84-85, 89-90.

enhance his family's standing for his ancestor Ruth was not even an Israelite. Clearly the shepherd boy David was not prestigious enough to compare with the kings of the other nations, a prerequisite set by Israel's elders (8:5), and indeed become the first king of Israel. Although quite large, both David's family and tribe did not produce an estimable socioeconomic power at the time. However the family may have traded locally. In Lawrence Stager's analysis of the Arab historian Ibn Khaldun, we learn that urban populations cooperated with more rural populations. While desert civilisations and the Bedouin population seemed inferior to their urban counterparts the Bedou provided 'conveniences and luxuries' for people in the cities.⁶⁵⁷ Conversely the Bedou procured 'their necessities of life' from their urban traders. This scenario is quite plausible for families of David's and Saul's statures. This symbiotic relationship would contribute to the development of Israel as a nation. No longer loosely organised tribes and clans independent of one another with the occasional need to band together and stave off their enemies or worship the people's God, Yahweh on key occasions, now Israel was marching towards the early stages of statehood or federalism. Free enterprise appears to be a precursor for Israelite disparate entities with similar goals to become a more unified and powerful unit. Such an attraction seemed appealing to the elders of Israel (1 Sam 9) especially in the case where the nation's king would win wars for the people.

One gesture not to be overlooked in this anthropological analysis is the religious and cultural biblical account of Israel's unity under YHWH (see also Mendenhall 1962, 1973; Gottwald 1979):

⁶⁵⁷ Stager, 103.

Israel developed its self-consciousness or ethnic identity in large measure through its religious foundation – a breakthrough that led a subset of Canaanite culture, coming from a variety of places, backgrounds, prior affiliations, and livelihoods, to join a supertribe united under the authority of and devotion to a supreme deity, revealed to Moses as Yahweh.⁶⁵⁸

The children or *'am* of the eponymous Israel covenanted under one single deity to be the kindred of the Divine paterfamilias, Yahweh.⁶⁵⁹ The people of Israel worshipped a common God, fought common battles, and would now share a common chief. Early Israel in Iron Age I would see the kin-based tribal confederations 'supplanted by a hierarchical state in which class displaces kin, and patronage dominates relationships'.⁶⁶⁰ Tribes unified through the socio-political organisations of family trees and the allegiances and identity the lineages provide would be replaced by larger polities and economic networks committed to the larger people or kindred (*'am*).⁶⁶¹ In its later years King Solomon of Israel would replace old kin loyalties with royal ones and thus impact the state's revenue stream by distributing the tax burden across twelve provinces rather than twelve tribes. This in turn would establish a local elite responsible to the king for provincial matters.

The David and Jonathan relationship seemed to pioneer this move away from orthodox kin loyalties to new royal ones. In this case the two men helped to develop a premonarchical tribal structure from kin based tribes and ultimate allegiances into to a scheme by which the king's son himself extended his 'friendship' to David across the Benjamin-Judah divide and secured such inter-tribal

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid., 105.

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid., 113.

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid., 111.

⁶⁶¹ Ibid., 112.

loyalties – even before the time which Solomon used this new system to establish taxable provinces from tribes. The new brothers used this new relationship to forge ties across patrilineal tribal families, their associated kinship, macro-tribal and regional networks. A new nation and power structure was being formed: one which was no longer based solely on the authority of the one paterfamilias, but instead on a network of likeminded and mutually loyal kin groups (or brotherhood) which held allegiances to YHWH *and* their king.

Simultaneously, Israel would undergo a change in their living needs and standards. As discussed in a previous chapter, individual households with a high birthrate, to ensure the labour supply in highland villages, was the norm for most of Early Israel. While other nations experienced overpopulation and employed birth control methods such as child sacrifice, Israel's theological and social imperative for survival was to be fruitful and multiply. However, atmospheric conditions limited Israelite survival. Diminished rainfall impacted upon the people's livelihood and an organisational change had to be accomplished, which would have been directed from above the village and kinship level.⁶⁶² One method would have been for a socio-political organisation to redistribute agricultural products and resources in a way that would maintain population growth. Yet archaeological surveys indicate that out-migration was the strategy Israel employed.⁶⁶³ Members of one family or kin group would move out to form another unit on unsettled land elsewhere – whether near or far. Further evidence indicates that in Iron Age IIA the settlement in the Judean Hills almost doubled compared to earlier periods. Trade amongst

⁶⁶² Meyers, "Kinship and Kingship," 180-81.

⁶⁶³ *Ibid.*, 181.

economies increased to satisfy the increased population and the new settlers' need for food. Certainly Israelite households were now expanding beyond close geographic lines. Tribal and social boundaries like Benjamin and Judah would gradually be erased in favour of new economic and agricultural ones. Again, this sort of expansion would tend to develop new relationships outside of the unique patrilineal family and would set the stage for David of Judah and Jonathan of Benjamin.

In a physical representation of a socially transformative process, Jonathan gifts David the symbols of a new brotherhood. The robe and weapons, which were not available to any other kin in Israel, signified the esteem of the warrior and royalty. This branded David and shifted his class status from that of a lowly shepherd and the youngest of Jesse's sons to the servant of the king, the *substitute* brother, the *gō,ēl* friend (of sorts) of the crown prince, and heir to the throne of Israel. This new brotherhood depicts another facet of the oneness Yahweh intends for his children. Already we know that the husband and wife relationship unites two people from different families in one form of unity. Also the 'am or kindred are encouraged to serve Yahweh as the one united larger family or even supertribe. So then this loyal friendship satisfies another form of union between people who serve the one Deity and experience a different aspect of relationship with humanity and with their God. Humankind's desire to belong, to love, and to relate can be understood as reflecting God's character, since YHWH, as the Supreme Paterfamilias, wishes his children to care for one another. The Decalogue alone outlines specific ways Yahweh worshipers should treat others. The Mosaic laws

further outline actions people should avoid or enact in order to respect ‘the other’ if Yahweh is the Supreme Paterfamilias and Israel is to be the supertribe. David and Jonathan’s relationship with one another, their families, a united Israel, and Yahweh reflect yet again the DH’s influence for Early Israel to conform to the ways of God.

The new relationship also contributed to the facilitation of monarchy in Israel. While Saul was seen more of a commander (1 Sam 9:16; 10:1, NKJV) or *nāgid* for Israel’s army, David embraced this role as well as that of supertribal chief becoming king. Such social steps are quite evident when a leader of David’s *mighty men* (RSV) or elite warriors intervened in a battle with the Philistines to kill the opponent before he killed the king (2 Sam 21:15-17). At the end of the conflict the chief sternly informed David that he would no longer engage in battles lest the lamp of Israel be quenched (v. 17), while concurrently acknowledging that Yahweh is David’s lamp (22:29). In other words David as king should reign over Israel in a visible place to provide hope, guidance, and in a sense, life to the citizenry rather than risk personal death and ultimately national despair for the people. In like manner, Yahweh provides hope, guidance and true life for David. This is quite a contrast to the preamble for the pericope regarding David’s adultery with Bathsheba. The narrator explicitly observed that David remained in Jerusalem at the time kings usually go off to war (11:1). Hence, the impetus for David’s illicit relation with another man’s wife which could have been avoided if David were truly off to war as is customary. Nevertheless, this contrast of interests did not prevent the implementation of a monarchy in Israel.

Geopolitical forces also contributed to the move towards kingship.

Philistine incursions into the highlands of Israel grew in the late eleventh century BC. Their military advances were so successful that the Israelites demanded the new institution of kingship.⁶⁶⁴ Some argue that the Philistine threat against Canaan and Israel were so great that it was this occurrence which forced Israel into its next mainstream stage of socio-political development.⁶⁶⁵

Socially the move to kingship distracted the focus from kinship:

Kinship ties within local communities remain integral to the activities of daily life; but as authority and status become detached from family or clan relationships and come to reside in national structures transcending local or traditional ones, kinship ceases to be the only determining factor in organizing [*sic*] community life. Kinship yields some functions to the power of kingship while maintaining others integral to daily activities and family life.⁶⁶⁶

Thus the essence of the crown prince [and his father the king] uniting a shepherd boy from another tribe and family to his own replaced David's status with that of royalty and authorised him to become his loyal friend and leader of the king's army (1 Sam 18:5).

This new custom in Israel is not unlike the warrior initiations of the Baruya culture.⁶⁶⁷ From the name of the clan which exercised the most important ritual functions in male initiations, the Baruya transform boys from children into adolescents and make them into young warriors. Unlike the Trobrianders with a paramount chief, the Baruya have 'Great Men' whose powers are either inherited or

⁶⁶⁴ Stager, 116.

⁶⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 128.

⁶⁶⁶ Meyers, "Kinship and Kingship," 167-68.

⁶⁶⁷ Godelier, *Enigma*, 110-11.

acquired through acts of merit. Those masters who perform the initiations are reported to have gifted sacred objects involved in the initiations to another clan which aided the rescue of the Baruya in a crisis. It is explicit that these initiations represent the Baruya as one 'body' or a whole to itself and other tribes.

As one observes the actions of warriors in the modern military a similar revelation occurs. When a warrior defeats a great foe or performs some tremendous act of bravery beyond the line of duty s/he is rewarded with a distinction by his/her commanders or civilian leaders such as a monarch – in either case. This victor now belongs to a special fraternity of individuals who have performed heroically in the past. Local to the unit s/he would be embraced by many especially those who have certain insight into what had just occurred. For David, King Saul rewarded him, and Jonathan, a man of insight into special victories of war, befriended him. Another relevant similarity begins before the military engagement. On occasion close comrades on the verge of executing a dangerous mission would promise one another to care for their loved ones if one died completing the mission. With the battle looming the two experience a very emotionally charged moment as they realise the potential for death ahead and their family behind. Team members are trusted with each other's life in the battle and in the tension of the event agree to be entrusted with the other's loved ones in the eventuality of death. Likewise Jonathan and David, suspecting that Saul would harm either of them, agreed to care for the

other's family in the event of one's death. The scene was both rational and emotional.⁶⁶⁸

More importantly David exhibited these qualities when Jonathan *initiated* him into his brotherhood. David had just conquered the enemy's champion Goliath. In proving himself to all the men present the prince and king honoured him accordingly. Originally Saul offered a prize for the one who would defeat Goliath: 'The king will greatly enrich the man who kills him, and will give him his daughter and make his family free in Israel' (1 Sam 17:25, NRSV). But once David accomplished this feat the stakes had changed. Instead Jonathan loved David as his own soul (18:1) and Saul *took* David that day and would not let him return to his father's house (18:2; 16:21-22) uniting David as a brother to Jonathan and not only an armour-bearer to but also seemingly as a son to Saul.⁶⁶⁹ Although Saul did not free David and his family according to 1 Samuel 17 this incident actually coincides with 1 Samuel 14:52 where Saul is observed enlisting valiant warriors into his service; now David is one of them. Furthermore Jonathan covenants with David and later Saul sets David over the army (18:3, 5, 13). Now the parallel is complete:

⁶⁶⁸ A 'higher order' of death and its affect on the surviving other could be considered here. At first glance, Jonathan's death produces in David the poetry and wisdom of 2 Samuel 1. David enters a new knowledge and his ritual kinship, with both Jonathan and the Divine, have again prepared him for kingship (and life). Historically this is evidenced in the following chapters when the DH focuses on David going to the sacred space (Hebron) to be crowned by the existing power structure of the elders (ch. 2). David then negotiates and unites the tribes in a united kingdom of Israel and Judah (chs. 2-5). The new state of Israel is formed under David's leadership and learning.

In a related narrative, Gilgamesh becomes 'a better person' and ruler following Enkidu's death. In Gilgamesh's quest to discover eternal life (without help from the deities), he discovers himself and becomes a better father/husband and a kinder ruler.

Note also Marvin & Ingle (1999): 'Boys become men by touching death' (p. 74).

⁶⁶⁹ In Jewish culture this is reminiscent of Jesus uniting his own mother with his close friend John, as now mother and son, and then John 'took her into his own home' (John 19:26-27).

David has accomplished a great military victory. He is initiated into the brotherhood. Then he takes his post within the new corps.

The Kish family

Socio-political power amassed in areas the Kish-Saulide kin group settled during the Iron Age. According to Stager's *Highland Settlements in the Iron I and Iron II Periods* amassed populations settled in the area of Benjamin over Judah.⁶⁷⁰ Emphasis is given to Ephraim and Gilead in Iron II as areas where the overwhelming majority of the people lived.⁶⁷¹ The narrative describes the Kish family as a wealthy kin group in Israel (1 Sam 9:1). Furthermore this family's power extended into Ephraim, Gilead, Jezreel, Asher, and their own locale of Benjamin (2 Sam 2:9).⁶⁷² So it would be logical from a socio-political perspective that the first king or *chief* of Israel should come from the largest and/or strongest tribe with the most resources i.e., wealth. Within this context it is understandable why Saul was threatened by David's rising power. With Saul's wealth, influence, and power over the region it would be unthinkable for a boy of insignificant means and status to wield such power over the tribes and the chief's son. This offence is magnified when the crown prince rejects the crown and aligns himself with the interloper. Saul was devastated. His son chose to relinquish 'national', regional, tribal, and even kinship power and wealth. Perhaps to retard the effect of Jonathan's decision, Saul pre-empted his son's foolery, disowns him as a son, and denounces his birth and the very day he was born. However the covenant that David and Jonathan

⁶⁷⁰ Stager, 96.

⁶⁷¹ Ibid., 101.

⁶⁷² Meyers, "Kinship and Kingship," 183.

forged seemed to have superseded Saul's reaction and intervention. Instead of loyalty to Saul as 'king', the nation, her God and the king's son, had chosen David to be the future warrior-chief. The elite alliance socially and politically permitted the strictures for the transfer of power. The Divine and the consensus were in agreement although the one who *held* power refused to release it.

The importance of the charismatic military chief Saul leading Israel in the tradition of the preceding judges⁶⁷³ underscores the fact of the *Samuel* and *Judges* editor(s) writing in the same ideal. The Hebrew corpus of the *Former Prophets* focuses on the wars, battles, and heroes of Israel – primarily Yahweh. For the writers and/or editors to portray the charismatic military leader as important characters in Israel's history means we must apply that same stratagem in reviewing the narrative and characters. It then cannot be denied that integral to the David and Jonathan story is this focus on the warrior-king. Jonathan obviously met the standard and would have become the next intertribal chief but for the fact that he relinquishes the power to his friend. 'A king's power ultimately rested on and was legitimized by a series of symbolic acts, attitudes, icons, and structures connecting the king with the deity and human kingship with divine rule'.⁶⁷⁴ 'The king of Israel was accepted because he was perceived as appointed by Yahweh; and Yahweh's character in turn was increasingly and richly expressed by the metaphor of divine kingship'. When Israel used the term son-of-god to refer to David or a Semitic king, rather than referring to the ruler as divine (as in other ANE nations), the concept is a metaphorical one which sanctioned dynastic power. 'Yet the most

⁶⁷³ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid., 197-98.

important representations of royal-sacral ideology were communicated visually, through crowns (2 Sam. 1.10; 2 Kings 11.12; see also Ps. 132.17-18), scepters, garments, and thrones (2 Sam. 14.9; 1 Kings 2.12). These symbols of royal power are also accoutrements of divine rule in Near East iconography; indeed, deities are signified in art by their distinctive headgear, clothing, and insignia of office. In Israel, with its aniconographic stance precluding images of God, the throne especially served as a visible sign of Yahweh’.

If the ark was a national or Israelite symbol of divine presence, effective in communicating to the people of the realm that God favored the king and his bureaucracy, the Temple was essential for projecting that message internationally . . . The persistence of strong kinship-based culture in monarchic Israel is apparent in the Bible’s continued attention to tribal identities and territories . . . tribal solidarity, manifest in grassroots support for local lineage heads, is transferred to the crown, as in the Judean segment of premonarchic tribal units. Supratribal administrative organs diminish aspects of tribal influence and power; but in smaller villages and settlements, and among those distant from the central or regional authorities, group identity and loyalty normally abides in the kinship and clan units that constitute the tribe . . . The successful functioning of the state system thus depended on the continued operation of kinship structures, and state and tribe were not in constant and inevitable tension.⁶⁷⁵

According to Meyer, contrary to seemingly antimonarchic passages (1 Sam 8:4-28, 10:17-19; 1 Kings 12:1-4; Deut. 17:18-22), the distaste for the monarchical rule was not the state system itself but the, ‘jealousies among leadership factions over the perquisites of being at the top of a distribution system that clearly advantages the king and his courtiers’. The opposition then is to the privileges of the individual kings rather than to kingship itself. Monarchy was meant to be

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid., 198-201.

dynastic as seen in Saul's anger to Jonathan. But later the DH narrative justifies David's replacement of the Saulide line.

Having established a loyal patronage among Judeans, the army, and a priestly faction, David was well situated to move into the position of God's chosen once Saul had died. Yet his sons struggled against each other to achieve their father's vaunted power, and Solomon's heir was opposed and ultimately rejected by a northerner The ideology of the Bible claims a national unity that was unlikely as yet to have existed, socially or economically. In this sense, modern occidental ideas of a nation-state prevent us from understanding that the early state in Israel had more in common with the Bronze Age traditions of city-states, writ large, than with a state composed of citizenry all directly affected by and identifying with the state.⁶⁷⁶

For example when more funds for building projects were needed Solomon did not tax the farmers but instead dealt with outsiders. As a result the emphasis was not placed on the temple-palace structure but on a reinforcing and legitimising of royal rule. The citizenry were relatively unaffected.

Excursus: An editorial of 1 Samuel 16-18

Walter C. Kaiser⁶⁷⁷ and E.W. Bullinger⁶⁷⁸ agree that the events of 1 Samuel 16-18 were transposed by an editor . It appears Hysterologia was employed to highlight certain aspects of the story in order to contrast the David and Saul characters. In particular the current reading emphasises the Spirit of the Lord upon David and departing from Saul:

A 16:1–13. DAVID anointed. The Spirit of the Lord comes upon him.

⁶⁷⁶ Ibid., 201-02.

⁶⁷⁷ Walter C Kaiser, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1997), 213.

⁶⁷⁸ Ethelbert William Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible: Explained and Illustrated*, 1898 reprint ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968), 706-07.

B 16:14–23. SAUL rejected. The Spirit of the Lord departs from Saul, and an evil spirit troubles him.

A 17:1–18:9. DAVID. An earlier incident in his life.

B 18:10–30. SAUL. The Spirit departed, and evil spirit troubling him.⁶⁷⁹

The chronological reading then should resemble:

A 16:1–13. DAVID anointed.

a 14:52. SAUL. An introduction to his actions and reactions

A 17:1–18:9. DAVID defeats Goliath and meets Saul. Jonathan loves and covenants with David. An introduction to SAUL's actions and reactions.

B 16:14–23. SAUL rejected.

B 18:10–30. SAUL plans to harm David.

I have amended this reading's descriptors for textual continuity in order to clarify the narrative's progression. The crux of our analysis is 1 Sam 18:1-5.

⁶⁷⁹ Ibid.

Love and Brotherhood

From David's initiation in 1 Sam 18:1-5, the corps later develops into what is called David's mighty men. Actually the mighty men tradition is an extension of the notable warriors in *Joshua*, *Judges* and other relevant books. The Book of First Samuel begins with the DH interlacing metaphors of bows and mighty men into Hannah's Song, of all places, as she exalts the power and strength of her Deity, while thanking him for her son, Samuel. Before the longer story shifts at 2 Sam 1 with metaphors of bows and mighty men, this early pericope sets the stage for the events leading up to David's introduction – specifically, the rejection of the judge-warrior Samuel, and those who would become the first warrior-kings of Israel. The reader recalls mighty or valiant warriors, such as Gideon and Jephthah, while reading how Saul gathers his band of warriors to fight Israel's battles (1 Sam 14:52); but his victories are too numerous to be listed in this one book, and his son's military prowess is impressed upon the reader alongside that of his father's. The narrator then introduces the next warrior-king, David, who becomes aligned with both Jonathan and Saul after the lad's great victory over the enemy giant, and is appointed over the army by the king himself. Likewise, when David establishes his reign he appoints Joab over his army and enlists mighty men to fight for him.

Significant for the David and Jonathan brotherhood are love, covenant, and loyal love descriptors used by the narrator. However not all of David's future relationships merit all three elements by the DH. Some *brothers* or *mighty men* hold a special place with David like Jonathan and David did, but not to the same degree. None covenanted with one another as Jonathan and David did, and some are

described as displaying loyal love (*hesed*) as the two co-founders had. Others are designated as friends (*rēa*), but still others are part of a special forces group of thirty or even a certain group of three (2 Sam 23). Apart from the army David's mighty men (including the elite guard) are a special forces unit which are close to the king. Overall the author specifically designates the following as mighty men in 1 and 2 Samuel: Saul (1 Sam 9:1; 2 Sam 1), David (1 Sam 16:18; 2 Sam 17:10), Goliath (1 Sam 17:51), Jonathan (2 Sam 1), Joab (10:7; 20:7, NASU, NKJV), Yahweh (22:26 by implication), Josheb-Basshebeth/Adino (23:8), Eleazar (v. 9), Shammah (v. 11), Abishai (v. 18), Benaiah (v. 20), Asahel (v. 24), and others in a group of thirty-seven (vv. 24-39).

Although not specifically mentioned as mighty men, some valiant warriors are close to the king because they express a loyal love. One key example is Saul's family member, Abner (1 Sam 14:50), who is the commander of the Israelite army and very loyal to the king. He is seen in close proximity to Saul on many occasions: after the defeat of Goliath (17:55, 57), at the king's table (20:25), sleeping near the king (26:5, 7), guarding the king (26:14-15), and supporting the king's son Ishbaal/Ishbosheth (2 Sam 2). Abner is also a self-described loyalist (*hesed*) to Saul (3:8). However when Abner's forces were defeated by David's after Saul's death, he allied himself with the new king on behalf of Israel over Ishbaal, Saul's son. Abner and David entered a covenant (*bērit*) with Israel's elders to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul to the throne of David (2 Sam 3:9-21; 5:1-3). The covenant between Abner, Israel and David was so important that when a violation occurred, such as the time when Abner and Ishbaal were murdered by David's men,

not only did David mourn publicly (3:31-38) and was deeply distressed (3:28-30, 39), but he also had the covenant offenders killed (2 Sam 4:5-12; 1 Kings 2:31-34).

Honouring a covenant was critical to the culture of the time. For David in particular, the narrator revisits the manner in which he honoured his personal covenant (*bērit*) with Jonathan. As the surviving son of Jonathan and Saul's house, David returned loyal love (*hesed*) to Jonathan's son Mephibosheth/Meribbaal (2 Sam 9:1, 3, 7). He also restored to Mephibosheth the land of Saul and invited him to eat at the king's table regularly (v.7). Even after it appeared that Mephibosheth was disloyal to David (16:1-4), the covenanted *hesed* friend of Jonathan forgave the offence (19:24-30; 21:7-8) and spared Mephibosheth over other members of Saul's lineage (21:1-9).

As observed, these aspects (covenant, loyal love, mighty men) of personal, military and political friendship appear throughout the story. They are expressed in various ways by a subset of people. Regarding the main character David these components of friendship are only combined with one other human and one Deity: Jonathan and Yahweh. Jonathan loves David and engages in a covenant *of* and *before* the Lord (1 Sam 18:3; 20:8; 23:18). Yahweh makes an everlasting covenant with David (2 Sam 7:12-16; 23:5). While Jonathan's covenant solidifies the *knit* or bond of the crown prince to the hero, Yahweh's covenant solidifies David's kingdom forever. The covenant initiators are both royalty: Jonathan and Yahweh, who establish Divine covenants with David (i.e., a covenant *of* and *before* the Lord), changed David's position from following the sheep to ruling over Israel (7:8). Yahweh's and Jonathan's loyal love (*hesed*) for David extends to his posterity (1

Sam 20:14-15; 2 Sam 22:51 cf., 22:26). Strikingly both accounts of *hesed* are couched in covenant language. Jonathan covenants with David again for his loyal love to his descendants while Yahweh shows loyal love to David and his offspring because of the covenant. Yahweh and Jonathan choose David because of his character not his appearance. When Samuel rejected Saul the first time he mentioned that the Lord was seeking a man after his own *heart* to be ruler over Israel (i.e., David) (1 Sam 13:14), but Yahweh later reiterated that he was not looking on the outward appearance to choose a new leader as mortals may do but at the heart (16:7). Then the Lord chose David over his older brothers who had more stature or status (vv. 6-13). ‘After David had finished speaking to Saul, the *soul* of Jonathan was bound to the *soul* of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own *soul*’ (18:1). The narrator does not remotely hint at David’s appearance as a factor in the two men’s souls knitting. In fact this scenario is couched in a military victory rather than sentiment or good looks. It is David’s character and actions which result in Yahweh’s and Jonathan’s heart-soul attraction.

Yahweh is the ultimate *mighty man* (*gibbôr*). As the Divine mighty man Yahweh defends Israel from all foes regardless of human intervention, and is the King of glory, strong and mighty (*gibbôr*); the Lord mighty (*gibbôr*) in battle (Psalm 24:8). As the Sovereign King of glory and Divine mighty one, Yahweh, like his human progeny King Saul, Prince Jonathan and King David, may initiate members into his brotherhood of mighty men. Mighty men like David and Jonathan who make covenants of the Lord and before the Lord in brotherhood are granted access. David appears to have understood this as he and Jonathan shared the space

of brotherhood and warrior-heroes after he defeated Goliath (1 Sam 18:3; 20:8; 23:18). David further suggested in his closing poem that the Lord may bring any worthy warrior into this brotherhood. Like the dialectic of covenant and loyal love in 1 Samuel chapters 18, 20, and 23 between Jonathan, David and Yahweh so in 2 Samuel 22:26 (see also 22:32) David explains that Yahweh is loyal to those who are loyal and wholly or completely dedicated to their brother/friend as the warrior is completely Yahweh's. Although the English term 'blameless' is used for *tāmim* here in the NRSV, and others may even imply a 'whole' or 'upright' divine standard, the better translation is 'wholly' Yahweh's.⁶⁸⁰ Yahweh is wholly or completely man's and vice versa in light of the *hesed* parallel in the previous line of the poem. In a committed *hesed* relationship one is 'wholly' devoted to the other and the relationship.

In tandem, and as comparing the two figures Yahweh and Jonathan, the DH utilises these characters to propel David to kingship based on their relationship as the two, respectively, make David their kinsman. Another important aspect of the DH's influence is the positive interpretation placed on the David and Jonathan relationship regardless of the monarchic author or narrator. Clearly a part of the standards related to Moses and the Torah, the DH supports the relationship of the two men and prominently places it in the narrative. After David's great victory the scene shifts to the brotherhood covenant, a poignant circumstance relative to the slaying of Goliath and significant in Israelite history. The relationship is couched in

⁶⁸⁰ *TWOT* no. 2522 on *tāmim* reminds us that Abraham and Israel were often required by the Lord to be 'wholly' his or completely devoted to him (Gen 17:1; Deut 18:13; 2 Sam 22:33; Psalm 101:2a, 6).

terms of love, covenant, souls knitting, loyal love, and an assortment of affective words which entreat the listener and reader to support this new relation. The DH further devotes a good deal of space in the story to interactions between the two and reactions about the relation. Eventually the greatest signpost to their relationship is in David's elegy in 2 Samuel 1 regarding his brother Jonathan and the sadness of his death.

Such a script can give solace to the listener. For not only does the David-Jonathan story and its characters meet sound Torah standards of morality, but it also provides a dispersed people with the hope for a Yahwistic friend. Whether the DH's audience is exilic or pre-exilic, dispersed Israel would not know their Israelite neighbours as they were displaced in foreign lands or if in post-exilic times returned to Israel without all their kinsmen intact. Consider both the Israelite who is deported and the one who returns to their homeland, both individuals are separated from their domestic groups and family identity. If a social custom existed where either of these individuals could covenant with another follower of Yahweh despite their patriline, affinal or consanguineal relation, and develop a mutual fraternity, then this custom would be useful in easing the distress of the dispersed Israelite. Now consider this custom modelled in existing stories about one of the greatest kings of Israel who as a simple shepherd boy befriended the crown prince and changed his own status. The social and religious impact of such a custom, imbedded in the cultural mythos, would serve as a hope for a depressed people. The David-Jonathan story goes hand in hand with, 'a powerful and artful presentation of the proto-Israelite story. . . which probably produced monumental architecture of

world-class quality [and] gave birth to a superb work of literature'⁶⁸¹ for the listener/reader.

A new society and identity

During monarchic times, archaeological records reveal populations and density which appropriate the need of the new era.⁶⁸² In emergent states, 'settlements of varying sizes in particular configurations – such as town site surrounded by smaller "satellite" villages – provide evidence of the centralization of economic and social functions that correlate with political centralization [*sic*']'. Such a model resembles the biblical descriptions of Solomon's provinces and its leaders who would collect the kingdom's taxes and would also facilitate other social interactions that were, previously, unnecessary. With Israelites from satellite villages not so isolated in their households and more involved with the main town and economic trade with other towns comes a natural interaction with a wider group of 'neighbours'. These associations could develop into broader affinal relationships and non-kin friendships or business relations. The social development of Israel would have naturally expanded as the political, geographic, economic and density characteristics of the state emerged.

The complexities of the relationship of David to and with his mighty men reveal more than a personal bond or even a military bond, for the social development of these relationships played a critical role in the development of David's royal court, administration and nation. After David begins his close

⁶⁸¹ Meyers, "Kinship and Kingship," 174.

⁶⁸² *Ibid.*, 177.

relationship with Jonathan, he later develops friendships with those who likewise become his advisors and elite warriors. Since his initiation into Jonathan's family and immediate circle, David learns of the benefits of brotherhood [of warriors] and passes the tradition on to his own group of mighty men. According to ANE traditions⁶⁸³ living in one household under the *paterfamilias* and serving their designated deity was akin to the nation or *super-household* under the ruler, chief or king of Early Israel serving their Deity YHWH. The concept of the Israelite super-household grants the David and Jonathan characters the nascent power and authority to be brothers and form this alliance. The House of David proved to be the new Israelite intra-relational kin structure which would eventually produce the Messiah. David and Jonathan's brotherhood broke the old mould of Israelite kindred relationships which only collaborated for battles against a common foe into a prototypical fulfilment of Yahweh's goal to unite Israel as the one power which would accomplish more than winning battles but a national brotherhood representing their God as one voice to the families of the earth. The David-Jonathan loyal friendship or brotherhood is, then, a power connecting non-affinal, non-consanguineal relations where partners affect one, the other, or one another in a way which can alter a macro system. Like monarchy, this kind of loyal love is new to the cultural narrative of Israel. The power inherent in monarchy and 'friendship' are wielded sometimes unknowingly by our main characters David, Jonathan, and Saul. Both forms of power highlight the transition of Israel from the tribal structure to a more unified society, under the kingship of David, initially Saul, and a Davidic expansion under Solomon later – known as the Golden Years. Politically,

⁶⁸³ Stager, 113.

geographically, and socially Israel's tribes would have to cooperate more sincerely in order to survive and grow. This new monarchy or neo-theocracy is the political move forward while ritual friendship is the non-consanguineal, non-affinal, non-tribesman move forward.

Certainly the term 'friend' (*rēa*) often appears in the Mosaic text more notably as 'neighbour'. The wide range of associations *rēa* implies can be as distant as a passing acquaintance in the culture to as close as a lover in the *Songs* or even an intimate friend (distinct from and in addition to a spousal type [i.e., sexual] relationship) in Deuteronomy 13:6, NRSV. As noted earlier Abraham is called a friend of God which symbolises a close special relationship no other human has with the Divine (2 Chron 20:7; Isa 41:8; James 2:23). However Moses is distinguished as communicating face to face with God as human friends do, but the comparison tends to express the idea of Moses speaking face to face with the Divine as one human would speak face to face with another human or neighbour (Exod 33:11). Although the term *friend* is not used to describe the relationship between David and Jonathan, the close association cannot be discounted and is replaced by a new designation in early Israelite culture. In fact *rēa* is used in 1 Samuel 20:41 when the two kissed *one another* and wept with *one another*. This could simply be translated as interacting with a neighbour or another human being, but contextually the term would imply intimate friends, fraternity, or better translated today as *loyal friends*. Diachronically translating the term friend was as difficult in 1000 B.C. as it is today. A friend could be one's associate or be described in a variety of colloquial expressions such as mate, homey, my boy, pal, buddy, chum, acquaintance, co-

worker, girlfriend, boyfriend, friend-girl, friend-boy, brother, parent, teacher, spouse, partner, and the list continues, as we have discussed earlier. Hence it is important to contextualise language and its discourse both formally and colloquially.

In the context of the David-Jonathan narrative the two loyal friends are defined by the covenant and love they share beginning in 1 Sam 18. Then in chapter 20 the two (re)commit to a *hesed* or loyal love relative to covenant which includes one another and extends to their families in perpetuity. Thus far patriarchal covenants between the Divine and man predominate the use of loving-kindness (*hesed*) towards humanity followed by human use in negotiations and resolutions. Re-engineering the *hesed*, through a particular ritual, Jonathan and David incorporate societal covenants, human love, and cultural gifting into a new type of kinship or brotherhood which is more than what we consider friendship.

Power, purity and progeny

A modern context of the concepts love and sexuality may be co-equal, but moderns like ancients distinguish between sexuality and power. Moreover, as we have discussed, the importance of contextualising that power within language, social customs and certain historical periods aids us in distinguishing the salient features of that power. For example, if Sodomite power over visitors to their city were the issue then the matter of rape takes a predominant place in the discussion (first rape then male-male as Lot offers females instead of males). Psychologists tell us that rape is more an issue of power than an enjoyable sexual experience. If this is the case then Sodom's men desired to exert their power over Lot's guests and the

Holiness Code would apply in a different fashion. The Leviticus 18:20 and 20:13 emphasis would be on the power aspect of the male-male sexual experience and the difficulty this would pose in a patrilineal Hebrew society. Lot's offering of his daughters would be less of an insult to his authority as the primary male and his household for not protecting his guests. Lot would have also protected the authority of the single male guests. Here, procreation may not have been the main issue, as male-male sex does not produce offspring. So the patrilineal priority would be protected in that sense, however the dishonour of the men would be prominent in this culture and this passage. It becomes clear that one reading of biblical narratives might not be enough; a re-reading with contextual issues in mind and tools, such as that which social anthropology can provide, are important to our modern understanding of issues like sexuality and power in Early Israel.

As discussed earlier, if the David-Jonathan relationship were a sexual one and we incorporate this concept of power into the discussion then the likely active partner would be David. However, this does not fit the contextual narrative as Jonathan initiated the relationship. Following other cultural practices, such as a pederasty, would cast Jonathan as the older teacher, the initiator, and the active partner in a male-male sexual relationship, or the penetrator, or even the effeminate wife. This after all is the role which the men of Sodom took on as well as victorious warriors over defeated foe: All of which deals with forms of power over another, and not the context of this pericope and ritual.

While Premonarchical Israel was concerned with patrilineal descent and the authority of the prime male, monarchy's power introduced an element of control

over the minds of the masses into Israel's life and King Saul's agenda. The narrative proffers clues. Saul's response to the old guard of theocracy in Samuel was that the people made him do it. Another example is the people's response to Saul's thousands and David's tens of thousands giving more attention to and relinquishing more power to the latter leader. The narrator/editor was also clear in the prominence in which he placed the David character in the story, and the divine authority and credibility he held over Saul.

Using the ritual friendship relationship as a seemingly new concept to monarchical Israel, the DH transfers power and credibility to David from Saul's own lineage, his offspring Jonathan. He additionally interjects the Divine blessing on this new relationship as a means of transfer. Little would David and Jonathan know in 18:1-5 that their new friendship would be tested and another pact be made for their own personal safety *and* the safety of their *progeny*. Here the DH reverts to familiar patrilineal concepts as security, for the Davidic and Jonathonian lines feature in the use of the new friendship. So, unwittingly to David, friendship secures him power in Israel, and to Jonathan, friendship secures his patrilineal authority as the reader later observes through Mephibosheth.

In this chapter we built on anthropological and biblical concepts observed from previous chapters in developing a context for the David-Jonathan relationship. We noted the importance of the power of sacred time/space, which had been assigned to the Jonathan-David narrative, when the biblical author demarcated this point in Israel's history within the pages of the OT and DH (i.e., the times of the warrior-judges and warrior-kings). Not only was Early Israel situated in a certain

time and place, different from our own, but they also used the power of the sacred time to distinguish a certain social convention and inchoate power against others: that of the ritual in 1 Sam 18:1-5. We revisited the story of the HDR and reinterpreted David's actions as cunning and successful according to the DH's reading. In doing so, we observed how the ch. 18 ritual, as a means to an inchoate power, infuses David as David now *becomes* Jonathan. The symbolic load and sacred power of the robe, bow and other elements in the ritual were discussed, especially as it is associated with divine power. These sacred objects then become recognised as power for the national brotherhood of Israel in times of war and individual strength. More than the power of the historical warrior-judges, as justification for David's new power, the military-monarchy, kingly-kinly robe of Jonathan, which was gifted to David, imbued and re-engendered him with the power of a warrior-brother. As king, David's power also resides in the people, or kindred of Israel, under the Supreme Paterfamilias and Ultimate Mighty Man: Yahweh. We saw the significance of the mighty men and the progression of this warriors' brotherhood from First to Second Samuel and from Early Israel to Monarchical Israel. We also pointed to a plausible scenario for the nation's need to identify with these symbols and powers in times of monarchy and exile. In this chapter, we concluded the justification for a warriors' brotherhood using social scientific and biblical devices.

Chapter 8 – Conclusion

Brotherhood: Wonderful love passing that of sensuality

Male society, the order of male domination, stands above social relations of intimacy and mutual help engendered by the exchange of women; it is above relations of kinship and their obligations which, though undoubtedly fundamental, are confined to the handful of lineages that make up a person's kinfolk, by the very limitations of these relations.⁶⁸⁴

Godelier explains the relation of friends within the Baruya,⁶⁸⁵ which is not unlike that of the men of Andalusia, chivalric medieval society or a number of comparative cultures with unisexual friendships, which we have observed. A friend is (like) a brother who is not necessarily a co-initiate. A co-initiate is not chosen by the man and is bonded with a different kind of solidarity. Co-initiates are expected to help one another, share food, share the cold, and share hunger, frights, fears, and ordeals. Thus [non-kin] friendships lie somewhere on the continuum between very close kin and co-initiates. Not unlike the co-initiates, friends express their feelings by mutual reliance, mutual assistance and the exchanging of gifts. 'Gifts between friends concern only the individuals involved. They therefore do not contribute to the reproduction of basic social structures, kinship relations for example, as does the practice of *ginamare*, sister-exchange between two men, the exchange of women between two lineages.' 'Gifts and assistance between friends come under the heading of subjective ties between individuals who choose each other; but this choice has no other motivation or obligation than the strength of their

⁶⁸⁴ Godelier, *The Making of Great Men*, 132.

⁶⁸⁵ Godelier, *Enigma*, 144-45.

feelings, the attraction that they arouse in and feel for each other. One social constraint is imposed on friendship, however: sexual relations are excluded. In this respect friendship resembles the relations of intimacy between brothers and sisters, between consanguines.’ Friends give without concern for reciprocation.

In Western societies gift-giving between friends continues to be valued while other types of obligatory giving necessary to reproduce basic elements of society such as kinship relations among the Baruya have ceased to exist in our culture. ‘The giving of gifts between friends, which is a minor feature of Baruya culture, remains a strong paradigm in the individualistic West because it is seen as a spontaneous, individual, subjective, and altruistic act, free of collective obligations and objective social constraints, which therefore does not serve to reproduce society on a deep level.’⁶⁸⁶ ‘In the West, gift-giving between friends stands alongside another gift which is strongly privileged by the Christian West, and that is the gift of his life by Christ, the son of God, to redeem people’s sins and to save them from everlasting damnation, the supreme example of the absolute gift freely given.’⁶⁸⁷

So then giving gifts to maintain brotherly and co-initiate relations is more the norm in the Baruya, whereas the Christian concept of gift-giving to friends is prominent in Western societies. In the West, reciprocity of gifts among friends is implied while the Baruya give gifts to solidify the intimacy and basic social structure of the brotherhood or friendship without the implication of reciprocity.

⁶⁸⁶ Ibid., 145.

⁶⁸⁷ Ibid.

Using this form, then, as Jonathan gifted David his robe, clothing and weapons he solidified their new brotherhood while not expecting anything in return from David.

The sacred is a certain relationship with the origin of things in which imaginary replicas step in and take the place of real humans. In other words, the sacred is a *certain type of relationship that humans entertain with the origin of things*, such that, in this relationship, the real humans disappear and in their stead appear duplicates of themselves, imaginary humans.⁶⁸⁸

For the Baruya the initiation of boys to men and of men into the elite warrior class is a sacred act. Somehow the humans themselves are replaced by the ritual, the acts, and most importantly the original intent of the ritual. Likewise in the David-Jonathan story although the emphasis is clearly David's rise to kingship, for a brief moment the focus tends to their loyal love. As though Divinely superseding the men themselves, the rituals, actions and resultant narrative engages the audience in David's *relationship* with Jonathan over the two individuals. The initiation, the gifting, the covenant(s) and the Divine origin take on an imaginary humanity of its own as the listener/reader is captured by its sensitivities in the midst of war 'in order to produce and to reproduce society'. A new society of mighty men now endorsed by King David elevates the level of the former *judge* while the new role of king replaces the former social chief – a simultaneous and mirrored graduation within the warrior class.

'It is not *society* which conceals something of itself from men; it is real human beings who conceal something of their social relations *from each other*.'⁶⁸⁹

One may love another without any hint of sexuality involved but modern society has

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid., 171-72.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid., 173.

so sexualised relations that even *mere friendships* are inflicted with this burden. ‘But we must be careful not to lose sight of our point of departure which explains why sacred objects are to be kept and not given: the fact that possession of these objects gives *men*, or at least some men, *powers* and sets them apart from the other members of their society.’⁶⁹⁰ In gifting to David, Jonathan relinquished those sacred powers which included those of leadership or kingship.

What we call events or experiences like birth, initiation, the start and end of a journey, the outbreak of war and conclusion of peace, and death and burial are points of contact between power and life and hence must be celebrated rather than merely experienced.⁶⁹¹ ‘In transitional rites, life affected by Power turns towards Power’. As David’s life was marked by such transitional rites as an anointing, a victory and subsequent initiation, a covenant, a betrayal from his king and surrogate father, and an eventual death of his covenantal friend which impressed Power on the lad to become king or the power of Israel. Failing to *celebrate* even one aspect of these transitional rites or even misinterpreting the rites might have suspended David’s success as monarch and man. Jonathan’s covenant with David, although a fragment of the totality of David’s celebrations, was nonetheless integral to David’s power.

Life

David’s initiation was a celebration of new life as Jonathan clothed David in a new robe. Rites guarantee power and the sacred life is replete with power. A

⁶⁹⁰ Ibid., 175.

⁶⁹¹ van der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*, Vol. 1, 193.

great majority of such rites are purifications. Purifications and tests can initiate a boy into manhood as through circumcision for example. The approximations of death leading to new life are at the core of such rites; and the use of new clothes is another purification rite.⁶⁹² For our heroes the new robe Jonathan gives David purifies the old life and confirms his candidacy as king and conduit of Power. However as David begins his new life Jonathan begins his death and Saul continues his 'dying' as well. To the reader the private anointing of David by Samuel marks the beginning of his new life but to the story's characters the public display of David's initiation in defeating the enemy and subsequent gifting by the crown prince marks the beginning of his new life. Consequently the narrative slowly 'kills off' the Saul character with his flaws and hatred for David becoming more violent and visible. Further the tension in securing a solid relationship for our initiate and sponsor is aggravated by Saul's descent. Eventually the two make a final covenant and leave the proximity of the friendship although the essence of the relationship is left intact. The final separation occurs when Jonathan dies, the proximity of friendship dies, but the covenant and associated love or strength lives as well as David's kingly power.

David does not really live until Jonathan and Saul die – and the three seem to recognise this. In the narrative David will not take Saul's life and become king although he, his warriors, much of Israel, the reader, Jonathan, and Saul himself know this is the only way for David to *live*. But while David waits on Saul's death he experiences Jonathan's death as well. Like Gilgamesh finding new life and

⁶⁹² Ibid., 196-97.

knowledge after Enkidu's death so David finds new life and knowledge or love or strength after Jonathan's death. The power of Jonathan and David's covenant fuelled David's life. The two recognised early on that Jonathan had to die. First when they covenanted to care for the other's family in the event of death and finally in David's eulogy for Jonathan: 'Saul and Jonathan, beloved and lovely! In life and in death they were not divided' (2 Sam 1:23, NRSV). The characters respected the power of the family unit in society and that, 'all life's power impulses are dominated by its common element: the family is all in all'.⁶⁹³ The two also respected the temporal power of the gift, whereas David acted on the counter-gift to Jonathan's son, *after* the covenant maker had died.⁶⁹⁴

An alternative lifestyle

In the Baruya older boys give younger boys male specific gifts which are not 'polluted' by females.⁶⁹⁵ But the younger boys do not return the gift until they are older and then offer their gift to younger boys. Thus a perpetual cycle of debt recurs where a clear superiority is observed but which unites the new initiates into the specialised male society. Now Jonathan gave David gifts at his initiation which David could not return as he was not wealthy enough to do so. However David later initiated others into his mighty men and thus completing the cycle of giving, including a new member in the camaraderie, and establishing himself as leader over them. The cycle has another element in that the older ones are indebted to the deity ultimately for gifting them their male powers. Likewise, a DH interpretation of the

⁶⁹³ Ibid., 247.

⁶⁹⁴ Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, 105-07.

⁶⁹⁵ Godelier, *The Making of Great Men*, 132.

David and Jonathan gift leads to Jonathan's debt to Yahweh and a life of service; and David's obligation for Jonathan's progeny. The cycle of Mauss' gift theory is complete as the giving, receiving and repaying of the gift, and the temporal nature of these actions (see also *Outline of a Theory of Practice*), are satisfied in this Old Testament ritual which is identified in the gift exchange of 1 Sam 18.⁶⁹⁶

The emotions and action exhibited in 2 Samuel 1:26 as a window into the culture of Early Israel held significant differences than today. Our emotional response to the phrasing in 1:26 might default to one of homosexuality, but this interpretation would confuse the past and that culture. The emotion of love clearly does not reflect a gay identity in the religion of Early Israel, whilst the same emotion relates to sexual identity in the modern West. Apart from emotion and identity, another factor in this discussion is the contrast of religious communities in Early Israel to that of other ANE nations and to modern religious communities in the Middle East and worldwide – in which some attention must be made to ideological religions other than those of the Abrahamic Faiths and of Eastern Philosophies.

Jonathan's gift to David must be viewed within its own reality and its own accounting. Likewise their love, kisses, and embraces must too be considered hence 'our objectivism falls short of objectivity' as Bourdieu warned. The asexual intimacy of a modern gay relationship and the non-sexualised aspect of a modern homosocial friendship are both part of the David and Jonathan relationship. But to label the relationship as 'gay' or a 'friendship' would cause our, 'objectivism [to

⁶⁹⁶ Mauss, 37ff.

fall] short of objectivity by failing to integrate into its account of reality the representation of reality against which it has had to construct its “objective” representation . . .’.⁶⁹⁷ In other words, we fail to account for the time, place, and social constructs surrounding the David-Jonathan relationship. Although we observe some elements of our modern western categorisations in this relationship, we fail to be objective to the David-Jonathan reality by identifying their *brotherhood* in a foreign construct.

In this thesis, we have observed how men, throughout time and space in unisexual societies, *ex-habit* or *in-habit* certain intimate, virtuous traits which produce a surpassing asexual love and bond between them (e.g., the habitus). These anthropological insights have fuelled our biblical enquiry into the ritual of 1 Samuel 18:1-5 and the relationship of David and Jonathan. Since the onset of this examination, we have utilised social scientific concepts to aid our biblical understanding of a new classification of male-male relations in Early Israel, from both the perspectives of individual agency towards ‘the other’ and the nationalistic social structure, which I have identified as the warriors’ brotherhood. In our investigation we have rediscovered a new human-Divine intimacy, which can be experienced amongst kinsmen and select non-kinsmen, a new respect for the other, a new tolerant way of seeing societies in their own time and space, and a new tolerant way of looking at the continuum of male-male relations, to which we avoid misclassifying many of these relationships as sexual or erotic. Within this classification, we have observed the characteristic of *being the other*, and the

⁶⁹⁷ Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, 110.

selfless phenomenon of giving, returning the gift, and passing on the gift – whatever tangible or intangible item is exchanged. We have also examined the relevance of the robe and bow as phenomenological symbols in Early Israel and how they might have been used to transform an individual and a people. Not only did these symbols have Divine significance, but a mutual reliance on the Divine also appeared in our study to be a quality which attracted the two heroes into a relationship of knitted hearts. The phenomenon of an intangible, spiritual attraction, which goes beyond the self and serves as a higher-order basis of virtuous relationships, existed at several points in history and in certain societies. The concept of liminality was explored as David's rite of passage, not only moved him into manhood, but it also re-engendered him into a brotherhood, militaristic group, and monarchical union. This union was seen to inhabit a love which not only exists, but moreover is beyond oneself, the other, death, genealogies, and nationalistic unity. Although some of the traits for this love and type of unisexual relations have been identified, it is beyond the scope of this study to signify which relationship it represents on our modern western continuum. For example, can this ritualised brotherhood and love exist or *be* in a grouping of two college age-mates or cohorts? Which type of 'friendship' resembles some of the qualities identified in this study? Is this even possible in our own time and place? Nonetheless, David's re-engendering and rite of passage causes him to be an Israelite neo-judge in a long line of judges from the time of Joshua and *Judges*. This neo-judge (or warrior chief and king) leads a mighty men of virtuous knights who have also adopted this militaristic, kinly, affective, and amiable bond. We have satisfactorily concluded this investigation of the ritual of

the warriors' brotherhood, the cultural hermeneutic (of biblical studies and social anthropology) of time and space, and the impact of individual agency on the social structure. With the help of social anthropology in this theological reflection, we have redirected this exploration to the study of God and how his selfless love for us can be expressed towards each other, regardless of one's worldview.

The need for exegetes, biblical scholars, and Bible readers to develop a cultural hermeneutic becomes clear. In setting stories such as the David-Jonathan narrative within its textual and socially contextual environment, one may begin to reconstruct the missing pieces in Israel's cultural and historical framework. The use of the social sciences in analysing biblical matter coupled with the biblical scholar's usual care for the text can further enhance our understanding of obscure texts or texts which have a tendency to be modernised in light of current popular customs or trends. Some social scientific concepts we incorporated in this thesis included cultural classifications, kinship concepts such as descent theory and ritualised kinship, exchange and reciprocity theory, patriliney, rites of passage, ideas of power, sacred time, sacred space, gift theory, heroes, and war. We used these concepts to explore the nature of the David-Jonathan relationship, and concluded by identifying the *brotherhood* of 'the self' and 'the other' as a significant expression from the meta-narratives of the DH, Yahwism, David's rise to monarchy, and the story of Israel approaching statehood.

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