JONATHAN HUDDLESTON

Eschatology in Genesis

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Dedication

Dedicated to my wife Adrienne Huddleston,
whose encouragement made this project possible.

Preface

This study examines the book of Genesis as a functioning literary whole, expressing the expectations of Persian-era Judeans. Many have contrasted Genesis' account of *origins* with prophetic speech about the *future*. Yet literary and historical evidence suggests that Genesis narrates Israel's origins, and the world's, in order to ground Judea's hopes for an eschatological restoration.

Using a speech-act linguistic semiotics, I explore the way Genesis orients the Persian-era Judeans who used this text. Promises made throughout Genesis pertain not only to the characters of traditional memory, but also to those who preserved, composed, and received Genesis. Divine promises for Israel's future help constitute Israel's ongoing identity. Poor, sparsely populated, Persian-ruled Judea imagines its mythic destiny as a great nation exemplifying and spreading blessing among the families of the earth, dominating central Palestine in a flourishing pan-Israelite unity.

Genesis' narrative of Israel's origins and destiny thus dovetails with the Persian-era expectations attested in Israel's prophetic corpus—a coherent though variegated *restoration eschatology*. This prophetic eschatology shares mythic traditions with Genesis, using those traditions typologically to point to Israel's future hope. Taken together, Genesis and the prophetic corpus identify Israel as a precious *seed*, carrying forward promises of a yet-to-be-realized creation fruitfulness. Those who used this literature identified their own crises with the mythic destruction threatening creation, a "cursing" that can never extinguish the line of promised blessing.

The dynamic processes of Genesis' composition and reception have made it an etiology of Israel's expected future—not of its static present. Because this future will be fully realized only in the coming divine visitation, Genesis cannot be attributed to an anti-eschatological, hierocratic establishment. Rather, it belongs to the same Persian-era Judean synthesis that produced the restoration eschatology of the prophetic corpus.

This book has been adapted from my 2011 Ph.D. thesis at Duke University's Graduate School of Religion. Special thanks to my advisor Stephen B. Chapman and committee members Carol Meyers, Ellen Davis, Anathea Portier-Young, and Julie Tetel Andresen. My editor Mark Smith's comments have made my argument and expression stronger at every point.

October, 2012 Jonathan Huddleston

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List of Abbreviations

BHDL *Biblical Hebrew and Discourse Linguistics*, ed. Robert Bergen (Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 1994).

JJAP *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context,* ed. Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers, and Manfred Oeming (Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 2011).

JJFC *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.*, ed. Oded Lipschits, Gary Knoppers, and Rainer Albertz (Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 2007).

JJNBP *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period,* ed. Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp (Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 2003).

JJPP *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, ed. Oded Lipshits and Manfred Oeming (Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 2006).

KEFB *Knowing the End from the Beginning: The Prophetic*, *the Apocalyptic and Their Relationships*, ed. Lester Grabbe and Robert Haak (London: T&T Clark, 2003).

NIDB *New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, Tenn: Abingdon, 2006–2009).

OLCA *Orality*, *Literacy*, *and Colonialism in Antiquity*, ed. Jonathan Draper (Atlanta: SBL, 2004).

PentT *The Pentateuch as Torah: New Models for Understanding Its Promulgation and Acceptance*, edited by Gary Knoppers and Bernard Levinson (Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 2007).

PiP *The Priests in the Prophets: The Portrayal of Priests, Prophets and Other Religious Specialists in the Latter Prophets,* edited by Lester Grabbe and Alice Bellis (London/New York: T&T Clark, 2004).

PT *Persia and Torah: The Theory of Imperial Authorization of the Pentateuch*, edited by James Watts (Atlanta: SBL, 2001).

RPP *Religion Past and Present: Encyclopedia of Theology and Religion*, edited by Hans Dieter Betz et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

Chapter 1

The Question of Genesis' Eschatology

My interest in eschatology began with Second Temple apocalypses and their contribution to Christian origins.[1] Yet texts such as Enoch, Daniel, and the War Scroll point farther back, reading eschatologically the symbols and language of earlier Hebrew literature – not least Genesis' account of creation and of the ancestral promises.[2] What eschatology did Israel have *before* the rise of apocalypses? What continuity or discontinuity exists between early forms of eschatology and eschatology attested in Hellenistic-era or Greco-Roman sources?

Paul Hanson's seminal study describes both a "prophetic" and an "apocalyptic" eschatology; yet hundreds of articles have been published on the latter and notably few on the former.[3] Hanson fatally undermines his story of how apocalypse grew out of prophecy by polarizing *history* versus *myth*, sociopolitical change versus divine action.[4] Such dichotomies reinforce the generalization that the Hebrew Bible cares only about this-worldly history, and therefore do not encourage the search for eschatology in the Hebrew Bible.[5] Meanwhile, Otto Plöger introduces his own dichotomy of *Theocracy and Eschatology*: any escha-

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[1] See N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992).

[2] Cf. George Nickelsburg, "Eschatology: Early Jewish Literature," *ABD* 2, 580–93; George Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980); and Anathea Portier-Young, *Apocalypse Against Empire: Theologies of Resistance in Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011). See also below, section 5.3.

[3] Paul Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic: The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979). Some deny that there is such a thing as prophetic eschatology; see Matthew Neujahr, "Royal Ideology and Utopian Futures in the Akkadian *ex eventu* Prophecies," in *Utopia and Dystopia in Prophetic Literature,* ed. Ehud Ben Zvi (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 41–54. For an overview of Hanson's work within a history of scholarship, see Leslie Allen, "Some Prophetic Antecedents of Apocalyptic Eschatology and Their Hermeneutical Value," *Ex Auditu* 6 (1990), 15–28; John Oswalt, "Recent Studies in Old Testament Eschatology and Apocalyptic," *JETS* 24.4 (1981), 289–301.

[4] For critique of Hanson's polarizations see KEFB; Stephen Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism: The Postexilic Social Setting* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995. John Collins argues that prophetic *and* apocalyptic eschatology are thoroughly mythic *and* historic, distinguished only by a few uniquely apocalyptic elements ("The Eschatology of Zechariah," in *KEFB*, 74–84; "Apocalyptic Eschatology as the Transcendence of Death," *CBQ* 36.1 [1971], 21–43).

[5] See Walter Schmithals' extraordinary claim that post-exilic eschatology is not consistent with the "Old Testament" (*The Apocalyptic Movement: Introduction and Interpretation* [trans. John Steely; New York: Abingdon, 1975], 79–80). Cf. Oswalt, "Recent Studies," 292–3.

tology in the prophets must be anathema to the priestly producers of the Pentateuch.[6] True, a growing literature recognizes that myth and history are thoroughly intertwined in Israelite literature, where priests as well as prophets advance "proto-apocalyptic" expectations.[7] Yet scholars have seldom taken the next step, exploring the eschatology of all parts of the Hebrew Bible canon – not just of Daniel and its "proto-apocalyptic" precursors.[8]

The barely-examined assumption that the Pentateuch is uneschatological dominates Pentateuchal studies. So Eckart Otto shows at length that prophetic and Pentateuchal editors are far closer than once imagined – yet still maintains, with little argumentation, that the two types of literature remain divided along theocracy-eschatology lines.[9] Rainer Albertz's history of Israel includes an unsupported comment that "we can see from P" that "the majority of the priestly college were still opposed to prophecy."[10] Frank Crüsemann calls the Pentateuch "unprophetic" because it is "uneschatological, even anti-eschatological."[11] Much of this work simply follows Plöger.[12] Joseph Blenkinsopp, more than any other scholar, discusses Plöger's Weberian underpinnings for dividing prophecy from Pentateuch, contrasting "free" prophecy with a "rigid" priesthood.[13] Yet several works have pointed out the weaknesses of Plöger's sociology.[14]

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[6] Otto Plöger, *Theocracy and Eschatology* (London: Blackwell, 1968).

[7] See Marvin Sweeney, "The Priesthood and the Proto-Apocalyptic Reading of Prophetic and Pentateuchal Texts," in *KEFB*: 167–79; Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticsm;* Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

[8] Brian Kelly, *Retribution and Eschatology in Chronicles* (Sheffield Academic, 1996).

[9] Eckart Otto, "Scribal Scholarship in the Formation of Torah and Prophets: A Postexilic Scribal Debate between Priestly Scholarship and Literary Prophecy: The example of the Book of Jeremiah and Its Relation to the Pentateuch," in PentT*,* 183. So also Sidnie Crawford, having discussed the *continuity* characterizing many of Jubilees' adaptations of Genesis, simply states that Jubilees' theme of eschatology simply adds something "not present" in Genesis itself (*Rewriting Scripture in Second Temple Times* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008], 80).

[10] Rainer Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period 2: From the Exile to the Maccabees* (trans. John Bowden; Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 455. Albertz's section about P, 480–93, does not mention opposition to prophecy at all.

[11] Frank Crüsemann, *The Torah: Theology and Social History of Old Testament Law* (trans. Allan Mahnke; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 346; idem, "Israel in der Perserzeit," in *Max Webers Sicht des antiken Christentums,* ed. Wolfgang Schluchter (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1985), 205–32. Cf. Otto Steck, *Der Abschluß der Prophetie im Alten Testament* (Neukirchener, 1991), 20.

[12] See Otto, "Scribal Scholarship," 183; Albertz, *History* 2, 438–9; Crüsemann, *Torah,* 347. For Hanson's dependence on Plöger see Allen, "Some Prophetic Antecedents," 17; Philip Davies, "The Social World of the Apocalyptic Writings," in *The World of Ancient Israel: Sociological, Anthropological, and Political Perspectives,* ed. Ronald Clements (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 251–71.

[13] Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Prophecy and Canon: A Contribution to the Study of Jewish Origins* (Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977).

[14] Davies ("Social World," 257–8) calls it "untenable," noting how "Daniel and the Qumran community deny the dichotomy [suggested by] Plöger and Hanson: they seem to have combined

Still, Plöger's influence remains felt in the relative *absence* of recent Pentateuchal study discussing eschatology; the state of the question is largely silence.[15] This silence is particularly striking because categories like *hope* or *promise* dominate several treatments of the Pentateuch and of Genesis in particular.[16] These treatments, often literary or theological in character, bypass the historical question about how the Pentateuch's *hope* relates to the prophetic scrolls' *eschatology*. Using the word "hope" for the future-orientation of one corpus, but the word "eschatology" for the future-orientation of another corpus, obscures the fact that Persian-era Judean literature attests various Pentateuchal *and* prophetic expectations. Might not two such future-oriented bodies of literature, shaped in the same tiny province in the same period of Persian rule, testify to a common conversation about Judeans' future-oriented identity?[17] This question is particularly press-

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quite harmoniously a reverence for the 'established' priesthood and cult with a strong belief in an imminent eschaton." For a related critique of Hanson and his sociology of apocalyptic see John Collins, "The Genre Apocalypse in Hellenistic Judaism," in *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East,* ed. David Hellhom (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983), 546; S. J. DeVries, "Observations on Qualitative and Quantitative Time in Wisdom and Apocalyptic," *Israelite Wisdom: Theological and Literary Essays in Honour of Samuel Terrien,* ed. John Gammie (Missoula, Mont: Scholars, 1978), 275; Oswalt, "Recent Studies," 298–300; and, at length, Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism.* See below, section 3.4.3.

[15] Hans-Peter Müller, who earlier traced the *Urspring* of eschatology in the Messianism of Gen 49:10 ("Zur Frage nach dem Ursprung der biblischen Eschatologie," *VT* 14 [1964], 276–93), does not mention Gen 49 or indeed the Pentateuch in his later RPP article ("Eschatology: Old Testament," *RPP* vol. 4, 534–9). Other standard articles on eschatology also ignore the Pentateuch's eschatology (see David Petersen, "Eschatology – Old Testament," *ABD* vol 2, 575–9; Stephen Cook, "Eschatology of the OT," *New International Dictionary of the Bible* vol 2, 299–308). Nor do standard books on the Pentateuch have an index entry for the term *eschatology;* see Jean-Louis Ska, *Introduction to Reading the Pentateuch* (trans. Pascale Dominique; Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 2006). Admittedly, Donald Gowan's *Eschatology in the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986) does cite passages from Genesis in its topical arrangement of biblical citations, but Gowan does not even begin to address the sorts of historical and literary questions necessary to account for a single book's eschatology (or lack thereof) – he does not mention the sorts of challenges voiced by Plöger, Blenkinsopp, Crüsemann, and Albertz. Compare also the work of Seth Postell, *Adam as Israel: Genesis 1–3 as the Introduction to the Torah and the Tanakh* (Eugene, Oreg: Pickwick, 2011); his conclusions are suggestive, but his treatment of the historical development of Israelite literature is too cursory.

[16] See David Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch* (Sheffield: University of Sheffield, 1978); Devora Steinmetz, *From Father to Son: Kinship, Conflict, and Continuity in Genesis* (Louisville, Kent: Westminster/John Knox, 1991); Diana Lipton, *Revisions of the Night: Politics and Promises in the Patriarchal Dreams of Genesis* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999). Notice that this emphasis on promise follows the tradition of Gerhard von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (München: Kaiser, 1960–61).

[17] Ehud Ben Zvi attributes the Primary History and the prophetic books to "the 'literati of Yehud,'" who structured both to portray Israel as a "future hope" ("Looking at the Primary Hi(story) and the Prophetic Books as Literary/Theological Units within the Frame of the Early Second Temple: Some Considerations," *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* [1998], 33).

ing because, as I will show, Hellenistic and Roman era texts use both Torah and Prophets as a source for their rich eschatology.

In this work I supply what seems lacking: a full literary-historical investigation of the eschatology of a single Pentateuchal book. I select Genesis for several reasons. First, it provides a coherent literary vision of the relationship between Yhwh and Israel that stands apart from Exodus through Deuteronomy (if only because Moses is not yet on the narrative scene).[18] Second, it narrates Yhwh's promises to the ancestors, promises that are particularly foundational for Israel's ongoing eschatology.[19] Third, it juxtaposes Israel's story with cosmic beginnings, a combination characteristic of Israel's eschatology. Fourth and finally, it contains a few intriguing passages, embedded in prominent blessing and cursing poems, that hint at a coming victory in quasi-messianic language. Admittedly, these verses are ambiguous, and Crüsemann is not alone in rejecting the idea that they are properly eschatological.[20] Yet important *possible* Pentateuchal instances of eschatology do come from the book of Genesis.

Finally, I note two significant exceptions to the recent silence on Pentateuchal eschatology. The first is Hans-Christoph Schmitt, who in a series of articles examines Genesis 49 and other passages in light of new models of Pentateuchal scholarship.[21] Schmitt discusses a Persian- era Pentateuchal redaction layer that is fully compatible with the prophetic spirit and addresses prophetic-style eschatological hopes. The second exception is John Sailhamer, who builds on Schmitt's work in as sophisticated analysis of three major Pentateuchal poems (Gen 49, Num 24, and Deut 32).[22] These poems serve in their current form as an

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[18] Rolf Rendtorff, *The Problem of the Process of Transmission in the Pentateuch* (trans. John Scullion; Sheffield: JSOT, 1990); Ska, *Introduction;* R. Walter Moberly, *The Old Testament of the Old Testament: Patriarchal Narratives and Mosaic Yahwism* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992).

[19] See Clines, *Theme*; Nickelsburg, "Eschatology." The "individual stories" are "framed within a bracket of eschatology" (Brevard Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979], 150–2).

[20] Crüsemann, *Torah,* 347, on Gen 3:15 and 49:10; he also cites Num 24:24 and Deut 32:43.

[21] Hans-Christoph Schmitt, "Eschatologische Stammesgeschichte im Pentateuch: zum Judaspruch von Gen 49,8–12," in idem, *Theologie in Prophetie und Pentateuch: Gesammelte Schriften,* ed. Ulrike Schorn and Matthias Büttner (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2001); idem, "Redaktion des Pentateuch im Geiste der Prophetie: Zur Bedeutung der 'Glauben' – Thematik innerhalb der Theologie des Pentateuch," in *Theologie in Prophetie*, 220–37; idem, "Die Suche nach der Identität des Jahweglaubens im nachexilischen Israel: Bemerkungen zur theologischen Intention der Endredaktion des Pentateuch," in *Pluralismus und Identität*, ed. Joachim Mehlhausen (Gütersloh, Germany: Kaiser, 1995), 259–78. He relies especially on the works, still influential, of Rendtorff (*Problem*) and of Hans Heinrich Schmid (*Der sogenannte Jahwist: Beobachtungen und Fragen zur Pentateuchforschung* [Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1976]).

[22] John Sailhamer, "Creation, Genesis 1–11, and the Canon," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 10.1 (2000), 89–106. Sailhamer notes that each of these poems also mines imagery from Gen 1–11; see Postell, *Adam as Israel,* arguing that Gen 1–3, the Pentateuch, and the entire Tanakh cohere in their usage of shared eschatological themes.

eschatological framework of the Pentateuchal narrative as a whole. Together, I find that Sailhamer and Schmitt give a solid answer to the question of Genesis' eschatology; my study will work backward from their conclusions, filling in the necessary argumentation to bolster their observations. I will also work forward from their brief discussions and extend their insights about the eschatology expressed in the book of Genesis.

1.1 Between Linguistic Semiotics and Biblical Studies

1.1.1 From Code Theorism to Situated Speech Acts

Inquiry into Genesis' eschatology does not begin and end with explicit references to an end (*eschaton*), or to the latter days (בְּאַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים). On the surface, Genesis' most clearly predictive passages (15:13–16; 46:4; 49:1, 10; 50:24–25) refer to ancient events, especially Israel's tradition of an exodus from Egypt and subsequent settling of twelve tribes. To probe beneath this surface, interpreters must ask whether Genesis' hopes apply to its audiences' ongoing futures – with an eschatological force. This question is simultaneously literary and historical. Genesis' *literary* form points beyond Israel's memory toward a continuous future hope; Genesis' *historical* contexts determine the book's situated hopes for those who produced and received it.

Too many scholars have split literary questions from historical questions, pursuing each from an inadequate code-theoretical framework. One tradition of Genesis scholarship, represented by Claus Westermann's magisterial three-volume Genesis commentary, is caught up in the question of Genesis' historical sources and authors – but completely neglects the meaning of a passage like Genesis 12:2 for the book as a whole.[23] Meanwhile, another tradition of Genesis scholarship, exemplified by Keith Grüneberg, thinks that interpreters can explicate Genesis as a whole in the light of "the promise of blessing for Abraham/Israel (12:2)" – but "without needing to know whether the original audience heard it as a promise that their current predicament would be transcended or as assurance that their current prosperity was divinely ordained."[24] Both traditions assume a code-theoretical linguistic model: a discrete speaker/author encodes information in writings to be decoded by a largely uninvolved listener/reader. In code-theorism, interpreters choose to focus on *the* historical author or *the* encoded meaning; the impact of the text on readers, within one or more concrete communication contexts, is not part of the exegetical discussion.[25]

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[23] Claus Westermann, *Gen 12–36: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985), 144–52.

[24] Keith Grüneberg, *Abraham, Blessing, and the Nations: A Philological and Exegetical Study of Genesis 12:3 in its Narrative Context* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003), 6.

[25] See Julie Tetel Andresen (*Linguistics Reimagined: Language Study for the 21st Century* [forthcoming]), and further discussion below.

Helmut Utzschneider documents the prevalence of this outdated "transmitter-receiver" model among biblical exegetes.[26] Christo van der Merwe argues that in fact the "code model of communication" lies behind "historical criticism in general," whenever exegetes assume their job is "to understand the 'message' of the code correctly."[27] In contrast, more recent linguistic theorists do not sharply distinguish speakers from hearers. Meaning does not pass from one person to another by means of a "code," but rather develops within a multi-agent linguistic and extralinguistic context.[28] Code-theorism simply cannot account for Archibald MacLeish's insight that "A poem should not mean / but be," and is "equal to / Not true," since "an empty doorway and a maple leaf" can stand for "all the history of grief."[29] Or, as Pablo Neruda puts it, literary words are not coded content but a "rush of objects that call" (*un golpe de objetos que llaman*), "a ceaseless movement" (*un movimiento sin tregua*), and "a confused name" (*un nombre confuso*).[30] Literary language exists not to pass on information but to spur an aesthetic process of meaning-making, inviting active response. A literary work is not just a "finished monologic utterance," to be analyzed and decoded by a disinterested interpreter. Instead, literary language is a response, and "readers . . . participate equally in the creation of the represented world in the text."[31]

Biblical scholarship has not remained untouched by this shift in linguistic and literary theory. Van der Merwe argues that a recent "crisis in Biblical exegesis" proceeds largely from the overdue recognition that "what happens in human communication" does not fit the code-theoretical exegetical model. Thus, recent biblical scholarship shifts *from* "'decoding'" the "'correct message' of a text" *to*

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[26] Helmut Utzschneider, "Text-Reader-Author: Towards a Theory of Exegesis; Some European Viewpoints," *Journal of Hebraic Studies* 1 (1996), 1–22.

[27] Christo Van der Merwe, "Biblical Exegesis, Cognitive Linguistics, and Hypertext," in *Congress Volume Leiden 2004,* ed. André Lemaire (Boston: Brill, 2006), 257–8.

[28] Recent literature does not distinguish between "extralinguistic" and "linguistic" settings, but unite the entire communication event; see Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson, *Relevance: Communication and Cognition,* 2nd ed (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995). Where early linguists distinguished between "locutionary" and "illocutionary"/"performatory" utterances, those who study pragmatics now assert that all language relies on what is implied and effected within the speech context. See John Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962); John Searle, *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Teun van Dijk, *Studies in the Pragmatics of Discourse* (The Hague: Mouton, 1981); Kent Bach and Robert Harnish, *Linguistic Communication and Speech Acts* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1979); Jef Verschueren, *Pragmatics: An Annotated Bibliography with Particular Reference to Speech Act Theory* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1978).

[29] Archibald MacLeish, "Ars Poetica," in *Sound and Sense: An Introduction to Poetry,* ed. Laurence Perrine (New York: Harcourt, 1977), 149–50.

[30] Pablo Neruda, "Arte Poética," in *Ways to Poetry*, ed. Stanley Clayes and John Gerrietts (New York: Harcourt, 1975), 156.

[31] Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays,* ed. Michael Holquist (trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist; Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 253.

"what happens in the process of reading and interpreting."[32] Newer models of language require a re-conception of *"biblical exegesis as the documentation of the process of reading,"* in light of the "historical character of the text . . . and the variety of audiences involved in its comprehension throughout the ages."[33] Although biblical scholars have always been interested in textual context as well as content, a thorough account of the functions that texts serve, and the interests of those who use them, has made real strides in recent scholarship.[34] James Brenneman describes a pervasive and necessary "shift . . . from what a text *means* to what a text *does.*"[35] William Schniedewind suggests that linguistic analyses of ancient Hebrew are only now beginning to pay sufficient attention to sociolinguistics, which many theorists now view as the heart of linguistics.[36]

In contrast to code-theorists, speech-act linguists analyze language in terms of its effects in specific contexts. The object of linguistic analysis is not isolated words and sentences; a linguist must deal with one or more fully situated utterances.[37] The most influential speech-act theorist is Roman Jakobson, whose diagram of the six major "functions" of speech has replaced older speaker-listener models. His picture of the communication event includes *addresser, addressee,* and *message*, but also new factors, such as *context, contact,* and *code.* More importantly, Jakobson reflects on the fact that speech serves more functions than merely passing along information. He delineates six functions:

- referential, describing something in the context;
- poetic, calling attention to the message itself;
- emotive (or expressive), conveying the attitude of the addresser;

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[32] Van der Merwe, "Biblical Exegesis," 257–8.

[33] Van der Merwe, "Biblical Exegesis," 276.

[34] See John Collins, *The Bible after Babel*; *Historical Criticism in a Postmodern Age* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005); *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Their Application,* ed. Steven McKenzie and Stephen Haynes (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993)*;* Mark Smith, *The Priestly Vision of Genesis 1* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010), 161–92; Kevin Vanhoozer (*The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005], 9–10, 212–14. Vanhoozer cites Richard Rorty's edited volume, *The Linguistic Turn: Recent Essays in Philosophical Method* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967).

[35] James Brenneman, *Canons in Conflict: Negotiating Texts in True and False Prophecy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997)*,* 26.

[36] William Schniedewind, "Prolegomena for the Sociolinguistics of Classical Hebrew," *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 5, n.p., online (2005); Andresen, *Linguistics*; William Labov, *Sociolinguistic Patterns* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1973).

[37] For the importance of analyzing, not lexical or grammatical units, but speech acts, see Mikhail Bakhtin, "The Problem of Speech Genres," in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays,* ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, trans. Vern McGee (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 60–102; Roman Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics," in *Selected Writings III: Poetry of Grammar and Grammar of Poetry*, ed. Stephen Rudy (The Hague: Mouton, 1981), 18–51; Austin, *How to;* and V. N. Vološinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language,* trans. Ladilav Matejka and I. R. Titunik (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press 1973/86), 115–123.

– conative, eliciting a response from the addressee;
– phatic, maintaining contact between the members of the conversation;
– and metalinguistic, analyzing the "code" or communication medium.[38]

While traditional biblical studies often address only the referential function, it is hardly an overstatement to suggest that new schools of biblical studies can be correlated to one of the other five less explored functions (literary structuralism = poetic, rhetorical criticism = emotive, reader-response = conative, and so on).[39]

Jakobson's point is not to inspire a parlor game of categorizing each speech as phatic, informative, and so forth. Rather, he seeks to sensitize linguists to the fact that speech is interactive and serves multiple functions. In other words, Jakobson analyzes what language is *doing*. In this Jakobson's seminal linguistic work explicitly builds on the seminal semiotic work of Charles Peirce.[40] Peirce complexified the meaning-making process, splitting the sign's object (what it refers to) from its interpretant (what meanings it produces).[41] A sign's interpetant, and hence its meaning, is its total effect upon users in the ongoing process of interpretation. Peirce divides this total effect into three general stages:

– the *immediate* interpretant is the mere potential for meaning, a first impression that invites further reflection;
– the *dynamic* interpretant represent a single active response, in which a user relates the sign to her whole world of experience;
– the *final* interpretant, never quite finalized, is the interpretive consensus that forms an ongoing habit of interpreting the sign a certain way.

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[38] Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics."

[39] On these methods see essays in *To Each Its Own Meaning,* ed. McKenzie and Haynes.

[40] The following summary is my own. See Charles Peirce, *The Essential Writings,* ed. Edward Moore (New York: Harper and Row, 1972); Antti Laato, *History and Ideology in the Old Testament Prophetic Literature: A Semiotic Approach to the Reconstruction of the Proclamation of the Historical Prophets* (Stockholm: Almquwist & Wiksell, 1996); Ellen van Wolde, *A Semiotic Analysis of Genesis 2–3: A Semiotic Theory and Method of Analysis Applied to the Garden of Eden* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1989); Umberto Eco, "Peirce and the Semiotic Foundations: Signs as Texts and Texts as Signs," in idem, *The Role of the Reader" Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (Bloomington, Ind: Indiana University Press, 1979), 175–99; and Edna Andrews, *Markedness Theory: The Union of Assymetry and Semiosis in Language* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990). I am also indebted to Edna Andrews' in-class discussion of Peirce's semiotic theory.

[41] Peirce (*Essential Writings*) stipulates that the real *object* of a sign is not an objective physical-world referent, but rather the users' semiotic *understandings* to which the sign relates. "Apple," in other words, does not refer directly to any real-world apple, but rather refers to English-speakers' *apprehension* of apples – the aggregate of English-users' experiences with objects-perceived-as-apples. For the age-old discussion about signs and their objects see Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana* (trans. R. P. H. Green; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). According to Peirce, language is largely conventional (symbolic), but simultaneously sets up real iconic resemblances and – especially – real indexical gestures toward objects in the (linguistic and extra-linguistic) environment. See Andrews, *Markedness Theory;* Jakobson, "Shifters and Verbal Categories," in Jakobson, *On Language,* ed. Linda Waugh and Monique Monville-Burston (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1990).

In the end, language's meaning cannot be reduced to information content, because the interpretant is the entire lived response in "mind and behavior" that discourse exists to produce.[42] In this approach, texts cannot be analyzed in terms of the objects to which they refer or the intentions with which they are crafted, but only in terms of the entire world of discourse to which they contribute.

What are biblical scholars to make of the suggestive insights of Jakobson and Peirce? I suggest that it is most helpful, not to attempt a brand new methodology or a new idiosyncratic jargon, but rather to guard against any code-theoretical simplifications of the interpretive task. The question of historical *usage* is, after all, native to biblical scholarship. Biblical scholars have always attempted "to work within that interpretative structure which the biblical text has received from those who formed and *used* it" – to "study the features of this peculiar set of religious texts in relation to their *usage* within the historical community of ancient Israel."[43] Perhaps the most pressing task is to find ways of integrating historical (diachronic) and literary (synchronic) approaches, so that neither textual evidence nor extratextual contexts are left out of the interpretive process.

1.1.2 Combining Diachronic and Synchronic Approaches

Moving beyond code-theorism raises new questions. If those who study ancient texts are not decoding what the author encoded, are they instead exploring the solipsistic responses of readers today? These alternatives, however, merely replicate the weaknesses of code-theorism. *If* language is only a medium, then either a prior meaning resides in the mind of the speaker/writer before being encoded in texts – or else a prior meaning or ideology resides in the mind of the listener/reader before being imposed upon the text.

On the other hand, what if language is not a medium at all, but an active *process* that creates meaning in concrete communication *events* – speech acts?[44] I find suggestive Ellen van Wolde's attempt, in conversation with Peirce, to "steer

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[42] Van Wolde, *Semiotic Analysis,* 27, 39, 47; cf. Eco, "Peirce and the Semiotic Foundations," 191–4. Eco locates Peircean meaning in users' embodied responses to signs, citing Pierce's definition of the final interpretant as "a tendency to behave in similar ways under similar circumstances in the future" (5.487, 5.491). As Eco reads Pierce, "to understand a sign is to learn what to do," and language is aimed not at our understanding alone but at our whole "way of acting within the world." I suggest that this "way of acting within the world" also includes *identity*.

[43] Childs, *Introduction,* 73; emphasis mine.

[44] So James Trotter, *Reading Hosea in Achaemenid Yehud* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 22. Trotter notes the shared emphasis of various literary critics on the reading *event* as a process that creates meaning – which does not mean that read*ers* get to singlehandedly determine what the text means. Cf. Stanley Fish, *Doing What Comes Naturally: Change, Rhetoric, and the Practice of Theory in Literary and Legal Studies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1989); Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1978); *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, ed. Jane Tompkins (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1980).

between" the "Scylla of object-oriented realism" and the "Charybdis of static subjectivism." In the first alternative, authors encode a predetermined meaning; in the second, readers impose their own predetermined meaning. The *via media* lies with those who locate textual meaning, not in the pre-textual minds of authors or readers, but in the complex effects of using texts.[45]

Admittedly, the situations of real human usage – the *Sitze im Leben*, not only of preliterary forms but also of the biblical texts themselves – may prove difficult to ascertain. Bo-Krister Ljungberg proposes abandoning "situational/pragmatic text-external meaning," on the grounds that form criticism cannot establish an extratextual setting "with any accuracy."[46] Kirk Lowery characterizes "discourse analysis" as the successor to a form criticism that "failed" because "biblical data to answer such questions [of historical context] are sparse" and therefore "entire classes of questions simply cannot be answered, including many of anthropological and psycho-social concern."[47] A purely formalist discourse analysis, however, seems hopelessly embedded in the project of *decoding* a static monologic text, without any reference to concrete situations of usage.[48] In code-theoretical fashion, Robert Bergen expects such discourse analysis to illuminate the author who "implanted hints . . . within usually ignored dimensions of language . . . guiding the reader to author-selected points of significance."[49]

Such expectations may, however, be overly optimistic. After all, as Ernst Wendland notes, real authors and readers must communicate from an insider (emic) perspective, "grounded in actual usage and related to shared experiences."[50] The attempt to bypass socially situated *forms* and *genres* for more objective

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[45] Van Wolde, *Semiotic Analysis*, 24–6; see also 34, 208.

[46] Bo-Krister Ljungberg, "Genre and Form Criticism in Old Testament Exegesis," in *BHDL*, 420. For some of the ways that form criticism has changed to respond to such criticism, see Carol Newsom, "Spying out the Land: A Report from Genology," in *Bakhtin and Genre Theory in Biblical Studies,* ed. Roland Boer (Atlanta: SBL, 2007); *The Changing Face of Form Criticism in the 21st Century,* ed. Marvin Sweeney and Ehud Ben Zvi (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

[47] Kirk Lowery, "The Theoretical Foundations of Hebrew Discourse Grammar," in *Discourse Analysis of Biblical Literature: What It Is and What It Offers,* ed. Walter Bodine (Atlanta: Scholars, 1995), 103–5, 118. Tova Meltzer notes that for "linguists and literary critics," whose chief informants are ancient texts, 'style' is an especially slippery and elusive concept" ("Stylistics for the Study of Ancient Texts: Wanderings in the Borderlands," in *Discourse Analysis,* 131).

[48] For this characterization of discourse analysis/text linguistics, see Susan Groom, *Linguistic Analysis of Biblical Hebrew* (Waynesboro, Ga: Paternoster, 2003), xxvi, 131, and 162–3. Note Groom's approving description of a text-linguistic attempt to "discover as much meaning as possible from its [the text's] linguistic form," coupled with her telling admission that "the meaning obtained " has no direct connection to the meanings of ancient authors or readers.

[49] So Robert Bergen, "Evil Spirits and Eccentric Grammar: A Study of the Relationship Between Text and Meaning in Hebrew Narrative," in *BHDL*, 332.

[50] Ernst Wendland, "Genre Criticism and the Psalms: What Discourse Typology Can Tell Us About the Text (with Special Reference to Psalm 31)," in *BHDL*. For the emic-etic distinction see Kenneth Pike, *Tagmemic and Matrix Linguistics Applied to Selected African Languages* (Ann

(etic) "structures" or "discourse-types" ignores the effects of genre expectations on the responses of those who use various texts.[51] Wendland is well aware that we know less than we might wish about ancient cultures' genre usage; for this reason he commends an "etic-emic" combination, using "objective" structural analysis to help correct some of form criticism's "speculative and idiosyncratic reconstructions."[52] Wendland's approach, not unlike form criticism at its best, begins with close attention to the textual evidence while acknowledging that only human situations – even if partially reconstructed – can give textual "structures" any *meaning.* Accessible etic evidence spurs an attempted explanation of less accessible, but more significant, emic meanings.[53]

Van der Merwe makes much the same proposal. He outlines a "text-pragmatic method" using "a synchronic description of textual units to determine their communicative structures," but then employs this synchronic description as a step *toward* the diachronic goal of reconstructing a "presumed communication situation." Here, too, the accessible text guides the interpreter's account of the often-inaccessible ancient settings.[54] Similarly, Barbara Green critiques her early structuralist work for being "wholly text-centered," eliding "historical and readerly issues" – but she insists that such "formalist" analysis is indeed useful when it serves as a "springboard" to issues of "greater depth."[55] As van Wolde explains, the text-internal correspondences examined by structuralist analysis cannot establish "*the* structure of the text" as though etic description had "normative or absolute value." Structural analysis does, however, provide *potential* avenues for interpreting the "process of interaction between the text and the reader," i.e. the way texts appeal to "reality as the readers know it." Texts have real effects upon

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Arbor, Mich: University of Michigan, 1966); Mark Brett, *Genesis: Procreation and the Politics of Identity* (New Yorkz: Routledge, 2000), 17–19.

[51] Wendland, "Genre Criticism," 377–9. Wendland quotes Basil Hatim and Ian Mason, *Discourse and the Translator* (London: Longman, 1990): genre's "'functions and goals involved in particular social occasions'" that depend upon "'the purposes of the participants.'" Cf. E. D. Hirsch, Jr. (*Validity in Interpretation* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967], 76); John Barton (*Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Study* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984], 11–19); *Bakhtin and Genre Theory,* ed. Boer. Boer ("Introduction," 2) says, "Only as words bounce, ricochet and rebound in utterance, transmission and reception does meaning begin to take place."

[52] Wendland, "Genre Criticism," 383.

[53] Wendland ("Genre Criticism," 376) locates "key aspects of an author's theme or purpose" in "devices, such as metaphor and sarcasm, which strongly stimulate" the audience's "perceptions, feelings, moods, and attitudes." Such devices are prominent and evocative – not "usually ignored." Wendland cites Jakobson's poetic function ("Linguistics and Poetics") to highlight language's "interest value, emotive impact and persuasive appeal." Familiar conventions trigger genre-associations from audiences' experience, guiding the reading protocols of each text; continued reading also shapes genre-associations, in a dynamic feedback loop. Cf. Newsom, "Spying."

[54] Van der Merwe ("Biblical Exegesis," 259), citing also Louis Jonker (see *Exclusivity and Variety: Perspectives on Multidimensional Exegesis* [Kampen, Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1996]).

[55] Barbara Green, *Mikhail Bakhtin and Biblical Scholarship* (Atlanta: SBL, 2000), 136.

readers precisely through their structured effects, viewed not as free-standing literary facts but as rhetorical clues to a situated usage.[56]

Biblical scholars owe a debt of gratitude to literary-critical scholars for refocusing attention on each biblical work as a meaningful whole, not just the detritus of a series of historical accidents. Yet final-form readings are in danger of abstracting away from real, flesh-and-blood writers and readers, analyzing instead text-immanent *ideal* or *implied* authors and readers "entirely fabricated by the dictates of the text."[57] Both James Watts and James Trotter critique literary-oriented biblical scholar Edgar Conrad for focusing narrowly on a text-internal "implied reader," without describing "how this implied reader compares to any real readers."[58] Both Trotter and Watts suggest that "reader-response" must ultimately account for the real responses of historically located readers; rhetorical criticism must take into account the social-historical particularities of those who are using the rhetoric.[59] Literary-critical approaches work best when they merge with historical-critical approaches, when the "final form" is read in "a particular historical horizon."[60] Even Grüneberg calls a "final-form" reading "synchronic"

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[56] Van Wolde, *Semiotic Analysis,* 58; 47; 109; 210. She is arguing here against Algirdas Greimas, *Sémantique Structurale, Recherche de Méthode* (Paris: Larousse, 1966). Van Wolde borrows Greimas's structural style of analysis but makes this structuralism subservient – at least in theory – to a Peircean focus on the reading process. In practice, van Wolde then explicitly decides to omit contextual, reader-world pragmatic effects and consider only "the intratextual phase of the interaction process" (71, 212). The same limitation applies to her more recent book, *Reframing Biblical Studies: When Language and Text Meet Culture, Cognition, and Context* (Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 2009). Here again, theoretical sections emphasize the need to combine text with context (2, 14–19, 54); here again, the exegetical analysis is overwhelmingly inner-textual. So, for example, a narrow treatment of Gen 1:1–2:3 (184–200) focuses on the root ברא and gives no attention to historical setting or to parallel language in other texts (e.g., Deutero-Isaiah); a painstaking analysis of Gen 34 (269–353) fails to mention any credible context, ignoring even the related material in Gen 49:5–7. Thus van Wolde leaves unanswered the question of how her *theoretical* focus on readers' contexts might be worked out *exegetically*.

[57] The language is from Brett, *Genesis,* 2, critiquing what he calls the "formalist fantasy of interpretation." Edward Said (*The World, the Text, and the Critic* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983], 39–40) similarly challenges any account "of the text as existing within a hermetic, Alexandrian textual universe, which has no connection with actuality." Brett and Said point to the formalism of various structuralist, literary, and linguistic studies.

[58] Trotter (*Reading Hosea,* 11–13), discussing Edgar Conrad, *Reading Isaiah* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1991); see Watts (*Reading Law*, 27–8), discussing Conrad's "Heard but not Seen: The Representation of 'Books' in the Old Testament," *JSOT* 54 (1992), 45–59.

[59] Trotter, *Reading Hosea,* 29–31; Watts, *Reading Law,* 131. Watts here relies directly on Bakhtin's *Dialogic Imagination* as a spur to contextualizing speech in a specific context.

[60] Trotter, *Reading Hosea,* 1–10. Similarly, Patricia Willey (*Remember the Former Things: The Recollection of Previous Texts in Second Isaiah* [SBL 161; Atlanta: Scholars, 1997]) speaks of using "literary theory to ask unapologetically historical questions" (7) because "recovering a text's context is indeed crucial for understanding its message" (1). Note Willey's reliance (2, 66–67, 75) on Bakhtin's *Dialogic Imagination*. F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp argues that synchronic studies must exist within "a larger informing diachrony" ("Brief Comments on John Collins's *The Bible After*

but not "achronic" – although his attempt to discuss the "text's rootedness in its original context" explicitly sets aside all consideration of ancient authors or readers.[61] Do not ancient authors and readers constitute ancient contexts?

In the end, historical and literary readings need one another. Trying to understand how an ancient text affected ancient readers requires that interpreters enter the text's rhetorical world, examining biblical material and hence "Israel's reading practices" on their own terms, temporarily setting aside any modern notion of objective historicity.[62] On the other hand, only a credible historical setting can give meaning to the literary evidence, transforming mere words and phrases into a coherent rhetorical whole. As Stephen Moore and Yvonne Sherwood argue, most literary/rhetorical readings actually depend upon such historical settings – even when, or especially when, the historical reconstruction is unacknowledged and unargued. The implied reader/author may be little more than a "ceremoniously renamed" historical reader/author; biblical reader-response criticism becomes "an exercise in historical criticism performed in a wig and dark sunglasses."[63] Yet it is no less true that the historical reader/author may in turn be an implied reader/author in her own disguise.[64] Literary accounts of implied readers tacitly rely on a certain reading of the text's historical situation, and reconstructions of

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Babel," in "The State of the Field of Hebrew Bible Study: In Conversation with John J. Collins, *The Bible After Babel: Historical Criticism in a Postmodern Age* (Eerdmans, 2005)," ed. David Carr, *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 6, n.p., online [2006]). He cites Roman Jakobson and Jurij Tynjanov ("Problems in the Study of Literature and Language," in *Verbal Art, Verbal Sign, Verbal Time,* eds. Krystyna Pomorska and Stephen Rudy [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1985], 26) and their critique of de Saussure's synchrony.

[61] Grüneberg, *Abraham,* 3–6.

[62] James Watts, *Reading Law: The Rhetorical Shaping of the Pentateuch* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 132–3. Citing Bakhtin (*Dialogic Imagination*) he argues that in studying ancient usage ("orientation to a "unified persuasive intent"), some modern literary reading practices are less than useful – e.g., the hermeneutics of deconstruction, suspicion, and fragmentation. Laato (*History and Ideology,* 321–96) makes the same point, with more theoretical discussion. Using Peircean semiotics, he argues that the process of making and testing hypotheses about an ancient text's meaning *begins* with an attempt to understand the text's reading effects as they would be accepted by an "I-reader" attuned to "ideological categories native to the text." Only then can scholars engage in a second-order investigation as "M-readers," pursuing *modern* questions about the text's production (e.g., its prehistory) that lie outside the sphere of its effects.

[63] Stephen Moore and Yvonne Sherwood, "Biblical Studies 'after' Theory: Onwards Toward the Past; Part Three: Theory in the First and Second Waves," *BI* 18.3 (2010), 203–4.

[64] Gerald Moers argues that historical reconstructions are often merely reflexes of ancient texts' implied audiences (*Fingierte Welten in der ägyptischen Literatur des 2 Jahrtausends v. Chr Grenzüberschreitung, Reisemotiv und Fiktionalität* [Leiden: Brill, 2001], 3; idem, "Fiktionalität und Intertextualität als Parameter ägyptologisher Literaturwissenshcaft: Perspektiven und Grenzen der Anwendung zeitgenössischer Literaturtheorie," in *Literatur und Politik im pharaonischen und ptolemäischen Ägypten*, ed. Jan Assmann and Elke Blumenthal [Cairo: Institut Françaid s'Archéologie Orientale, 1999]). For the move from text to audience see *A Sense of Audience in Written Communication,* ed. Gesa Kirsch and Duane Roen (Newbury Park, Cal: Sage, 1990).

the historical situation tacitly rely on a certain reading of the text's literarily constructed implied readers.[65]

In my judgment, the best scholars can do is to bring both processes of imagination into the light, not pretending either that the text speaks for itself or that we know much about the ancient contexts that help give it meaning. The literary data, along with other pertinent historical information, can suggest a reconstructed setting for ancient texts.[66] In the end, perhaps both the implied audience and the historical audience are over-simplifications, best combined into a suitably tentative account of *plausible audiences* reconstructed by combining historical and literary evidence. A careful reading of real potentialities within the text, but also within the historical record, guides hypotheses about who might have used these texts, and why, and how. Scholars, in other words, can reconstruct the "implied" and the "historical" audience in transparent conversation, lest what is *not* discussed should predetermine what *is* discussed.

Throughout this work, when I refer to the audience or audiences of Genesis I am always thinking of plausible audiences. The text itself can presume, invite, or specify certain reading contexts; historical accounts, informed by archaeological evidence, can flesh out these literary suggestions. Even in the face of inadequate information, some usages of ancient texts are surely more likely than others. I envision a three-level process for discerning plausible audiences, roughly following Peirce's three-part interpretant. First, every text has the *possibility of meaning* (immediate interpretant), diverse possible reactions invited by the text's rhetorical features: *how it might be read*. Second, every text has *actual instances of meaning* (dynamic interpretant), discrete responses from each user elicited in the concrete particularity of each reading: *how it is read*. Third and finally, most texts produce a stabilized *habit of meaning* (final interpretant), a canalized consensus of shared reading practices: *how it is supposed to be read*.[67] An adequate reading

[65] So, for example, Gordon Wenham distinguishes a rhetorical-literary ethic for "implied readers" from actual users' historical ideology (*Story as Torah: Reading the Old Testament Ethically* [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2002]). Yet Wenham's implied Pentateuchal readers are not simply the ostensive literary addressees, wandering in the wilderness or camped on the plains of Moab; rather, they live under David's reign, Wenham's historical dating of the Pentateuch. From the other side, Albertz (*History* 2) painstakingly attributes Pentateuchal strands to social-historical locations; yet the "coalition of Deuteronomists and wealthy landowners" is not directly derived from any archaeological record, but from Albertz's understanding of what the textual rhetoric intends. I am not here criticizing either Wenham or Albertz. I do, however, note that *both* scholars inextricably intertwine a literary-rhetorical investigation (implied readers) and a social-historical investigation (reading situation) – whether or not this is how they describe their own work.

[66] Trotter speaks of using "textual and artifactual remains" to reconstruct ancient settings, even if the reconstructions prove "partial, provisional, and speculative" (*Reading Hosea,* 32–33; cf. 16–18). Schniedewind ("Prolegomena") also emphasizes the significance of archaeology for fleshing out the sociological-historical contexts for linguistic analysis of ancient Hebrew texts.

[67] For language as canalization, see below. Note that my phrase "supposed to" presumes some community that is doing the supposing, not a rigid linguistic, historical, aesthetic, or ethical rule.

of plausible audiences requires some account of all three levels: the text's potentiality, historical diversity, and converging cumulative usage.

Such a reading, rooted in linguistic semiotics, may help combine the best of three distinct types of biblical criticism. Traditional historical criticism best explores the dynamic interpretant, that is, the text's diverse meanings in particular settings. Literary-rhetorical criticism draws attention back to the immediate interpretant, that is, the text's potentiality for meaning. And canonical criticism considers the consensus of final-interpretant meanings, that is, the emerging traditional interpretations of the canonical community. As Burke Long notes, while canonical approaches and literary approaches are both interested in the final form's literary-rhetorical structures of meaning, literary critics by training seek *multiple,* innovative, and idiosyncratic readings – while canon-critics emphasize how tradents *guide* and *limit* possible readings.[68] Peircean semiotics would suggest that both emphases – alongside historical criticism – are necessary components of interpretation.[69]

1.1.3 Dynamic Usage and the History of Effects

Perhaps the greatest challenge posed by the move from code-theorism to speech-act theory, and the greatest bone of contention between historical/diachronic and literary/synchronic methods, is the multivocality of most biblical literature.[70] Biblical texts, like many ancient texts, usually consist of traditional material that has been passed down and reshaped. Meanwhile, biblical texts, like many literary texts, are in their extant form open-ended and intended for re-usage in multiple settings.[71] Clearly, the notion of a static speech-act in a single historical context, with a closed literary voice, fails to do justice to the material.

Fortunately, various theorists have extended the Peirce-Jakobson model into a dynamic speech act with an ongoing history of effects. Peirce himself makes it

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[68] Burke Long ("Readers, Reading, and Biblical Theologians," in *Canon and Authority: Essays in Old Testament Religion and Theology,* ed. George Coats and Burke Long [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977], 166–86). Note that there are important exceptions on either side. James Sanders is famous for seeking canonical multiplicity of meaning (e.g., *Canon and Community: A Guide to Canonical Criticism* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984]; "Adaptable for Life: The Nature and Function of Canon," in *Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God: Essays on Bible and Archaeology in Memory of G Ernest Wright,* ed. Frank Cross, Werner Lemke, and Patrick Miller [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976]). And some literary critics have tried to exclude certain misreadings precisely by considering consensual audience responses (e.g., Umberto Eco, *Interpretation and Overinterpretation* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992]).

[69] See Bruce Chilton's suggestion of a new successor discipline to canonical criticism, more attuned to historical development within the canonical tradition; he calls this new discipline "generative exegesis" ("Biblical Authority, Canonical Criticism, and Generative Exegesis," in *The Quest for Context and Meaning: Studies in Biblical Intertextuality in Honor of James A. Sanders,* ed. Craig Evans and Shemaryahu Talmon [Leiden: Brill, 1997]).

[70] See the comments of Ska, *Introduction,* 161–4.

[71] Cf. Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985).