LIONS AND OVENS AND VISIONS

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A Satirical Reading of Daniel 1–6

David M. Valeta

To my spouse, Gail Erisman Valeta, and my children Matthew and Jessica, all my love!

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PREFACE

This project began many years back as I was reading commentaries on the book of Daniel in order to deepen my understanding of apocalyptic literature. Most of what I read admirably conveyed the multiple layers of conundrums in this short book, but none suggested any convincing overall solution to the problems of genre, languages, and social history of the book. One day, while riding to the ski slopes (one of the perks of living in Colorado!) I brought along a new commentary on Daniel in the New Interpreter's Bible Commentary by Daniel Smith-Christopher. While the skiing was great as usual, I vividly remember how excited and intrigued I felt as I read his work. His trenchant sociological analysis of the book gave me new eyes to see how Daniel could be read as a coherent whole, particularly as a text of resistance to the hegemony of imperial powers of the Ancient World. The bifurcation of Daniel into stories and visions did not necessarily lead to a division of the book into two distantly related sections. Some time later, I was introduced to the work of Mikhail Bakhtin and his significance for Biblical Studies through the work of Kenneth Craig and his analysis of the book of Esther. Many of Craig's excellent interpretations of Esther pointed towards the possibility that Bakhtin could provide similar insights into the book of Daniel. This study is the fruit of that research. This book focuses on the stories of Daniel 1–6, with some brief suggestions how this analysis can fruitfully be applied to the visions of Daniel 7–12, which I plan to research more extensively in the near future.

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David M. Valeta
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ABBREVIATIONS

AB	*Anchor Bible*
ABD	David Noel Freedman (ed.), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992).
ABR	*Australian Biblical Review*
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
AcT	Acta theologica
AJSL	American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures
AJT	*Asia Journal of Theology*
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ATR	Australasian Theological Review
AUSS	*Andrews University Seminary Studies*
Bib	*Biblica*
BibInt	*Biblical Interpretation*
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium
BR	*Bible Review*
BSac	*Bibliotheca Sacra*
BT	*The Bible Translator*
BZRGG	Beihefte zur ZRGG
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CRBS	*Currents in Research: Biblical Studies*
Enc	*Encounter*
EvJ	*Evangelical Journal*
EvQ	*Evangelical Quarterly*
FCB	Feminist Companion to the Bible
FOTL	The Forms of the Old Testament Literature
GBS	Guides to Biblical Scholarship
HAR	*Hebrew Annual Review*
HDR	Harvard Dissertations in Religion
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
HUCM	Monographs of the Hebrew Union College
HvTSt	Hervormde teologiese studies
IDS	In die Skriflig
IBC	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
Int	*Interpretation*
JANESCU	*Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JBQ	*Jewish Biblical Quarterly*
JCS	*Journal of Cuneiform Studies*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JNSL	*Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*

JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JR	*Journal of Religion*
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
JSP	*Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha: Supplement Series
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
NCB	New Century Bible
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
OTE	*Old Testament Essays*
OTG	Old Testament Guides
OTL	Old Testament Library
PEQ	*Palestine Exploration Quarterly*
PRSt	*Perspectives in Religious Studies*
RefR	*Reformed Review*
REJ	*Revue des études juives*
RevQ	*Revue de Qumran*
RHR	*Revue de l'histoire des religions*
SB	Sources bibliques
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLSP	SBL Seminar Papers
SBLSymS	SBL Symposium Series
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SEÅ	*Svensk exegetisk årsbok*
Semeia	*Semeia*
SemeiaSt	Semeia Studies
SJOT	*Scandinavian Journal of Theology*
SO	Symbolae osloenses
SSN	Studia Semitica Neerlandica
SVTQ	*St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*
SwJT	*Southwestern Journal of Theology*
TBC	Torch Bible Commentaries
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
TRu	*Theologische Rundschau*
TynBul	*Tyndale Bulletin*
UF	*Ugarit-Forschungen*
VS	*Vox scripturae*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	*Vetus Testamentum*, Supplements
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

Chapter 1

THE CONUNDRUMS AND CONTRADICTIONS OF DANIEL 1–6

> There is a universal truth that pundit and politician need to acknowledge;
> slaves and peasants do not always obey their masters.
>
> Tariq Ali[1]

1. *Introduction*

This study offers a new genre designation for the tales of Daniel 1–6, prenovelistic Menippean satires. Based on the work of Mikhail Bakhtin,[2] this work follows the growing trend among biblical scholars to use the thought of this literary critic as a theoretical framework for reading biblical texts.[3] The

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1. *The Clash of Fundamentalisms: Crusades, Jihads and Modernity* (London: Verso, 2002), p. 4.

2. A few of his many works may be found in Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World* (trans. Hélène Iswolsky; Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1968; repr. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984); Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin* (ed. Michael T. Holquist; trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael T. Holquist; University of Texas Press Slavic Series, 1; Austin: University of Texas, 1981); Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* (ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist; trans. Vern W. McGee; University of Texas Slavic Series, 8; Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986); Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson; Theory and History of Literature, 8; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984); Bakhtin, *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays* by M.M. Bakhtin (ed. Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov; trans. Vadim Liapunov; University of Texas Press Slavic Series, 9; Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990); Pam Morris (ed.), *The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev, and Voloshinov* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); and Mikhail M. Bakhtin and Pavel N. Medvedev, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship: A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics* (trans. Albert J. Wehrle; Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

3. Major studies include, for example, Kenneth M. Craig, Jr, *Reading Esther: A Case for the Literary Carnivalesque* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1995); Barbara Green, *Mikhail Bakhtin and Biblical Scholarship: An Introduction* (SemeiaSt, 38; Atlanta: SBL, 2000); Green, *How the Mighty are Fallen: A Dialogical Study of King Saul in 1 Samuel* (JSOTSup, 365; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003); Carol A. Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Walter L. Reed, *Dialogues of the Word: The*

Daniel 1–6 tales resist the oppressive political forces of their day by using humor, particularly satire.[4] The stories of Daniel 1–6 are artfully crafted

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Bible as Literature according to Bakhtin (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); and Michael E. Vines, *The Problem of Markan Genre: The Gospel of Mark and the Jewish Novel* (Academica biblica, 3; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2002). See also James L. Bailey, 'Genre Analysis', in Joel B. Green (ed.), *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), pp. 200-203.

4.   Humor is a human trait that is both an anthropological constant and something that is historically relative (Peter Berger, *Redeeming Laughter: The Comic Dimension of Human Experience* [New York: W. de Gruyter, 1997], p. 10; and Leonard Feinberg, [ed.], *Asian Laughter: An Anthology of Oriental Satire and Humor* [New York: Weatherhill, 1971], pp. 3-15). In general, scholars have identified three major theories concerning the nature of humor. They are: (1) the relief of tension, or relief of inhibition, theory; (2) the incongruity, or frustration of expectation, theory; and (3) the superiority, or degradation, theory. The relief of tension theory focuses on the physiological and emotional responses to humor and is often associated with the work of Sigmund Freud (*Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious* [New York: W.W. Norton, 1961]). This theory focuses on the venting of tension and the relief of emotional energy. Humans often laugh at forbidden things and taboo subjects, and this laughter is an expression of relief by releasing energy that is usually kept locked up. This theory primarily describes what happens physiologically rather than why or how laughter and humor occurs. The focus is on the reactions of the amused person rather than what is causing the amusement. Incongruity theories focus on the cognitive aspects of humor. The incongruous experience or thought violates expected conceptual patterns. When persons perceive that something is different, unexpected, illogical, or inappropriate from what one normally expects the result may be a response of laughter (see, e.g., Rod A. Martin, 'Approaches to the Sense of Humor: A Historical Review', in Willibald Ruch [ed.] *The Sense of Humor: Explorations of a Personality Characteristic* [New York: W. de Gruyter, 1998], pp. 15-60 [25-28]). This theory focuses on how humor is created. Some of the ways literary documents exhibit incongruity includes the use of techniques such as puns, wordplay, repetition, irony and other related constructions. The identification of the use of such techniques is an important indication of the possible use of humor. John Morreall states that this theory best describes the nature of humor because incongruity is a necessary and sufficient condition for humorous amusement ('Enjoying Incongruity', *Humor* 2 [1989], pp. 1-18). A focus on the ways humor is created, however, gives little insight into the reasons why humor is used in a given document. Certainly humor can be an expression of literary creativity and playfulness, but many times this playfulness serves a purpose beyond comedic inventiveness. The superiority theory helps explain why an author might decide to use humor. This theory holds that humor originates from some position of superiority over others (Martin, 'Sense of Humor', pp. 15-60 [28-33]). The chief nature of humor in this view is aggression, which is directed towards another as a vehicle of scorn and judgment. The humor is the enjoyment one feels by experiencing superiority over other persons. Superiority theories are among the oldest theories of humor, dating back to the Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle (John Morreall, 'The Rejection of Humor in Western Thought', *Philosophy East and West* 39 [1989], pp. 243-65). Each of these theories accounts for certain aspects of what humor is and why it happens. While

works of satire that are politically and literarily sophisticated and astute.[5] Furthermore, this new genre analysis invites the use of innovative approaches to some perennial problems that have plagued Daniel studies, including the social history and bilingualism of the Daniel narratives, and the ways that the series of novelistic satires of Daniel 1–6 are related to the apocalyptic visions of Daniel 7–12.

2. *Daniel as Satire, Or, What Has the* Wizard of Oz *Got to Do with Daniel?*

The question for this study is whether ancient writers may have imbued their stories with political satire, particularly the author/s of the Daniel 1–6 stories, so that they might be read on more than one level. It has long been recognized that folklore may have a multiplicity of meanings and interpretations and undergo transformation over time.[6] Folklore and hero stories are not

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earlier studies attempted to discern one primary explanation of humor, recent work is proposing a multi-disciplinary approach that acknowledges the contributions of a number of theoretical conceptions. For example, Martin proposes a three dimensional model that recognizes the cognitive, emotional and motivational causes of humor. Sometimes the humor is pointed and judgmental, other times it is merely comedic amusement ('Sense of Humor', pp. 15-60 [57-60]).

5. Satire, like humor itself, has always been notoriously difficult to define. See, e.g., the several definitions of the term in Wendell V. Harris, 'Satire', in *Dictionary of Concepts in Literary Criticism and Theory* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1992), pp. 357-61. Satire has a tendency to embed itself in a variety of genres, such as comedy and tragedy. Unlike comedy and tragedy, however, satire refuses to remain in one neat classification box and, therefore, can be difficult to discover. Carl Joachim Classen notes that this confusion was present even in the early history of satire ('Satire the Elusive Genre', *SO* 63 [1988], pp. 95-121). Classically, satire has been defined in terms of either its form or its purpose or moral function. Two basic forms have been identified: the formal verse tradition, as exemplified by the Roman writers Horace, Juvenal and Persius, and the prose tradition, as practiced by the Greek cynic Menippus and the Latin writers Varro and Lucian. See Dustin Griffin, *Satire: A Critical Reintroduction* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1994), pp. 12-24. Classical Rome and Elizabethan England are often considered the golden ages of formal verse satire and, they continue to exert great influence upon many theorists of satire. Although many have held that formal verse satire constructions are necessary for the identification of a satiric piece of literature, it has always been true that satire has never been confined to a single form. Definitions of satire that focus on the purpose and function of the genre allow for a much broader inclusion of various works to be classified as satire. In depth studies of the early history of satire include C.A. van Rooy, *Studies in Classical Satire and Related Literary Theory* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965); and Joel C. Relihan, *Ancient Menippean Satire* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

6. Eli Yassif, *The Hebrew Folktale: History, Genre, Meaning* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), p. 3.

always as simple as the mere celebration of the protagonist's exploits, piety, and cunning; they may have deeper meanings. A number of commentators acknowledge the presence of satire, including political satire, in the Hebrew Bible; specifically, some interpreters read the tales of Daniel, like the stories of the *Wizard of Oz*, on some level as political satire. While the narratives of Daniel 1–6 have characteristics that invite scholars to classify them as court tales, didactic wisdom tales, folklore, and the like, they also contain elements in the nature of political satires with an aim to resist the forces of empire.

The popular stories of the *Wizard of Oz*, written by L. Frank Baum in the early 1900s, provide a fruitful illustration. The *Wizard of Oz* stories are filled with vivid descriptions of adventures where heroes and villains contend with one another in fantastic situations. Dorothy and her friends face the terrors of the Wicked Witch of the West and the dangers of the Land of Oz, and they are fêted as resourceful and courageous characters. Readers find these stories compelling and identify with their triumphs. According to Russell B. Nye, Baum intended to write American fairy tales.[7] Reading the *Wizard of Oz* stories this way, as simple stories of popular heroes and their adventures, is quite satisfying. Nonetheless, other possible interpretations of these stories exist. The Wicked Witch of the West and her minions, along with the various other villains of these narratives, are also key characters. A focus on these evil personages and the reasons they must be resisted and defeated gives the reader a different perspective on the purposes of these narratives. The Oz stories are recognized not only as entertaining children's literature but also as narratives with a deeper meaning and significance. What is most important, several scholars have suggested that these stories are a satirical allegory for Baum's political and economic views. Although these critics disagree about specific points, they note that Baum championed Populism, the egalitarian political philosophy or movement that promotes the interests of the common people.[8] Nye was the first to suggest this possibility.[9] Lawrence Swain

7. 'An Appreciation', in Martin Gardner and Russell B. Nye (eds.), *The Wizard of Oz and Who He Was* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1994 [1957]), pp. 1-17 (1-4).

8. The most important of the many works on the deeper levels of meaning in the Wizard of Oz stories has been that of Henry M. Littlefield, 'The Wizard of Oz: A Parable on Populism', *American Quarterly* 16 (1964), pp. 47-58; and Littlefield, 'Letter to the Editor', *New York Times*, 7 February 1992, A28. See also, e.g., Michael A. Genovese, 'The Politics of the Wizard of Oz', *Los Angeles Times*, 19 March 1988; Michael P. Hearn, 'Introduction to The Annotated Wizard of Oz', in Michael Patrick Hearn (ed.), *The Annotated Wizard of Oz* (Centennial edn, New York: W.W. Norton, 2000), pp. i-xx (xx); Richard Jensen, *The Winning of the Midwest: Social and Political Conflict 1885–1896* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), pp. 282-83; William R. Leach, *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), pp. 248-60; David B. Parker, 'The Wonderful Wizard of Oz: The

disputes the view that Baum intended to write a piece of political satire, but even he acknowledges, 'Baum seems to have resolved on the level of fantasy, certain political issues that troubled him'. Swain also asserts: 'Although he [Baum] was clearly disturbed by the farmers' troubles he intended to respond to such issues with flights of fancy'.[10] Whatever Baum's exact political motivations were, these scholars agree that these stories offer a level of meaning beyond the one for children. Thus the *Wizard of Oz* stories can be read profitably on a number of levels, in ways as diverse as children's literature or as tales of social critique.[11]

The stories of Daniel 1–6, like those of the *Wizard of Oz*, are filled with vivid descriptions of adventures where heroes and villains contend with one another in fantastic situations. Daniel and his friends confront rage-filled kings, fiery furnaces, and hungry lions. The portrayals of the various kings and their advisors are caricatures of the real thing, and their actions are more comical than royal. Even though these men hold positions of power and authority, their behavior is often weak, vacillating, and erratic. The author used a variety of literary techniques in the stories of Daniel 1–6 to develop these satirical portraits. Among such devices are absurdities, distortions, ironies, fantastic situations, unbelievable elements, grotesqueries, wordplays, and related rhetorical features. These aspects of the text indicate a playfulness of language that is a hallmark of satire. Moreover, Daniel and his friends are also celebrated as resourceful and courageous characters. As a consequence, readers of Daniel 1–6 find these stories compelling and identify with their triumphs. Reading them as containing popular heroes and adventures is at least as satisfying as reading the stories of the *Wizard of Oz*. Nevertheless, these stories relay a far more complex message, one that responds to the political realities of imperialism and colonialism.

In addition to linguistic and rhetorical cleverness, satire also has a serious side that can be used to indicate judgments against individuals and institutions and to highlight reversals of status and importance. Through such

Rise and Fall of The Wonderful Wizard of Oz as a "Parable on Populism" ', *Journal of the Georgia Association of Historians* 15 (1994), pp. 49-63; Hugh Rockoff, 'The "Wizard of Oz" as Monetary Allegory', *Journal of Political Economy* 98 (August 1990), pp. 739-60; Gretchen Ritter, *Goldbugs and Greenbacks: The Anti-Monopoly Tradition and the Politics of Finance in America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 7; and Edward Wagenknecht, 'Utopia Americana', in Michael P. Hearn (ed.), *The Wizard of Oz* (New York: Schocken Books, 1983) pp. 157-59.

9. Nye, 'An Appreciation', pp. 5-17 (6).

10. Lawrence Swain, 'Plain Truths in a Fantasy Land', *In These Times* 11 (18-24 February, 1987), pp. 19-20.

11. These stories have inspired at least 20 different critical readings, including political, psychoanalytical, sociological, economic, mythological and satirical analyses, to name just a few. See, e.g., the numerous critical essays in Hearn, *The Wizard of Oz*.

playful judgment, the mighty are brought down and the high made low. Satire often indicates judgment in indirect ways rather than through direct statements of judgment and criticism. Satirized characters may act in an absurd, even comical manner. Readers may laugh, but also realize that the lampoon is an arrow that hits the mark. The implicit satirical judgment of the kings and their advisors in Daniel 1–6 thus joins the more explicit manifestations of judgment in Daniel 7–12 to create a piece of literature that is subversive through and through.

3. *Interpretive Problems in Daniel*

The stories and apocalyptic visions of the book of Daniel have enjoyed great popularity even while engendering abundant controversy during the last two millennia.[12] This controversy results from the book's many enigmas. Some of the most prominent areas of contention involve the issues of historicity and the nature of prophecy, resulting in this book becoming a virtual battleground in both ancient[13] and modern times.[14] Daniel is similar to the finest of

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12. The book has been interpreted literally, allegorically, as historically accurate prophecy (particularly Dan. 7–12), and as spiritually edifying literature (particularly Dan. 1–6). For succinct overviews of the common interpretations, see Donald E. Gowan, *Daniel* (Abingdon Old Testament Commentary; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), pp. 13-18; and W. Sibley Towner, 'Daniel, Book of', in John H. Hayes (ed.), *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), I, pp. 242-49. For a history of Daniel interpretation, see Klaus Koch, *Europa, Rom, und der Kaiser vor dem Hintergrund von zwei Jahrtausenden Rezeption des Buches Daniel* (Hamburg: Joachim Jungius-Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften, 1997).

13. The often vituperous nature of these debates is captured in the following quote: 'The book of Daniel is especially fitted to be a battleground between faith and unbelief. It admits of no halfway measures. It is either divine or an imposture... The writer, were he not Daniel, must have lied on a most frightful scale' (Edward B. Pusey, *Daniel the Prophet* [Oxford: Parker, 1865], p. 1). The record indicates that these disputes began in ancient times. In the writings of Jerome, we learn of Porphyry, a Neo-platonic philosopher who suggested that Daniel was written during the second century BCE rather than in the sixth century setting of the stories. Porphyry considered Daniel's predictions to be a case of what in modern scholarship is labeled *vaticinium ex eventu*, or prophecy after the fact. This position was anathema to Jerome, as one can surmise from the following quote: 'And so whenever occasion arises in the course of explaining this volume, I shall attempt briefly to answer his malicious charge, and to controvert by simple explanation the philosophical skill, or rather the worldly malice, by which he strives to subvert the truth and by specious legerdemain to remove that which is so apparent to our eyes' (trans. Gleason L. Archer, *Jerome's Commentary on Daniel* [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1958], p. 16). For further details on Jerome's writings on Daniel and Porphyry, see Jay Braverman, *Jerome's Commentary on Daniel: A Study of Comparative Jewish and Christian Interpretations of the Hebrew Bible* (CBQMS, 7; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1978); and P.M. Casey, 'Porphyry and the Book of Daniel', *JTS* 27 (1976), pp. 15-33.

Chinese puzzles because various attempts to solve interpretive dilemmas encounter dead ends time and again.

Interpreters of Daniel meet a pastiche of genres, languages, and ideological viewpoints within the book that frustrate attempts to discern a coherent hermeneutical strategy.[15] The book of Daniel resists facile classification, for it

14. A similar disputatious attitude is discernible in the public 'duel by journal' between H.H. Rowley and H. Louis Ginsberg from 1948 to 1955. In 1948, Ginsberg published a collection of studies in which he argued for a developmental theory of the writing of the book of Daniel, positing a number of authors over several centuries (*Studies in Daniel* [Texts and Studies of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 14; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1948]). Rowley reviewed Ginsberg's book the next year, appreciating Ginsberg's hard work but nevertheless rejecting many of his conclusions based upon his own research concerning the unity of Daniel ('Review of H. Louis Ginsberg, Studies in Daniel', *JBL* 68 [1949], pp. 173-77). Ginsberg replied to Rowley's review that same year, remarking that a review by Professor Rowley is a review by a scholar and a gentleman. He also described, however, Rowley's position as an ultra-simple view of the composition of Daniel ('In Re my Studies of Daniel', *JBL* 68 [1949], pp. 402-407). Rowley quickly responded with a rejoinder in which he took comfort and amusement in having his position characterized as ultra-simple ('A Rejoinder', *JBL* 69 [1950], pp. 201-203). There seems to be more going on here than a mere scholarly disagreement, which is confirmed in the next series of articles. In 1950, Rowley delivered the Presidential Address to the Society for Old Testament Study, which subsequently appeared in print ('The Unity of the Book of Daniel', in *HUCA* 23, Part One [1950–51], pp. 233-73). In this study, Rowley produces much evidence against those critical scholars who were moving away from the once common belief in the unity of Daniel. Ginsberg responded with his own article, which he began with the following statement: 'Professor H.H. Rowley, who has repeatedly affirmed that the Book of Daniel was produced by a single person during the persecution of the Jewish religion by Antiochus IV, has recently taken up the cudgels again in behalf of his favorite theory. While his jihad is waged against all divisive theories, the pertinent sections of my pertinent monograph are its main targets, even as they are obviously the immediate occasion for it. It is calculated to convince not a few readers who have not thoroughly mastered my opuscle; but *audiatur et altera pars*' ('The Composition of the Book of Daniel', *VT* 4 [1954], pp. 246-75 [246]). In the last recorded exchange on this issue, Rowley begins and ends his remarks as follows: 'In *Vetus Testamentum* 4, 1954, pp. 246-75, Professor H.L. Ginsberg makes a sustained and intemperate attack on me which compels me to crave space for a brief reply. Ginsberg and I have been friends for so long that I shall try to be more restrained in reply than he has been in attack, since I desire our friendship to continue… I have said enough to show that his attack is no more convincing in substance than it is satisfactory in form' ('The Composition of the Book of Daniel: Some Comments on Professor Ginsberg's Article', *VT* 5 [1955], pp. 272-76 [272]). It is very clear that there are religious and personal investments that underlie some of the disputes concerning the book of Daniel. See also Lester L. Grabbe, 'Fundamentalism and Scholarship: The Case of Daniel', in Barry P. Thompson (ed.), *Scripture: Meaning and Method* (Hull: Hull University Press, 1987), pp. 133-52.

15. Other interpretive problems exist in the book of Daniel. For example, the narra-

contains two literary forms (narrative and vision), two languages (Hebrew and Aramaic), and two viewpoints concerning how one should live under foreign domination (collaboration with existing rulers or hostility towards such rule). The first two dichotomies of literary form and language are easily observable but difficult to explain. For example, Daniel is often identified as the best example of apocalyptic literature found in the Hebrew Bible because of the vivid visions of the second half of the book.[16] The argument is that apocalyptic literature usually has a narrative frame and Daniel 1–6 provides the introductory material for the otherworldly visions.[17] Although there is little doubt that Daniel 7–12 exhibits the characteristics of apocalyptic in both form and content, the narratives of Daniel 1–6 have always resided uncomfortably within that designation.[18] As a result, Daniel scholars debate

tive also shifts from the third person to the first between Dan. 1–6 and 7–12. Moreover, the reigns of many kings are involved in the stories. Nebuchadnezzar is the king of concern in chs 1–4; Belshazzar in chs 5, 7–8; Darius the Mede in ch. 6; Darius son of Ahasuerus (Xerxes) in ch. 9; and Cyrus of Persia in ch. 10. Finally, Dan. 7–12 deals explicitly with the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes; Dan. 1–6 does not. See further, John J. Collins, 'Daniel, Book of', *ABD*, II, pp. 29-37 (29-30). These difficulties, however, will not be directly addressed within this study.

16. The visions of Dan. 7–12 have often had an influence on the entire work so that it is common to refer to the book of Daniel as an apocalypse. See, e.g., Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary* (TOTC; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-varsity, 1978), pp. 46-59. Moreover, the apocalyptic portion of the book has often set the agenda for scholars in determining the book's social history. For a good summary of the apocalyptic characteristics of Daniel, see André Lacocque, *Daniel In His Time* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), pp. 82-120.

17. The working definition of the Apocalypse Group of the SBL Genres Project recognized that many apocalypses contain revelatory literature with a narrative framework. The complete definition reads: ' "Apocalypse" is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial as it involves another, supernatural world' (John J. Collins, 'Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre', *Semeia* 14 [1979], pp. 1-20 [9]; see also his, *The Apocalyptic Imagination* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2nd edn, 1998 [1984]], p. 5). For example, Roy Gane argues that the narratives of chaps. 1–6 provide the background to the visions of chs 7–12 and that the connecting theme is the transcendent kingship of God ('Genre Awareness and Interpretation of the Book of Daniel', in David Merling (ed.), *To Understand the Scriptures: Essays in Honor of William H. Shea* [Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1997], pp. 136-48). See also Marius Nel, 'Danielboek as apocaliptiek', *Verbum et ecclesia* 22 (2001), pp. 366-78.

18. Tawny L. Holm notes that 'concentration on the visions has…somewhat diverted or distorted our view of the narrative parts' ('A Biblical Story-Collection: Daniel 1–6' [PhD dissertation, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996], p. 15). The mere presence of narrative literature in the Daniel corpus gives little reason to consider the stories

endlessly the reasons for these differences and how to interpret these changes in genre, as well as the change of language. The third bifurcation concerning the ideological viewpoint finds a majority of modern interpreters in agreement.[19] Most concur that the apocalyptic visions of Daniel 7–12 have a more negative tone towards the kingdoms and rulers of this world, while the stories of Daniel 1–6 hold open the possibility of fruitful accommodation and collaboration with foreign ruling authorities.[20] Early rabbinic traditions first noted this apparent positive view toward foreign rule in Daniel 1–6 but had difficulty reconciling this perspective with their understanding of Nebuchadnezzar as one of the most despicable foreign kings to conquer the peoples of Israel and Judah.[21] Today, the discrepancy is often not even acknowledged. It has not been adequately explained throughout the history of interpretation.

The confusion over genre is not surprising. André Lacocque notes a plethora of diverse elements, forms, and interests contained in the book. He lists the most notable characteristics as popular lore, mythological imagery, mantic

as part of the apocalyptic visions. Narrative, of course, can be part of an apocalypse, but there should be more of a connection than mere proximity. Even Collins notes that the combination of story narratives and visions in the book of Daniel 'is rather different than [sic] that of later works' and 'does not become a recurrent feature of the genre' (Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* [Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1993], p. 58). As to Gane's analysis, while transcendence is a theme of the entire book, it is an inadequate reason to label Dan. 1–6 as apocalyptic material.

19. For example, Ginsberg calls the view of the monarch in Dan. 2 'positively cordial' whereas he suggests that Dan. 7 'breathes hatred of the Babylonian and Macedonian kingdoms' (*Studies in Daniel*, p. 10). See also Matthias Henze, 'The Narrative Frame of Daniel: A Literary Assessment', *JSJ* 32 (2001), pp. 5-24 (6). For a succinct summary of the positions concerning attitudes in Daniel towards foreign rule, see Collins, 'Daniel, Book of', pp. 29-37 (33-34).

20. As Collins states, 'The political stance of the (Daniel) tales is one of loyalty and optimism. The legitimacy of gentile rule is not in doubt' (*Daniel: A Commentary*, p. 51). He continues in later work: 'The heroes of the tales are portrayed as courtiers, trained in 'the language and letters of the Chaldeans'. Their fortunes are closely bound up with the good favor of the monarchs they serve. Success is reflected in advancement at court. There is no hint of rebellion. At the same time Daniel and his friends are pious Yahwists who are not prepared to compromise their religion. One purpose of the tales is to suggest that it is possible to gain advancement in the gentile world while remaining faithful' ('Daniel, Book of', pp. 29-37 [33]).

[21] See Peter Coxon, 'Nebuchadnezzar's Hermeneutical Dilemma', *JSOT* 66 (1995), pp. 87-97 (87-89), for a description of Nebuchadnezzar's villainy. See further David Satran, 'Early Jewish and Christian Interpretation of the Fourth Chapter of the Book of Daniel' (PhD dissertation, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1985); Matthias Henze, 'The Ideology of Rule in the Narrative Frame of Daniel (Dan. 1–6)', SBLSP 38 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999), pp. 527-39 (533); Henze, 'Narrative Frame', pp. 5-24 (13-14); and Lawrence M. Wills, *The Jewish Novel in the Ancient World* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995).

wisdom, prophetic imagination, scribalism, pietism, apocalyptic eschatology, dualism, determinism, pacifism, divine secrets, and priestly interests.[22] These may suggest any number of genres and social settings. Consequently, many genre proposals for this material exist beyond that of apocalypse.[23] These include aretalogies or miracle stories,[24] comedy,[25] court legend,[26] court tale,[27] didactic or historical wisdom tale,[28] folktale, particularly the hero

22. 'The Socio-Spiritual Formative Milieu of the Daniel Apocalypse', in A.S. van der Woude (ed.), *The Book of Daniel in the Light of New Findings* (BETL, 56; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1993), pp. 315-43 (335).

23. For a fuller discussion of the many genre designations, see Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, pp. 38-52; and John G. Gammie, 'The Classification, Stages of Growth, and Changing Intention in the Book of Daniel', *JBL* 95 (1976), pp. 191-204 (191-93).

24. See, e.g., Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), I, p. 111.

25. Using Northrop Frye's understanding of comedy as a type of mythos, Edwin M. Good postulates that there is an overall comic plot line to the book, as well as individual comic plot lines in various chapters, especially those within Dan. 1–6: 'If the whole Dan. 1–6 presents a comic pattern, the single tales are comedies in little' ('Apocalyptic as Comedy: The Book of Daniel', *Semeia* 32 [1985], pp. 41-70 [48]). The book of Daniel has not only the plot and some of the characteristics of comedy, its style also reflect the comedic. Good believes that the Daniel narratives reflect the idea of 'subversion from the inside' and are a kind of 'escape fiction' (Good, 'Apocalyptic as Comedy', pp. 41-70 [55-56]). Francesca Murphy classifies the Daniel stories as pantomime comedies filled with repetitions that depict the ruling authorities as political incompetents (*The Comedy of Revelation* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2002], pp. 194-99).

26. John J. Collins, *Daniel, with an Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature* [FOTL, 20; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984], pp. 41-42; Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, pp. 44-45; Collins, 'Daniel, Book of', pp. 29-37 (31); and Matthias Henze, 'Narrative Frame', pp. 5-24 (5). Although Henze identifies these stories as part of the legend genre at the very start of his article, he often calls them court tales and on the last page he states: 'The court-tales or, rather, conversion narratives in Daniel each ends on a theological note…' ('Narrative Frame', pp. 5-24 [24]).

27. The court setting of these tales encourages comparisons with similar court tales found in the ancient Near East. The most common comparison is between Daniel and the Assyrian story of Ahikar. See George A. Barton, 'The Story of Ahikar and the Book of Daniel', *AJSL* 16 (1899/1900), pp. 242-47. For comparisons with other ancient court stories, see Lawrence M. Wills, *The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), pp. 39-74. W. Lee Humphreys, includes the stories of Esther, Daniel, Joseph, Nehemiah and Ahikar under the designation the tale of the courtier, which he then divides into two sub-categories, tales of court conflict and tales of court contest ('A Life-Style for Diaspora: A Study of the Tales of Esther and Daniel', *JBL* 92 [1973], pp. 211-23; see also John Goldingay, 'The Stories of Daniel: A Narrative Politics', *JSOT* 37 [1987], pp. 99-116). This designation has been the focus of Daniel narrative studies in recent years. The court tale genre is by far and away the most common of the designations (Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, p. 42). It was popular even

story,[29] legend,[30] *Märchen* or fairy tale,[31] martyr legend,[32] midrash,[33] novel or

before the work of Humphreys. Among others who accept this designation, see Ginsberg, *Studies in Daniel*, p. 27; Arthur Jeffrey, 'The Book of Daniel', *IB*, VI, pp. 339-549 (359-60); Shemaryahu Talmon, 'Daniel', in Robert Alter and Frank Kermode (eds.) *The Literary Guide to the Bible* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 343-56 (355), although he maintains that Daniel as a whole is 'a distinctive variant of late biblical historiography'; and Robert R. Wilson, 'From Prophecy to Apocalyptic: Reflections on the Shape of Israelite Religion', *Semeia* 21 (1981), pp. 79-98 (88). Georg Fohrer suggests that the stories are partly court tales and partly martyr legend (*Introduction to the Old Testament* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1965], p. 474). Gammie argues that Dan. 1–6 is primarily either court tales or romances, but has many sub-genres contained within them ('Classification', pp. 191-204 [193-94]). One of the chief difficulties of the court tale genre assignment, as Tawny L. Holm points out, is that it is primarily based on the setting of the stories rather than on the particular forms contained within the story (Holm, 'Biblical Story-Collection', p. 17). The court tale classification accurately describes the content, setting and theme of the stories, but offers little help in solving some of continuing areas of contention surrounding the book that are identified above.

28. See, e.g., Ernst Haag, *Die Errettung Daniels aus der Löwengrube: Untersuchungen zum Ursprung der biblischen Danieltradition* (SBS, 10; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1983), pp. 80-88; Hans-Peter Müller, 'Die weisheitliche Lehrerzählung im Alten Testament und seiner Umwelt', *WO* 9 (1977), pp. 77-99, although he says that Daniel 3 and 6 are in the nature of legends and notes the *Märchen*-like character of Daniel 4–5 (Müller, 'Die weisheitliche Lehrerzählung', pp. 77-99 [77-78]); and Gerhard von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), pp. 46-47. Donald E. Gowan suggests that Dan. 2, 4, and 5 are wisdom stories; Dan. 1, 3, and 6 are 'legends of faithful ones in jeopardy' (*Daniel*, pp. 24-29). In his earlier work, Wills explores the connection of wisdom to the court legend (*Jew in the Court*, pp. 12-13, 23-38), but, in his later work, he focuses on the legendary character of the stories (*Jewish Novel*, pp. 41-42). For the mantic wisdom connection, which is a useful description of one of the concerns of these stories, see Hans-Peter Müller, 'Magisch-mantische Weisheit und die Gestalt Daniels', *UF* 1 (1969), pp. 79-94; and Müller, 'Mantische Weisheit und Apokalyptik', VTSup 22 (1972), pp. 268-93. The main objection to the wisdom designation is that it focuses on one aspect of the stories but it is too vague and general to accurately portray the purpose of these narratives (see Holm, 'Biblical Story-Collection', pp. 23-24). As a secondary objection note the judgment of Norman W. Porteous: 'The Wisdom literature concerns itself with general problems of human concern, whereas the apocalyptic form of writing relates itself more easily to particular historical crises' (*Daniel: A Commentary* [OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965], p. 16). Although Dan. 1–6 is not fundamentally apocalyptic in nature, these narratives are responding to a particular historical crisis and any genre designation should recognize this fact.

29. See, e.g., Susan Niditch and Robert Doran, 'The Success Story of the Wise Courtier: A Formal Approach', *JBL* 96 (1977), pp. 179-93; W. Sibley Towner, *Daniel* (Interpretation; Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1984), p. 5; and Leland Ryken, 'Hero/Heroine', in Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit and Tremper Longman III (eds.), *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), pp. 378-82 (380); cf.

Susan Niditch, *Folklore and the Hebrew Bible* (GBS; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), pp. 10-11. Thematic and content parallels among stories from various cultural milieus indicate some structural similarities using folktale analyses. Ironically, these thematic and content parallels are also the problem with many folklore analyses. Their comparisons are generally thematic and ahistorical, that is, structures are imposed from the outside primarily at the typological level; the details of the individual stories are lost in the analysis (Holm, 'Biblical Story-Collection', p. 28).

30. A legend generally refers to a story of a celebrated or holy person for the edification of the community and to inspire imitation (John J. Scullion, '*Märchen*, Sage, Legende: Towards a Clarification of Some Literary Terms Used by Old Testament Scholars', *VT* 34 [1984], pp. 321-36 [334]), although conflict as to the definition exists. For those who support this genre designation, see, e.g., 'Daniel, Book of', in Jacob Neusner and William Scott Green (eds.), *Dictionary of Judaism in the Biblical Period: 450 BCE to 600 CE* (New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1996), I, pp. 148-49; and Ronald M. Hals, 'Legend', in George W. Coats (ed.), *Saga, Legend, Tale, Novella, Fable* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985), pp. 45-55 (51-55). Gowan suggests that Dan. 1, 3, and 6 are 'legends of faithful ones in jeopardy', rejecting the view that they are martyr legends (*Daniel*, pp. 28-29).

31. Some have suggested links with the category *Märchen* because of the fantastic events depicted in the book and their shared elements and motifs such as 'preoccupations of kings to their courts, trials of young people, heroic deeds, miraculous transformations, etc.' (Holm, 'Biblical Story-Collection', pp. 16-17; cf. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, p. 42). For examples of the argument for the category *Märchen* (although often the genre argument is only for a stage of the composition and not the final composition), see Walter Baumgartner, 'Ein Vierteljahrhundert Danielforschung', *TRu* 11 (1939), pp. 133-35; Hermann Gunkel, *Das Märchen im Alten Testament* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1921), p. 106; and Hans-Peter Müller, '*Märchen*, Legende und Enderwartung', *VT* 26 (1976), pp. 338-50, noting especially the connection of chs 4 and 5 to *Märchen*. Although there are features of the Daniel tales that share similarities with this category such as a royal setting, heroic actions and miraculous deeds, the world of the *Märchen* is a place where unreality predominates, the limitations of space, time and causality are unknown, and places and characters are often nameless (Scullion, '*Märchen*, Sage, Legende', pp. 321-36 [322]). The Daniel stories contain fantastic elements but are primarily ensconced in a realistic story line and place.

32. Some have made this connection because of the tale of the three friends in the fiery furnace of Daniel. See Curt Kuhl, *Die drei Männer im Feuer* (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1930), p. 72; and Walter Baumgartner, *Das Buch Daniel* (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1926), p. 7. According to M.A. Beek, however, this is a problematic designation because the three do not actually die; see *Das Danielbuch: Sein historischer Hintergrund und seine literarische Entwicklung* (Leiden: Ginsberg, 1935), p. 73; see also Wills, *Jewish Novel*, p. 45.

33. The thinking is that Daniel and Esther are midrash on Joseph because of the obvious connections between the stories related to the court settings of their adventures. The classic expressions of this relationship is Ludwig A. Rosenthal, 'Die Josephgeschichte, mit den Büchern Ester und Daniel verglichen', *ZAW* 15 (1895), pp. 278-84; and Rosenthal, 'Nochmals der Vergleich Ester, Josephe, Daniel', *ZAW* 17 (1897), pp. 125-28. For examples of the argument for midrash, see Aage Bentzen, *Daniel* (HAT, 19;

novella,[34] romance,[35] short story,[36] story-collection,[37] and wisdom court legend.[38] The three most common genre classifications of Daniel 1–6 are court tale, folklore, and wisdom tale, inasmuch as they each encompass a major characteristic of the stories.[39] The existence of so many designations for these stories is one indication of the genre confusion that afflicts Daniel studies. Another index of this confusion is that authors often assign multiple

Tübingen: Mohr, 1937), p. 11; M. Delcor, *Le Livre de Daniel* (SB; Paris: J. Gabalda, 1971), p. 23; C. Gaide, *Le Livre de Daniel* (Paris: Mame, 1969), pp. 19-20; and Louis E. Hartman and Alexander A. Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel* (AB XXIII; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1978), pp. 54-55, although they argue that this is a specific type of midrash, namely, 'the religious romance or popular tale of the wise courier'; and André Lacocque, *The Book of Daniel* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1979), p. 10. Addison G. Wright and Collins disagree with this designation because midrash is defined as an interpretation or retelling of a biblical text, and, although Daniel shares affinities with these texts, Daniel is neither an interpretation or retelling of a previous biblical story (Addison G. Wright, *The Literary Genre Midrash* [Staten Island, NY: Alba, 1967], p. 74; and Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, pp. 39-40). For a fuller description of midrash, see Jacob Neusner, *What Is Midrash?* (GBS; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987).

34. See, e.g., Arndt Meinhold, 'Die Diasporanovelle: Eine alttestamentliche Gattung' (PhD dissertation, University of Greifswald, 1969); and Richard I. Pervo, *Profit with Delight: The Literary Genre of the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), p. 120.

35. See, e.g., Robert B.Y. Scott, 'I Daniel, the Original Apocalypse', *AJSL* 47 (1931), pp. 290-91; Eric W. Heaton, *The Book of Daniel: Introduction and Commentary* (TBC; London: SCM Press, 1956), pp. 37-41; and Lewis B. Paton, *Esther* (ICC; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), p. 75. Collins maintains, however, that in this context romance means little more than tale (*Daniel: A Commentary*, p. 42, citing Heaton, *Book of Daniel*, p. 38; but Heaton calls them short stories [*Book of Daniel*, p. 17]). Again, Gammie ('Classification', pp. 191-204) argues that Daniel 1–6 is primarily either a romance or court tales, but has many sub-genres contained within them, although in his case he seems to be using romance and court tales as different designations. James A. Montgomery also argues that this is 'religious romance', but he sees this genre as a subcategory of wisdom tales (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927), pp. 75-76, 100. Nonetheless, he later suggests that, 'they are admirable as examples of the short story' (Montgomery, *Daniel*, p. 100).

36. See Danna Nolan Fewell, *Circle of Sovereignty: A Story of Stories in Daniel 1–6* (JSOTSup, 72; Sheffield: Almond Press, 1988) p. 10.

37. See Holm, 'Biblical Story-Collection'.

38. See Wills, *Jew in the Court*, pp. 12-13; although he says that the overall structure of Daniel is 'novelistic' in this volume (Wills, *Jew in the Court*, p. 66). Wills's comprehensive designation of this literature as a wisdom court legend attempts to encompass the gamut of influences present in these stories, but, in the end, this genre designation is too broad to be very useful. He later rejects it in favor of the court legend in *Jewish Novel*, pp. 41-42.

39. Holm, 'Biblical Story-Collection', pp. 17-18.

genres simultaneously or genre hybrids to Daniel 1–6. Finally, there are those who have simply abandoned all efforts to determine a genre designation.[40]

The sources of the confusion are many. First, the definition of each genre classification can differ among scholars. Questions concerning the primary characteristics of wisdom, legend, or folklore, to name just a few, often vary. There are divergent definitions of what constitutes folklore and this has led to very different genre designations for the same literature.[41] Lawrence M. Wills redefines wisdom, 'This thesis posits a wisdom based in popular, not professional, conceptions of what the "wise" hero is like and how he or she succeeds'.[42] He thus expands wisdom beyond the traditional scribal schools. He also does not use legend in the traditional form-critical sense of Hermann Gunkel.[43] Second, some of these genre designations are actually subgenres of a larger genre designation. For example, all would agree that martyr legend is a subgenre of legend; likewise, the *Märchen* and legend are types of folklore.[44] In some cases, however, exactly where a subgenre belongs is in dispute. For example, some scholars consider the romance a subgenre of wisdom, others of midrash.[45] Some scholars consider the court tale a subgenre of wisdom, others of folktale, others of legend, and still others believe it is an independent genre.[46] John J. Collins views the designation court legend as

40. T.J. Meadowcroft states simply: 'A number of genre analyses have been applied to Daniel in recent times, most of which have some problems' (*Aramaic Daniel and Greek Daniel: A Literary Composition* [JSOTSup, 198; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995], p. 28). Raymond Hammer suggested in 1976: 'The question "What kind of book is it?" still remains to be answered' (*The Book of Daniel* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976], p. 2). Porteous, after a long discussion of whether Daniel is wisdom literature, states: 'Perhaps the wisest course is to take the Book of Daniel as a distinctive piece of literature with a clearly defined witness of its own, and to take note of the various ways in which it borrows from and is coloured by the earlier prophetic literature, the Wisdom literature and the Psalms and has its successors in the apocalypses…' (*Daniel*, p. 16).

41. Alan Dundes, *Holy Writ as Oral Lit: The Bible as Folklore* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), pp. 2-20 (9, 13-14, 18). See also Niditch's discussion of the problem in *Folklore and the Hebrew Bible*, pp. 3-12.

42. *Jew in the Court*, p. 34.

43. Wills, *Jew in the Court*, pp. 12-19 (13-14). Collins notes that the definition of the term legend is much disputed (*Daniel: A Commentary*, p. 44).

44. Cf. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, p. 42.

45. Hartman and Di Lella maintain religious romance is a subcategory of midrash (*Daniel*, pp. 54-55) and Montgomery maintains that it is a subcategory of wisdom (*Daniel*, pp. 75-76). Heaton also notes the connection between romance and wisdom (*Book of Daniel*, pp. 17, 22-23, 37-44).

46. For instance, Pamela J. Milne notes that 'the majority of scholars believe the tales of Daniel 1–6 belong to what is generally called "wisdom literature"' and that 'the subclassification most chosen was that of "court tale"' (*Vladimir Propp and the Study of*

subgenre of legend, although it picks up many of the characteristics of the independent court tale genre in his discussion.[47] The designation wisdom court legend could easily be placed within the larger categories of wisdom or legend. In fact, it is a hybrid designation that sought to answer the failings of the simpler genre designations of court tales, legend, and wisdom tale. Third, some scholars simply assign different chapters to different genres.[48] Fourth, in giving these stories their genre designations, each scholar tends to emphasize a particular aspect of these stories and to highlight that specific feature as the most important, allowing other characteristics recede in importance.[49] Fifth, many analyses tend to blend attributes of multiple genres without clear delineation of that fact. For example, the royal court setting of these stories has driven the designation court tales, but scholarly analysis of Daniel 1–6 as court tales often proceeds as if they were wisdom tales whether or not that connection is identified.[50] Sixth, some of the designations just do not address the fundamental nature of the stories. For example, the designation of the texts as a story collection offers some insight into the redactional questions of Daniel but does not answer what kind of stories these are.

Each of these classifications, while having a few or even many meritorious supporting arguments, remains unsatisfactory because none solves three fundamental issues. First, by minimizing the realities of life lived under the sway and influence of foreign rule, they do not adequately explain the social con-

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Structure in Hebrew Biblical Narrative [Bible and Literature Series, 13; Sheffield: Almond Press, 1988], p. 180). Niditch and Doran would classify these tales as part of folklore ('Success Story', pp. 179-93). Humphreys, on the other hand, in differentiating Daniel from Esther, seems to distinguish the Daniel court tales from hero stories, making it a separate designation: 'But here are marked developments beyond the tale of Esther and Mordecai. Daniel and his companions do not have expressed links with their fellow Jews, and they are not the source of deliverance for their co-religionists… Furthermore, the Jewishness of the hero is stressed and even provides a hinge for the plot. The courtier is quite passive, he is delivered not only through his own skill in ways of court intrigue, but primarily through the miraculous intervention of his deity, to whom the courtier is completely loyal, and who thus appears as sovereign deity of all men and nations. Aspects characteristic of the piety of the Jew are stressed in this connection… In this stress on the devotion of the hero characteristic elements in the tale of the courtier are submerged. The God of Daniel is the central figure and not the courtier ('Life-Style for Diaspora', pp. 211-23 [220-21]). Wills suggests in his later work that the court tale as Humphreys understands it is court legend (*Jewish Novel*, pp. 41-42). Hartman and Di Lella consider court tales and religious romance to be equivalent categories and consumed under midrash (*Daniel*, pp. 54-55).

47. *Daniel: A Commentary*, pp. 44-47.

48. Gammie, 'Classification', pp. 191-204.

49. Holm, 'Biblical Story-Collection', p. 17.

50. This is nowhere made as plain as in Holm's discussions of the wisdom tale and court tale designations ('Biblical Story-Collection', pp. 18-24).

ditions from which the book arose. Second, none, save one, accounts for the vast amount of humor found within the first six chapters.[51] Third, they leave a number of unresolved literary problems in their wake, such as the presence of the two languages in the book and a plausible explanation of how the two disparate sections of the book relate to one another.[52]

What is most troubling is the fact that all these analyses suggest that the narratives have a positive attitude toward the imperial rule.[53] This violates the sociological awareness that living under imperial rule is unpleasant for most; moreover, it grates against the negative attitude toward colonial rule held by the visions. Many investigators argue that these stories embody a primer for living successfully in the Diaspora.[54] Humphreys, in particular, designates the narratives of Daniel 1–6 as 'Success in the Court' or 'Lifestyle in the Diaspora' tales. His interpretive paradigm has convinced many scholars that

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51. Interest in ancient humor, particularly the existence of humor within the Hebrew Bible, is increasing and much theoretical work has been done. Ancient societies valued humor and laughter as much as modern ones, and the subjects that cause laughter are often quite similar throughout human history. Bakhtin noted that humor existed more than a thousand years before the most advanced Renaissance forms of Menippean satire arose (*Rabelais*, pp. 70, 72). For examinations of humor in ancient cultures, see Ferdinand Deist, 'Boundaries and Humour: A Case Study from the Ancient Near East', *Scriptura* 63 (1997), pp. 415-24; Benjamin R. Foster, 'Humor and Cuneiform Literature', *JANESCU* 6 (1974), pp. 69-85; Ingvild Gilhus, *Laughing Gods, Weeping Virgins: Laughter in the History of Religion* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997); Scott Noegel (ed.), *Puns and Pundits: Word Play in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Literature* (Bethesda: CDL Press, 2000); and W.M.S. Russell, '"A Funny Thing Happened…" Humour in Greek and Roman Life, Literature and the Theatre', in Gillian Bennett (ed.), *Spoken in Jest* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), pp. 83-116. Gilhus notes that biblical humor, like most humor in Mesopotamia and Egypt, focuses on scorn and ridicule versus merriment and joy. This use of humor with a cutting edge is important to our understanding of the nature of humor in Daniel.

52. Edwin M. Good, 'Apocalyptic as Comedy', pp. 41-70, in his analysis of Daniel as comedy, has made the best attempt, to date, to connect the narrative and apocalyptic sections of the book. Nonetheless, his analysis is incomplete and that he continues to see the tone of the first section as too positive.

53. See, e.g., Porteous, *Daniel*, pp. 19-20, 29; Baumgartner, *Buch Daniel*, pp. 7-9; Aage Bentzen, *Introduction to the Old Testament*. I. (Copenhagen: Gad, 2nd edn, 1952), pp. 195-97; Fohrer, *Introduction*, pp. 474-75; Ginsberg, *Studies in Daniel*, p. 10; and Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*. II. (trans. D.M.G. Stalker; New York: Harper & Row, 1962), pp. 309-10.

54. The connection between this goal and wisdom is argued by both Humphreys ('Life-Style for Diaspora', pp. 211-23) and A. Meinhold ('Die Gattung der Josephgeschichte und des Estherbuches: Diasporanovelle I', *ZAW* 87 [1975], pp. 306-24; and Meinhold, 'Die Gattung der Josephgeschichte und des Estherbuches: Diasporanovelle II', *ZAW* 88 [1976], pp. 79-93). It should be noted, however, that these authors only noted the wisdom connection; they did not argue that wisdom tale was the genre of Dan. 1–6.

these stories describe the possibility of faithful religious observance and successful participation in the ruling apparatus of the king's court.[55] The result is the opinion that the overall political stance of these stories is one of loyalty, optimism, and accommodation towards the ruling powers. This interpretation describes a mostly benign, nonjudgmental relationship with a conquering foreign system.[56] The seeds of this attitude are evident by how often the experience of exile during the Persian Period is portrayed as a neutral, even positive experience, particularly when compared to the Assyrian and Babylonian occupations.[57] The thinking suggests that Cyrus, the Persian leader, was celebrated as a friend of the Jews for allowing the exiles to return and rebuild the temple. This period of comparative goodwill also allowed the exiles opportunities to be involved in the life of the empire, particularly the political life of the court, and the exiles' involvement at court prompted the creation of various court tales to promote such ambition. In this view, the book of Daniel reflects the ongoing evolution of thought within Hebrew society concerning accommodation to versus separation from the wider culture.[58]

Many commentators emphasize the skill of Daniel and his friends in living in dangerous conditions and the importance of faithful obedience to God as a condition of success with its attendant rewards.[59] Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are understood as faithful Jews, and their piety is an essential part of what makes them the stories' heroes. The four are lionized as paragons of virtue, and examples of moral superiority and wise living. Wills suggests that, while it is possible that these stories affirm the possibility of

55. See, e.g., Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, pp. 45-47; Henze, 'Narrative Frame', pp. 5-24 (10-12); and Wills, *Jewish Novel*, pp. 41-42. For a brief summary of the development of Humphreys's thought, see Henze, 'Narrative Frame', pp. 5-24 (10-12).

56. Humphreys contends, 'In certain circles, at least, the possibility of a creative and rewarding interaction with the foreign environment was present and could work for the good of the Jew…' ('Life-Style for Diaspora', pp. 211-23 [213]).

57. See, e.g., Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah* (London: SCM Press, 1988), p. 160; cf. Collins, *Daniel, with an Introduction*, p. 72.

58. Aaron Wildavsky, *Assimilation versus Separation: Joseph the Administrator and the Politics of Religion in Biblical Israel* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publications, 1993), pp. 119-29.

59. This success through faithfulness view is still predominant. See, e.g., Wildavsky, *Assimilation versus Separation*, pp. 128-29; 'Daniel, Book of', in Neusner and Green (eds.), *Dictionary of Judaism in the Biblical Period*, pp. 148-49 (149); and Montgomery, *Book of Daniel*, p. 101. As Fewell observes, 'The irony involved in all of this courageous resistance, however, is that every instance of resistance to political authority, every affirmation of priorities other than the priority of political power is rewarded—how?—with the bestowal of more political power. When we look at the overall picture of Daniel, the so highly valued piety and wisdom of our Judean heroes become means to a political end' (Fewell, *Circle of Sovereignty: Plotting Politics*, p. 126).

faithful individual participation in the life of a foreign nation, these narratives actually serve as a source of ethnic pride.[60] Thus, the stories act as an affirmation of group identity in a time of exile.[61]

Many theories concerning the social world of Daniel focus on configurations of scribal, educated, and upper-class values based on the concerns of the narrative. On the surface, the book itself gives evidence that it reflects such matters. The narratives of Daniel 1–6 are set in the king's court, and the stories seem to reflect the concerns of Jewish courtiers striving for high political positions while being religiously faithful.[62] A number of scholars posit that the references to the wise ones (משכלים) in Daniel 11 are reflective of the circles that produced this literature.[63] Similarly, several interpreters situate the Daniel stories and visions among cultic and wisdom circles.[64] Hence, these interpreters contend that these stories were not for the masses but rather were guides for the elites who aspired to royal service.[65] These tales may have functioned as a sort of training manual on how one could have remained religiously faithful and still found success in royal service.

It is just as important, however, to consider the evidence of the popular nature of the stories in determining the social provenance of the book. If the book does, indeed, have a long compositional history as many scholars argue, this could be one indicator of the book's popularity.[66] However, the best measure of its popularity is probably the many extant versions available to

60. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, p. 44; and Wills, *Jew in the Court*, p. 68.

61. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, p. 51; and Wills, *Jew in the Court*, p. 150.

62. George W.E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah: A Historical and Literary Introduction* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2nd edn, 2005 [1981]), p. 22; and Nickelsburg, 'Apocalyptic and Myth in 1 Enoch 6–11', *JBL* 96 (1977), pp. 383-405 (396-97 nn. 61-62).

63. Paul L. Redditt, 'Daniel 11 and the Socio-historical Setting of the Book of Daniel', *CBQ* 60 (1998), pp. 463-74.

64. Müller, 'Mantische Weisheit und Apokalyptik', pp. 268-93.

65. Montgomery argues, for example, that the Daniel narratives are 'wisdom stories addressed to the more cultured ranks of society' (*Book of Daniel*, p. 100). Wills concludes: ' …it [the wisdom court legend] is a popular genre, but it probably does not extend to the lower classes. It reflects the orientation of the administrative and entrepreneurial class. The scribal ideals inherent in the stories might restrict this circle somewhat to the extended court circles' (*Jew in the Court*, p. 197). Collins contends that Daniel's authors were 'like Daniel, upper-class, well-educated Jews, who found careers in government service in the eastern Diaspora' ('Daniel and his Social World', *Int* 39 (1985), pp. 131-43 (136-37). See also Wilson, 'From Prophecy', pp. 79-98 (88).

66. See, e.g., Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, pp. 35-38; Ginsberg, *Studies in Daniel*, Hartman and Di Lella, *Book of Daniel*, pp. 9-18; and Wills, *Jew in the Court*, pp. 43-49. For a summary of early positions on the compositional history of the book, see H.H. Rowley, 'Unity of Book of Daniel', pp. 233-73.

us.[67] The training manual view of the social setting of Daniel alone does not justify the book's vast popularity. An alternative explanation must be sought.

The setting of the tales at the foreign court does not necessarily indicate that the stories function only, or even primarily, in court circles. The tales are not simply a factual account of the details of life at court but instead contain numerous exaggerations of, for example, excessive royal rage (Dan. 1.10; 2.5; 3.19), resplendent dinner parties for a thousand nobles (Dan. 5.1), and seemingly effusive praise and conversions by the foreign king to the Hebrew faith (Dan. 3.28-30). Matthias Henze credits Hans-Peter Müller with the recognition that such exaggerations are not likely to originate in circles well acquainted with court values.[68] It is just as likely that such extravagant descriptions are wishful projections of the disenfranchised. Thus, it is possible that the stories are not created by well-placed Jews in exile, but instead reflect the imaginings of those well below the social circles of the court. In the same way, Henze notes that the characters of the stories of Daniel are often exaggerated portraits that serve the purposes of the literary genre of the court tale.[69] The Jews are exceedingly pious, eloquent, and wise, while the monarch is somewhat of a dolt, and his advisors are cunning and malevolent.

67. The Daniel traditions were plural in form as evidenced by the Masoretic and Greek traditions, and the multiplicity of witnesses within each of these traditions. Within 150 years of the completion of the Masoretic text, there is evidence of the growing influence of the Daniel traditions. Daniel was an important text for the Qumran community, and the Greek versions of Daniel indicate a continuing development of the Daniel corpus. For a summary of the early development of the Daniel traditions, see Klaus Koch, 'Stages in the Canonization of the Book of Daniel', in John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint (eds.), *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2001), II, pp. 421-46. For additional important studies on the textual variants, see Alexander A. Di Lella, 'The Textual History of Septuagint-Daniel and Theodotion-Daniel', in Collins and Flint (eds.), *The Book of Daniel*, II, pp. 586-607; Matthias Henze, *The Madness of King Nebuchadnezzar: The Ancient Near Eastern Origins and Early History of Interpretation of Daniel 4* (Supplement to the Journal for the Study of Judaism, 61; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1999), pp. 19-23; Meadowcroft, *Aramaic Daniel;* Eugene Ulrich, 'Orthography and Text in 4QDan[a] and 4QDan[b] and in the Received Masoretic Text', in Eugene Ulrich (ed.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origin of the Bible* (SDSRL; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), pp. 148-62; Eugene Ulrich, 'The Text of Daniel in the Qumran Scrolls', in Collins and Flint (eds.), *The Book of Daniel*, II, pp. 573-85 (581-82); Eugene Ulrich, 'The Canonical Process, Textual Criticism, and Latter Stages in the Composition of the Bible', in Michael Fishbane and Emmanuel Tov (eds.), *Sha'arei Talmon: Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1992), pp. 267-94 (286-87).

68. Henze, 'Narrative Frame', pp. 5-24 (16), citing Müller, '*Märchen*, Legende und Endwartung', pp. 338-50 (341). See also Henze, 'Weisheitliche Lehrerzählung', pp. 77-98.

69. Henze, 'Narrative Frame', pp. 5-24 (16-17).

The tales offer hope to the Jews in the Diaspora by offering types of characters who personify the national hopes of the exiled Jews (virtuous heroes) and by creating fantastic situations with overblown characters that serve the satirical message of the tales.[70] The dialogic nature of these two interpretations exemplifies well the tensions resident in a Bakhtinian reading of this text.

A hallmark of traditional form criticism is that once the major forms of a given piece of literature are correctly identified, it is then possible to suggest the genre of the piece and the life situations, or the *Sitz im Leben*, where those forms and that genre may have originated.[71] A common assumption of much traditional biblical social world research is that the text under study is a reliable indicator and conveyor of information concerning the interests and provenance of the creators of that text. While it is certainly possible that the text directly reflects the social world of the author, other options also exist. Numerous scholars have recognized the speculative nature of the reconstruction of the historical and social settings of a text based upon an analysis of its forms.[72]

In the case at hand, the recognition of the wisdom elements, folklore structures, and the court setting of Daniel 1–6 have yielded many valuable insights concerning these narratives. Nonetheless, many questions still remain.[73] Hence, the adequacy of a direct correspondence between the social setting of the text of the book of Daniel and the real social world has become a question of discussion. Philip R. Davies reviews a number of suggestions for the social provenance of the Daniel material and demonstrates that there is no consensus.[74] He concludes that it is simply not possible to know precisely

70. Henze, 'Narrative Frame', pp. 5-24 (18).

71. For a concise definition of form criticism and some relevant overviews of this method, see Marvin A. Sweeney and Ehud Ben Zvi (eds.), *The Changing Face of Form Criticism for the Twenty-First Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), p. 1.

72. On the general speculative correspondence of the forms of the text and the reconstruction of social settings, see Martin J. Buss, 'The Idea of *Sitz im Leben*—History and Critique', *ZAW* 90 (1978), pp. 157-70. Buss notes that it is misleading to say that a concrete genre emerges from a specific setting. Burke O. Long, 'Recent Field Studies in Oral Literature and the Question of *Sitz Im Leben*', *Semeia* 5 (1976), pp. 35-49 (44), states: 'factors influencing the match of genre and setting are often external to content and literary style and that reconstructions based almost wholly on internal literary arguments are likely to be seriously flawed from the outset'.

73. Roy F. Melugin notes that form critical work can help readers understand the textually portrayed setting of a piece of literature and that this insight can be of great interpretive help ('Recent Form Criticism Revisited in an Age of Reader Response', in Sweeney and Ben Zvi (eds.), *The Changing Face of Form Criticism* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003], pp. 46-64 [52-58]).

74. He notes: 'There is an inbuilt tendency in the discipline of biblical studies to take biblical statements about social realities as if they are reliable descriptions of a [*sic*]

where these texts originated. This tendency to sift out the nuggets of socio-logical gold from the stream of the text has been replaced by what Davies characterizes, in a later article, as a 'hermeneutics of suspicion' in order to discern the underlying ideological interests of the text.[75]

Tawny L. Holm maintains that Daniel 1–6 is a story-collection and states, 'The comprehensive discussion of genre given by [John J.] Collins in his commentary suggests that these and related genre designations have reached the limits set by the available evidence.'[76] She, therefore, broadened the re-search into more ancient Near Eastern comparative materials, as traditional form-critical methods have reached the limit of their helpfulness and not provided new insights for some time. This study also suggests new directions for resolving long-standing conundrums in Daniel research.

A different theoretical framework might help resolve the outstanding issues, namely, the work of Mikhail Bakhtin concerning dialogism, het-eroglossia, genre, the novelistic impulse, and, most significantly, Menippean satire. Using Bakhtin's theories, this study proposes a new genre designation for Daniel 1–6, *i.e.*, that these chapters are prenovelistic[77] Menippean satires that seek, through humor, to resist the oppressive political forces of their day.[78] This new genre analysis will contribute to the further resolution of the

objective state of affairs' ('Reading Daniel Sociologically', in van der Woude [ed.], *The Book of Daniel*, pp. 345-61 [347]). Wills adds a helpful caveat, arguing that care should be taken not to restrict the authors or the audience of the tales to the social standing of the characters depicted in the narrative (*The Jewish Novel*, p. 49).

75. Davies, 'The Scribal School of Daniel', in Collins and Flint (eds.), *The Book of Daniel*, I, pp. 247-65 (247-51). For another discussion of the need to go beyond surface readings of the text to determine sociological patterns, see also Henze, 'Narrative Frame', pp. 5-24 (5-6).

76. 'Biblical Story-Collection', p. 16.

77. The use of the term 'novelistic' is intentional to avoid confusion. The term 'novel' implies a work of longer length than the Daniel stories, while the designations 'novella' and 'short story' are used in modern literary studies in a variety of manners that may be confusing. Wills describes the rise of novelistic impulses, the seeds of which are reflected in Dan. 1–6 and are made fully manifest in the LXX version of the book (*Jewish Novel*, pp. 4-7, 66). Bakhtin describes a similar process in his study of the rise of the novel. It is Bakhtin's analysis that suggests calling these works novelistic.

78. The identification of humor is an imprecise undertaking, but given the human propensity for this characteristic, it would be surprising not to find many examples of humor in such a large body of literature as the Bible. The debate on how to identify humor from different time periods and different cultures continues in this context. Although it is true that one can never be totally sure that something in a text from another time period and culture is actually humor, one can make a provisional case for such identifications, open to further discussion and refinement. Yehuda T. Radday and Athalya Brenner begin their volume with three tacit presuppositions that are operative for this study as well: (1) instances of humor, jokes and comic expressions are to be

four greatest unsolved problems within Daniel studies, including the social history of imperialism and colonialism, the bilingualism of the Daniel narratives, the presence of many comic elements in the text, and the ways that the stories of Daniel 1–6 are related to the apocalyptic visions of Daniel 7–12.

Numerous studies contend that texts of the Hebrew Bible contain comic elements or may have a comedic genre. Scholars have now produced a substantial number of studies on this topic, beginning in the 1890s and extending to the present.[79] Moreover, many suggest that parts of the Hebrew

found in the Hebrew Bible or read into its texts; (2) by way of a generalization, the nature of biblical humor is unique albeit elusive; and (3) the acknowledgement of humorous and comic elements—when and where these are judged to be valid—can serve as a valuable strategy for biblical exegesis ('Between Intentionality and Reception: Acknowledgement and Application [A Preview]', in Radday and Brenner [eds.], *On Humour and the Comic*, pp. 13-20 [13]). Moreover, John Goldingay notes that '…if a literary work contains one joke, it is at least a plausible possibility that it may contain more than one; conversely, if it lacks more, this may cast doubt on such a reading of the one' ('Are They Comic Acts', *EvQ* 69 [1997], pp. 99-107). The why and how of biblical humor are open to debate. Some scholars see the humor of the Bible as primarily the result of various literary techniques that result in incongruities that amuse and intrigue the reader (see, e.g., Willie van Heerden, 'Taking Humour Seriously: A Few Thoughts on Incongruity, Humour and Biblical Interpretation', in Willie Wessels and Eben Scheffler [eds.], *Old Testament Science and Reality: A Mosaic for Deist* [Pretoria: Verba Vitae, 1992], pp. 57-69). John Morreall notes that biblical humor is almost always the laughter of scorn ('Rejection of Humor', pp. 243-65 [245]). Thus, humor in the Bible is not simply an ornamental literary technique but rather is wedded to the message being communicated. An essay that recognizes the presence of both types of humor in the Bible is Arthur Quinn, 'The Mirth of God', in Virgil Nemoianu and Robert Royal (eds.), *Play, Literature, Religion: Essays in Cultural Intertextuality* (SUNY Series, The Margins of Literature; Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), pp. 41-59. This study primarily draws upon portions of both the incongruity and the superiority theories in determining the presence of humor and satire in Daniel 1–6. Various literary techniques that help create an atmosphere of humor and judgment towards the king and his empire will be identified.

79. Studies noting the presence of humor and comedic elements in the Hebrew Bible progressed from identifying the use of wordplays and irony in various texts to studies of the function of the comedic in the Hebrew Bible. Several of the most important studies include, in chronological order, Joseph Chotzner, 'Humour and Irony of the Hebrew Bible', *Asiatic Quarterly Review* (1892), pp. 124-35; Immanuel Casanowicz, *Paronomasia in the Old Testament* (Boston: Norwood Press, 1894); Antoine Baumgartner, *L'humour dans l'ancien testament* (Lausanne: Georges Bridel, 1896); Joseph Chotzner, *Hebrew Humour and Other Essays* (London: Luzac, 1905); Chotzner, *Hebrew Satire* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1916); Elbert Russell, 'Paronomasia and Kindred Phenomena in the New Testament' (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 1920); M.D. Goldman, 'Humour in the Hebrew Bible', *ABR* 2 (1952), pp. 1-11; René Voeltzel, *Le rire du Seigneur: enquêtes at remarques sur la signification théologique et pratique de l'ironie biblique* (Strasbourg: Editions Oberlin, 1955); John Moore Bullard, 'Biblical

Bible are satirical.[80] Leland Ryken contends, 'It is obvious that the Bible is a

Humor: Its Nature and Function' (PhD dissertation, Yale University, 1962); W.F. Stinespring, 'Humor', in *IDB*, II, pp. 660-62; Bert Hayes, 'A Study of Humor in the Old Testament' (PhD dissertation, Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion, 1963); Alfred Guillaume, 'Paranomasia in the Old Testament', *JSS* 9 (1964), pp. 282-90; J.J. Glück, 'Paronomasia in Biblical Literature', *Semitics* 1 (1970), pp. 50-78; Jack Sasson, 'Word Play in the Old Testament', *IDBSup*, pp. 968-70; J. Cheryl Exum and J. William Whedbee, 'Isaac, Samson and Saul: Reflections on the Comic and Tragic Visions', *Semeia* 32 (1985), pp. 5-40; Jakob Jónsson, *Humour and Irony in the New Testament: Illustrated by Parallels in Talmud and Midrash* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1985); Conrad Hyers, *And God Created Laughter: The Bible as Divine Comedy* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1987); Radday and Brenner (eds.), *On Humour*; Edward L. Greenstein, 'Humor and Wit in the Old Testament', *ABD*, III, pp. 330-33; van Heerden, 'Taking Humour Seriously', pp. 57-61; Étan Levine, 'The Humor in Qohelet', *ZAW* 109 (1997), pp. 71-83; M.A. Screech, *Laughter at the Foot of the Cross* (London: Penguin, 1998); J. William Whedbee, *The Bible and the Comic Vision* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Hershey H. Friedman, 'Humor in the Hebrew Bible', *Humor* 13 (2000), pp. 257-85; Joel S. Kaminsky, 'Humor and the Theology of Hope: Isaac as a Humorous Figure', *Int* 54 (2000), pp. 363-75; Hershey H. Friedman, 'Is There Humor in the Hebrew Bible? A Rejoinder', *Humor* 15 (2002), pp. 215-22. But see John Morreall, 'Sarcasm, Irony, Wordplay, and Humor in the Hebrew Bible: A Response to Hershey Friedman', *Humor* 14 (2001), pp. 293-301. William Whedbee's work is especially important to this study. Many scholars have written articles on smaller sections of the Bible where humor is used, but few have attempted to find large-scale instances of humor. In lieu of a reductive definition of comedy, Whedbee focuses on certain recurrent features of comedy that appear in classic comic works throughout the ages. The four focal points include: (1) a U-shaped plot that concludes with an upswing toward life, regeneration, and festive celebration; (2) conventional character types such as clowns, fools, tricksters; (3) a variety of linguistic strategies such as punning, parody, hyperbole, redundancy, repetition, incongruity, irony, discrepancy, reversal, and surprise; and (4) comedic purpose that functions between the conservative and subversive poles (*Comic Vision*, pp. 6-8). He then analyzes the books of Genesis, Exodus, Esther, Jonah, Job and Song of Songs to illustrate that perceiving the comic spirit helps us to understand a variety of Hebrew Bible texts in helpful ways. Whedbee's work shows that it is possible to discover comic dimensions that help shape major portions of biblical material. The book of Daniel shows many of the same characteristics that Whedbee deems essential to designating a work as comic, and this study demonstrates that affinity.

80. A comprehensive bibliography of works on satire generally is by Brian Connery, 'Satire', at http://www.otus.oakland.edu/english/showcase/satbib.htm [cited January 20, 2008]. One of the earliest studies of satire in the Bible is C. Corydon Randall, 'Satire in the Bible' (PhD dissertation, Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, 1966); cf. Randall, 'An Approach to Biblical Satire', in Jack C. Knight and Lawrence A. Sinclair (eds.), *The Psalms and Other Studies Presented to Joseph I. Hunt* (Nashotah, WI: Nashotah House Seminary, 1990), pp. 132-44. Randall's form critical approach is helpful in identifying possible discrete occurrences of satire. In fact, there are a plethora of such possibilities that are open to discussion and debate. Randall detects

thoroughly satiric book'.[81] The book of Jonah is often classified as satirical in nature.[82] Many of the studies of Esther observe that the satirical depiction of

numerous instances of satire throughout the Hebrew Bible, such as the story of Rachel sitting upon the household gods (תרפים) in Gen. 31 and the confrontation between Elijah and Baal in 1 Kgs 18 (Randall, 'Satire in the Bible', pp. 109-12). Certainly, it is helpful to recognize that the use of satirical forms is one of the tools that an accomplished author may use to create his or her overall document. This atomistic approach, however, is oriented to finding individual instances that are satirical rather than identifying the presence of a satiric spirit that pervades a literary work. For example, Randall only briefly notes that the Book of Jonah may be identified as a satirical composition (Randall, 'Satire in the Bible', pp. 79, 107). This study recognizes the use of various satirical forms but uses a more wholistic approach to identify the presence of satire in and through a biblical text.

81. 'Satire', in Leland Ryken and Tremper Longman III (eds.), *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), pp. 329-40 (330). The most common definition of satire is informed by the more formal conception of satire that indicates that satire must be direct, clear, and unambiguous and that the target of attack is clear. Often, however, the manner of recognizing the presence of satire in the Bible seems to turn on the issue of the critical mass of how many satirical features and techniques are enough to determine finally that a particular piece qualifies for a satirical reading strategy.

82. Just a few of the many important studies on satire in Jonah include James S. Ackerman, 'Satire and Symbolism in the Song of Jonah', in Baruch Halpern and Jon D. Levenson (eds.), *Traditions in Transformation: Turning Points in Biblical Faith: Frank Moore Cross Festschrift* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1981), pp. 213-46; T. Desmond Alexander, 'Jonah and Genre', *TynBul* 36 (1985), pp. 35-59; Arnold J. Band, 'Swallowing Jonah: The Eclipse of Parody', *Prooftexts* 10 (1990), pp. 177-95; Athalya Brenner, 'Jonah's Poem out of and within its Context', in Philip R. Davies and David J.A. Clines (eds.), *Among the Prophets: Essays on Prophetic Texts* (Sheffield: JSOT Press 1993), pp. 183-92; Millar Burrows, 'The Literary Category of the Book of Jonah', in Harry Frank Thomas and William L. Reed (eds.), *Translating and Understanding the Old Testament: Essays in Honor of Herbert Gordon May* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), pp. 80-107; Kenneth M. Craig, Jr, 'Jonah in Recent Research', *CRBS* 7 (1999), pp. 97-118; Baruch Halpern and Richard Elliott Friedman, 'Composition and Paronomasia in the Book of Jonah', *HAR* 4 (1980), pp. 79-92; Willie van Heerden, 'Humour and the Interpretation of the Book of Jonah', *OTE* 5 (1992), pp. 389-401; John C. Holbert, ' "Deliverance Belongs to Yahweh!": Satire in the Book of Jonah', *JSOT* 21 (1981), pp. 59-81; André Lacocque and Pierre-Emmanuel Lacocque, *Jonah: A Psycho-Religious Approach to the Prophet* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1990), pp. 39-41; David Marcus, *From Balaam to Jonah: Anti-Prophetic Satire in the Hebrew Bible* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), p. 158; Hans W. Wolff, *Obadiah and Jonah* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988), pp. 84-85; Judson Mather, 'The Comic Art of the Book of Jonah', *Sound* 65 (1982), pp. 280-91; John A. Miles, 'Laughing at the Bible: Jonah as Parody', *JQR* NS 65 (1975), pp. 168-81; I.J.J. Spangenberg, 'Jonah and Qohelet: Satire versus Irony', *OTE* 9 (1996), pp. 495-511; Roger Syrén, 'The Book of Jonah—a Reversed *Diasporanovella?*', *SEÅ* 58 (1993), pp. 7-14; and Whedbee, *Comic Vision*, pp. 191-220.

the king and his court sets the stage for the comic denouement of the story.[83] The story of the slaughter of the enemies of the Jews at the end of the book is a satirical masterstroke that highlights the ludicrousness of the same judgment against the Jews as promulgated by the king's advisor Haman.[84]

Commentators also notice the presence of satiric accents in the composition of prophetic literature in the Hebrew Bible, claiming that prophetic literature uses a variety of techniques to create a satirical atmosphere of judgment and condemnation,[85] and the prophets themselves were often subject to satirical critique.[86] Additionally, the Hebrew Bible contains much

For alternative views see Jack Sasson, *Jonah* AB, XXIV B; (New York: Doubleday, 1990), pp. 331-34; Phyllis Trible, 'Jonah', *NIB*, VII, pp. 461-530 (469-72); Yvonne Sherwood, 'Cross-Currents in the Book of Jonah: Some Jewish and Cultural Midrashim on a Traditional Text', *BibInt* 6 (1998), pp. 49-79; and Yvonne Sherwood, *A Biblical Text and its Afterlives: The Survival of Jonah in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

83. A few of the important studies on satire in Esther include Adele Berlin, 'The Book of Esther and Ancient Storytelling', *JBL* 120 (2001), pp. 3-14; Berlin, *Esther* (JPS Bible Commentary; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2001), pp. xvi-xxii; Craig, *Reading Esther*; Sidney White Crawford, 'Esther', *NIB*, III, pp. 853-942 (858); Edward L. Greenstein, 'A Jewish Reading of Esther', in Jacob Neusner *et al.* (eds.), *Judaic Perspectives on Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), pp. 225-43; Bruce W. Jones, 'Two Misconceptions about the Book of Esther', *CBQ* 39 (1977), pp. 171-81; W. Lee Humphreys, 'The Story of Esther and Mordecai: An Early Jewish Novella', in George W. Coats (ed.), *Saga, Legend, Tale, Novella, Fable: Narrative Forms in Old Testament Literature* (JSOTSup, 35; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985), pp. 97-113; Jon D. Levenson, *Esther: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1997), pp. 13-23; Edgar Alan Perdomo, 'Apuntes para una comprension del contexto socio-literario del libro de Ester', *VS* 7 (1997), pp. 3-14; Yehuda T. Radday, 'Esther with Humor', in Radday and Brenner (eds.), *On Humour and the Comic*, pp. 295-313; Zdravko Stefanovic, ' "Go at Once!" Thematic Reversals in the Book of Esther', *AJT* 8 (1994), pp. 163-71; and Whedbee, *Comic Vision*, p. 187.

84. See, e.g., Ze'ev Weisman, *Political Satire in the Bible* (SemeiaSt, 32; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), p. 159.

85. David Fishelov notes the use of techniques such as catalogue lists and animal imagery in order to highlight the satiric judgment against prophetic objects of attack ('The Prophet as Satirist', *Prooftexts* 9 [1989], pp. 195-211). He also explains the use of intensified reversal where a character in the story declaims about their strength or power immediately before their fall before divine judgment. These types of techniques are present in the stories of Daniel particularly concerning the claims and boasts of King Nebuchadnezzar as a powerful sovereign. See also Thomas Jemielity, *Satire and the Hebrew Prophets* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1992); and Marcus, *From Balaam to Jonah*, pp. 11-18.

86. David Marcus focuses on the presence of works he labels as anti-prophetic satire in the Hebrew Bible (*From Balaam to Jonah*). Marcus's definition of satire contains two elements. First, a text is satire if it has an identifiable target of attack, either directly or

political satire within its pages, and these insights are particularly helpful in application to the book of Daniel.[87] Furthermore, some suggest that Daniel

indirectly, and secondly, the text contains a preponderance of the essential attributes of satire, including unbelievable elements, fantastic situations, absurdities, distortions, grotesqueries, ironies, ridicule, parody and similar rhetorical features (Marcus, *From Balaam to Jonah*, p. 9). Other important features include the use of key words, parono-masia, artful repetition of verbs, chiastic structures, homophones, homographs, expres-sive language colloquialisms, obscenities and indelicate expressions (Marcus, *From Balaam to Jonah*, p. 23). He also argues that although there is no way to ascertain if biblical authors were aware of satire as a genre, it is reasonable to use such a classi-fication since other literary identifications such as irony, allegory, parable and parody developed after biblical times but are routinely used to classify biblical literature (Marcus, *From Balaam to Jonah*, p. 25). Marcus moves beyond a simple cataloging of various satirical passages based on form and content to a more broadly nuanced understanding of the genre. He mentions the presence of at least 14 satires in biblical narratives, including the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11), the story of Ehud (Judg. 3) and the book of Esther. The main focus of the book is the exploration of four stories that are critical of prophets through the use of satirical plots. These include the stories of Balaam and his donkey (Num. 22), Elisha and the story of the boys and the bald prophet 2 Kgs 2), the lying prophet before Jeroboam (1 Kgs 13) and the story of Jonah. Thus, he recognizes the wider presence of this literary technique throughout the Hebrew Bible. He notes that interpreting a work as satire can help explain previously insoluble exegetical conun-drums. Since a satirical text is not necessarily to be understood as literally and histori-cally true, then features such as fantastic events and incongruities become understandable as literary constructions and thus less problematic. Satirical works do not need to be interpreted as factual representations of history.

87. Weisman, *Political Satire*. He argues that the roots of political satire are found in oral utterances, a view that calls to mind the work of Robert Elliott (Weisman, *Political Satire*, p. xii). For details on oral ridicule as a precursor to literary satirical forms, see Robert C. Elliott, *The Power of Satire: Magic, Ritual, Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Uni-versity Press, 1960). In Weisman's first chapter, he reviews methodological considera-tions and concludes that the principal means of the satirist is wit. He defines wit as a sophisticated literary means of imparting double entendre and paradoxical meaning to ordinary words (Weisman, *Political Satire*, p. 3). Comedy may use some of the same techniques with the purpose of evoking laughter and fun, while satire arouses disdain and contempt. It is the tone of the piece that differentiates satire from tragedy or comedy. Weisman presents seven general elements of political satire, not all of which must be evident for political satire to occur. These elements include: (1) sordid criticism (nega-tive attitude); (2) concrete criticism (aimed at historical personalities, institutions, political systems, and so forth); (3) taunts and the expression of joy over the downfall of a specific personality or system; (4) a mood of animosity and insult; (5) the use of rhetorical elements for a polemical purpose; (6) the implementation of nicknames or code names; and (7) the use of the absurd or grotesque (Weisman, *Political Satire*, pp. 7-8). In his analysis of texts, Weisman starts with an examination of smaller incidents of satire such as appellations, epigrams, proverbs and fables (for example, in Gen. 11, the tower is called Babel (בבל) because the Lord confused (בלל) the language of all the

has comic and satirical elements. Hector I. Avalos, David M. Gunn and Danna Nolan Fewell, Henze, and René Voeltzel have all noted or done smaller studies on the existence of comedy in the book.[88] Two other scholars have focused on the satirical dimensions of the book. W.F. Stinespring suggests that the book of Daniel has a satirical atmosphere that recalls the ridicule of foreign idolatry that is found in abundance in prophetic literature.[89] He identifies the following targets in Daniel: Daniel 1 satirizes foreign wisdom and eating habits; Daniel 2 targets the helpless ignorance of the advisors, and the collapse of the great image is a double satire against foreign nations and idols; in Daniel 3 the three friends make a great image and a great king look ridiculous; in Daniel 4 a great king goes ridiculously mad; Daniel 5 satirizes licentiousness, idolatry, and the ignorance of foreign magicians; and Daniel 6 is the account of a mighty king humbled. In the apocalyptic visions, the mighty foreign kingdoms are again humbled. John Moore Bullard observes that the book of Daniel is organized around ironic themes, whose purpose is to satirize the follies of foreign rulers.[90] Bullard writes, 'The book of Daniel is therefore to be interpreted as a book whose sole purpose is ridicule; the conquerors of Judah are figuratively placed on a rack and exposed to the laughter and scorn of everyone. Without the dimension of humor, the book would be entirely ineffective. Ridicule is the key to its interpretation; to ignore this is to make of Daniel a hero-legend with little reason for inclusion in the Canon.'[91] His judgment of the purpose of the book of Daniel proleptically anticipates the conclusions of this analysis and provides evidence in support of this assessment.[92] This study extends the work of previous interpreters, uncovering additional examples of comedy and satire within Daniel 1–6. Furthermore, this study argues that such satirical elements structure the Daniel narratives and shape their genre.

Two investigators have maintained that the genre classification of Daniel 1–6 is comedy. Edwin Good argues that Daniel has a comedic U-shaped

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earth) and then proceeds to the use of satirical devices in prophetic rhetoric such as the taunt elegy against the king of Babylon (Isa. 14.4–21). Weisman demonstrates that political satire is a recurrent phenomenon in the Hebrew Bible.

88. Hector I. Avalos, 'The Comedic Function of the Enumerations of Officials and Instruments in Daniel 3', *CBQ* 53 (1991), pp. 580-88; David M. Gunn and Danna Nolan Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 174-75; Henze, 'Narrative Frame', pp. 5-24 (12-24); and Voeltzel, *Le rire*, pp. 145-53.

89. W.F. Stinespring, 'Irony and Satire', *IDB*, II, pp. 726-28.

90. Bullard, 'Biblical Humor', pp. 166-71.

91. Bullard, 'Biblical Humor', pp. 170-71.

92. Bullard summarizes the character and purpose of biblical humor as that dimension of biblical literature that employs rhetorical forms of wit and imbues whole books and portions of books with an ironic, satirical or sarcastic tone in the instrumentality of a religious, moral or profoundly theological message ('Biblical Humor', pp. 214-15).

form, comedic elements structure Daniel 1–6, and that subversion is an impor-
tant theme throughout the book.[93] Francesca Murphy classifies the Daniel
stories as pantomime comedies filled with repetitions that depict the ruling
authorities as political incompetents.[94] This analysis, however, differs from
theirs in six respects. First, this investigation is much more extensive than
either of theirs. Second, this study uses a different theoretical basis from
either that of Good or Murphy, which explains more of the formal features of
Daniel 1–6.[95] Third, this analysis suggests that Daniel 1–6 reflects a specific
type of humor, namely satire. Fourth, it maintains that the point of Daniel's
humor is to resist imperial forces and is not, as Good suggests, 'escape fic-
tion', which is fundamentally a coping mechanism.[96] Fifth, it suggests new
avenues to further the understanding of the bilingualism of the text, which
their analyses do not. Sixth, this study offers a different understanding of the
relationship between the narratives and visions than either of the previous
investigators maintains. This use of Bakhtin's understanding of Menippean
satire to comprehend the book of Daniel is entirely new, and will contribute
important insights to the on-going conversation about Daniel 1–6.[97]

93. Good, 'Apocalyptic as Comedy'.

94. *Comedy of Revelation*, pp. 194-99.

95. Good uses Northrop Frye as his theoretician (Northrop Frye, *The Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957], pp. 223-39). Many conceptions of satire are based on Frye's two-fold typology of satire as wit or humor founded on fantasy or a sense of the absurd, and the presence of a clear object of attack. For various articles and a recent summarization of Frye's impact on the study of religion, see James M. Kee (ed.), 'Northrop Frye and the Afterlife of the Word', *Semeia*, 89 (2002), pp. 1-169. Murphy, on the other hand, explores the Bible as a dramatic comedy and an encounter between the human and divine that consists of four elements: alienation, integration, freedom and eros.

96. 'Apocalyptic as Comedy', p. 56. In labeling the Daniel stories, escapist fantasies, Good is suggesting that the relief of tension, or relief of inhibition theory, of humor is at work. This study utilizes the incongruity, or frustration of expectation theory and the superiority, or degradation theory.

97. Bakhtin's view of Menippean satire has been used infrequently as a basis upon which to discuss a biblical book. The rare cases include Craig, *Reading Esther*; and Lacocque and Lacocque, *Jonah*, pp. 39-41. Thomas Jemielity also compares the longer prophetic texts that combine prose and poetic passages with Menippean satire (Jemielity, *Satire*, pp. 11-18). These passages indicate that both prophecy and satire contain criti-cism and judgment of the present with an eye towards some better, ideal future. They share a variety of rhetorical themes, techniques and strategies. Biblical prophecy, how-ever, is not built upon the conscious use of this literary genre since satire as a discrete literary form postdates the prophets; rather the shared unconscious literary qualities are based upon the critical impulse that results in the use of similar literary constructions (Jemielity, *Satire*, pp. 24-25). He notes that the use of satire in a shame-based culture such as Israel is especially effective since one of the most powerful tools for disapproval is ridicule (Jemielity, *Satire*, p. 26).

So far this proposal addresses three of the great problems of Daniel studies. The final area of discussion is how this study contributes to the resolution of the problem of bilingualism in Daniel 1–6. The presence of Aramaic in the Masoretic text of Daniel is undoubtedly one of the most puzzling aspects of this book. Scholars wrestle particularly with the fact that the language division crosses the genre boundaries of stories and apocalypse. Dan. 1.1–2.4a is in Hebrew; Daniel 2.4b–7.28 is in Aramaic; and Daniel 8–12 is once again in Hebrew. There are four primary theories that attempt to explain the bilingualism in Daniel. They are: (1) a single author composed the book in two languages; (2) the entire book was composed originally in Hebrew, with subsequent translation into Aramaic; (3) the entire book was composed in Aramaic, with subsequent translation into Hebrew; and (4) older Aramaic material was redacted into a work being composed in Hebrew.[98] The arguments that Daniel was first composed entirely in Hebrew or Aramaic and subsequently partially translated have found few adherents. The other two positions, that a single author composed a bilingual work, or incorporated older Aramaic material into a Hebrew document are considered more plausible, but no one position has gained widespread support.[99]

The recognition of the vibrancy and popularity of the Daniel traditions allows for a more dynamic view of the development of the Daniel traditions.[100] In keeping with that dynamic view, scholars have proposed other novel and imaginative theories to explain the bilingual nature of Daniel beyond the idea that the older Aramaic material was redacted into a newer Hebrew work.[101] For example, James E. Miller argues that the bilingual book of Daniel was redacted at one time from two independent documents.[102] Since Daniel 2 existed in both documents, the author conflated the sources and primarily retained the Aramaic version. John J. Collins hypothetically proposes that Daniel 1 was written in Aramaic to introduce the court tales and then later translated into Hebrew when the Hebrew apocalyptic visions were added to the tales. Thus, the Hebrew portions of the book constitute an *inclusio* for the entire book.[103] A.S. van der Woude suggests that a version of

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98. Philip R. Davies (*Daniel* [OTG; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985], pp. 35-40, and Klaus Koch, *Das Buch Daniel* [Erträge der Forschung, 144; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1986], pp. 34-54) each includes brief overviews of these various positions.

99. For the historical arguments for these positions, see Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, pp. 12-13.

100. Holm, 'Biblical Story-Collection', pp. 120-23.

101. For good summaries of various positions, see Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, pp. 24-38; and Paul L. Redditt, *Daniel* (NCB; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), pp. 20-34.

102. James E. Miller, 'The Redaction of Daniel', *JSOT* 52 (1991), pp. 115-24.

103. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, p. 24.

Daniel 1–7 existed in Aramaic and that, with the addition of Daniel 8–12 in Hebrew, Daniel 1.1–2.4a was translated into Hebrew to serve as an appropriate introduction to the book.[104] It is interesting to note that all three of these approaches recognize the Aramaic portion of the book as a unified literary creation. Many modern scholars have accepted this conclusion, particularly since the work of A. Lenglet demonstrated the concentric chiastic arrangement of the Aramaic stories.[105]

Even though all these proposed solutions are possible and plausible, none of them has garnered strong support, and the lack of confirming evidence leaves other options open for solution. Jan-Wim Wesselius argues that the complexity of various redactional theories, such as the ones described above with their intricate translation scenarios makes them somewhat disingenuous.[106] He suggests that a synchronic approach, which recognizes the book of Daniel as a well-composed literary unit, yields better results.[107] Paul L. Redditt also contends that it is difficult to imagine reasons why an author or editor would translate only part of a book.[108] The arguments that a single author wrote both sections of Daniel, or that a redactor creatively combined older Aramaic material into a document completed in Hebrew are simply more plausible.[109]

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104. A.S. van der Woude, 'Die Doppelsprachigkeit des Buches Daniel', in van der Woude (ed.), *The Book of Daniel*, pp. 3-12.

105. A. Lenglet, 'La structure littéraire de Daniel 2–7', *Bib* 53 (1972), pp. 169-90.

106. Jan-Wim Wesselius, 'The Writing of Daniel', in Collins and Flint (eds.), *The Book of Daniel*, II, pp. 291-310 (292).

107. Jan-Wim Wesselius, 'Discontinuity, Congruence and the Making of the Hebrew Bible', *SJOT* 13 (1999), pp. 24-77 (63), argues that biblical authors copied vital structures of other texts, which they had subjected to a thorough literary analysis before setting up the structural framework of the text being written. Thus, he argues that the structure of Ezra and Daniel are strikingly similar and this explains the language shifts present in these two documents. These structural similarities strengthen the case for the intentional compositional unity of the book. For a later explanation of his overall argument, see Wesselius, 'The Writing of Daniel', pp. 291-310. Nevertheless, a simpler explanation exists for the presence of Aramaic in Daniel than is offered by Wesselius.

108. *Daniel*, pp. 18-19.

109. In an earlier study, Wesselius argued that there are a variety of grammatical constructions present in the Aramaic portion of Dan. 2–7 that give evidence of the unity of this section and thus lend support to the argument that the Aramaic section may have developed as a unit prior to its inclusion with the Hebrew sections. See J.W. Wesselius, 'Language and Style in Biblical Aramaic: Observations on the Unity of Daniel 2–6', *VT* 38 (1988), pp. 194-209. See also J.W. Wesselius, 'The Literary Nature of the Book of Daniel and the Linguistic Character of its Aramaic', *Aramaic Studies* 3 (2005), pp. 241-83. H.J.M. van Deventer, 'Testing-Testing, Do We Have a Translated Text in Daniel 1 and Daniel 7?', *JNSL* 31 (2005), pp. 93-106, argues that, on the basis of corpus-based translation studies, Daniel 1 (Hebrew) and Daniel 7 (Aramaic) should not be regarded as translated texts, but as original compositions.

The presence of two languages in the book of Daniel is intentional as suggested by Wesselius. It is not the product of the compositional history of the book but rather results from the actions of a single author or a significant, if not the final, redactor of the book. The Aramaic serves a key literary purpose as has been previously argued by B.T. Arnold.[110] It is of no consequence to this proposal which of these possible individuals might have created the bilingualism of the book. Instead the focus is on Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossia and its import in expressing conflicting ideological viewpoints.[111] This study contends that, in the book of Daniel, the use of Aramaic is itself an act of satire aimed against the ideology of empire.[112] Thus, comprehending that Daniel 1–6 is satire within a Bakhtinian framework will also provide an alternative explanation for the presence of two languages in the single document.

Bakhtin's thought offers a new ground for resolving many of the outstanding difficulties that traditional form-critical studies, comparative studies, and even some of the new literary studies have failed to resolve. Comprehending the stories of Daniel 1–6 as novelistic satires that confront imperial power opens a new level of meaning for these narratives. The proposed genre designation of this analysis suggests positive new directions for future scholarship in Daniel studies.

4. *Recent Developments in Daniel Studies*

The genre analysis proposed here is supported by two recent trends in Daniel scholarship. First, Daniel scholars, using a postcolonial perspective, have been reassessing the prevalent understandings of the social background, purpose, and tone of the Daniel 1–6 narratives in the last few years. Second, Daniel scholars have recently acknowledged the literary complexity of these stories and manifested an increasing appreciation both for the novelistic character of the Daniel stories and for the stories' ability to express creatively the frustrations and hopes of oppressed peoples. The social background, purpose, and tone of the Daniel narratives are the first areas of examination.

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110. 'The Use of Aramaic in the Hebrew Bible: Another Look at Bilingualism in Ezra and Daniel', *JNSL* 22 (1996), pp. 1-16.

111. For a concise description of heteroglossia, see Sue Vice, *Introducing Bakhtin* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), pp. 18-44.

112. Although Rowley offers a complicated and, in some part, implausible suggestion regarding the compositional history of the book of Daniel, he does make one very important point regarding the Aramaic portions of the book of Daniel: the purpose of the Aramaic portions of Daniel 1–6 were written to encourage those who suffered under the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes ('The Bilingual Problem of Daniel', *ZAW* 9 [1932], pp. 256-67 [261]).

There is an increasing recognition of the oppressive realities of social and political life for persons and cultures living under the sway of occupying and colonizing powers. Recent biblical scholarship has begun to question the common view that life was relatively benign and positive under the various empires of the ancient world.[113] Today in the field of biblical studies, the perspectives of postcolonial interpretation and cultural studies are sensitizing readers to the presence of power dynamics and differentials that result from the experience of colonization in the biblical materials.[114] In particular, postcolonial interpretation foregrounds the overlapping issues of empire, domination, nation, ethnicity, migration and language that are present in a variety of biblical texts.[115] As a result, scholars question the idea that ancient Israelite subjects accepted their domination passively and tried to fit easily into the colonizing imperial structures.

Tariq Ali's pithy observation at the beginning of this chapter reminds us of something so common that it is often forgotten. Persons who are held in subjugation against their will seldom blindly obey their masters but often resist in many direct and indirect ways. The social and political realities of exile create an atmosphere where covert and creative resistance is the best and sometimes the only option open to those who disagree with the ruling powers.[116] The depiction of conquered peoples as passive and docile is usually that of ruling groups towards their subjects. This depiction is, how-

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113. Daniel Smith-Christopher argues convincingly that life under imperial domination and the exilic experience exerts an enormous physical, social, and psychological trauma upon the victims of exile ('Reassessing the Historical and Sociological Impact of the Babylonian Exile (597/587–539 BCE)', in James M. Scott (ed.), *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish and Christian Conceptions* (Supplement to the Journal for the Study of Judaism, 56; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997), pp. 7-36; see also Daniel Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile* (OBT; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002); and Richard A. Horsley, *Religion and Empire: People, Power and the Life of the Spirit* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003).

114. See, e.g., Musa W. Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (St Louis: Chalice Press, 2000); R.S. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); R.S. Sugirtharajah (ed.), *The Postcolonial Bible* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998); R.S. Sugirtharajah (ed.), *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991); and J.S. Ukpong, 'Rereading the Bible with African Eyes: Inculturation and Hermeneutics', *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 91 (1995), pp. 3-14.

115. See, e.g., R.S. Sugirtharajah, 'Biblical Studies after the Empire: From a Colonial to a Postcolonial Mode of Interpretation', in Sugirtharajah (ed.), *The Postcolonial Bible*, pp. 12-23 (16).

116. James C. Scott suggests how one might more successfully read, interpret and understand the often-fugitive political conduct of subordinate groups (*Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* [New Haven: Yale University Press], 1990). His analysis is utilized in Chapter 5 of this study.

ever, only one point of view. James C. Scott notes, 'What postcolonialism does is to reverse this depiction and overturn the stereotypical images of colonialism and assert the authenticity of the 'natives' as subjects and their desire to be independent and, when necessary, troublesome and seditious.'[117] This understanding of the vicissitudes of life under foreign domination creates the possibility of new understandings of material such as the narratives of Daniel 1–6.[118]

Recent interpreters have been identifying a darker, more judgmental tone to these tales.[119] Danna Nolan Fewell argues that Daniel may be the foremost book of resistance against domination in the Bible.[120] The work of Daniel Smith-Christopher uses cultural studies and post-colonialism in his study of the book of Daniel, exploring the ways that subjugated peoples resist the encroachment of hegemonic imperial power and control.[121] The result is an interpretation that takes seriously the realities of imperial domination and understands the creative and persistent strategies of resistance that the subjugated Hebrew people utilized in order to survive the Diaspora experience.[122] If his analysis of the social realities of Daniel 1–6 is plausible, then it may be possible to demonstrate a genre designation that accords with this view of life under imperial domination. Shane Kirkpatrick also reads Daniel 1–6 through

117. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, p. 21.

118. Various scholars have identified a long tradition of objection to royal tyranny, which is expressed especially through the prophetic literature of the Bible. See, e.g., David Aberbach, *Imperialism and Biblical Prophecy: 750–500 BCE* (London: Routledge, 1993); Robert P. Carroll, 'Deportation and Diasporic Discourses in the Prophetic Literature', in Scott (ed.), *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish and Christian Conceptions*, pp. 63-88; Cristiano Groattenelli, *Kings and Prophets: Monarchic Power, Inspired Leadership and Sacred Text in Biblical Narrative* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); and Moshe Weinfeld, 'The Protest against Imperialism in Ancient Israelite Prophecy', in S.N. Eisenstadt (ed.), *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Age Civilizations* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1986), pp. 169-82.

119. See, e.g., Henze, 'Ideology of Rule', pp. 527-39. Earlier, Porteous noted that Dan. 2 reflects this darker view: 'It is argued that the stories of the first part of the book show a different attitude to the heathen world from that of the visions in the second part. It must be pointed out, however, that even within the stories there is a double attitude. Daniel as a civil servant is loyal to the heathen state so long as its royal master does not challenge his conscience. Yet in chapters 2 and 7, the doom awaiting the kingdoms symbolized by the beasts is proclaimed. Is it not possible that the author of our book himself shared this double attitude?' (*Daniel*, p. 19).

120. 'Chapter Five: Resisting Daniel', in *The Children of Israel: Reading the Bible for the Sake of our Children* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), pp. 117-30.

121. Daniel Smith-Christopher, 'Daniel', in Keck (ed.), *NIB*, VII (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), pp. 17-152.

122. Daniel Berrigan observes in his commentary on Daniel: 'The ancient story tells of conflicts of conscience in opposition to the sordid will of the powers' (*Daniel under the Siege of the Divine* [Farmington, PA: Plough Publishing House, 1998], p. x).

the lens of social-scientific models and articulates an understanding of these stories as resistance to the perceived threat of the loss of Judean identity and heritage in the face of an overwhelming and oppressive Hellenistic domination.[123] Resistance is expressed by means of a sustained comparison of the honor-laden relationship of patronage between the Judean people and their God, and the imposed relationship of their foreign oppressors. The comparison favors the Judean tradition and therefore sounds a call for the refusal and rejection of imperial claims.

The second force driving a reassessment of the Daniel narratives is an increasing appreciation for the novelistic character of the Daniel stories and how embellishment, invention, and humor are integral parts of these stories. First, Elias Bickerman recognized the complexity of the Daniel material by including it in what he designated as 'the four strange books of the Bible'.[124] He noted that the tales of Daniel 1–6 are wonderfully written and are to be read and listened to for pleasure, encouragement and entertainment.[125] In a later study, Bickerman noted that the literary skill of the Aramaic author of Daniel playfully reveals the conflict of foolish kings with wise heroes in an engaging manner.[126] The historical setting of these tales creates an air of verisimilitude for these stories that is used as a vehicle for the author's didactic intentions. Bickerman concludes:

> It is the art of the narrator, however, and not simply monotonous propaganda that attracted and still attracts readers to Daniel. The stories remind us of the Tales of the Arabian Nights. Daniel, the hero of the tales, is the man who against all odds, by virtue of his sheer intelligence and moral goodness like Joseph of old, succeeds at an oriental court. The king is the standard despot of oriental folk literature; the conflict between the hero and his antagonists is purely personal. The contrast is not between Jewish light and pagan darkness, but between the caprices of the foolish caliph and the wits of the hero. And the compiler makes these oriental court stories even more fascinating by skillfully correlating, and at the same time varying, these materials.[127]

These stories have an element of fun that must be accounted for.

An increasing recognition of comedy and satire in the Hebrew Bible, among other factors, led Wills to study the rise of Jewish novelistic popular literature. Such literature entails prose narratives of varying lengths and complexity written for a popular audience. He argues:

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123. *Competing for Honor: A Social Scientific Reading of Daniel 1–6* (BIS, 74; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2005).

124. Elias J. Bickerman, *Four Strange Books of the Bible* (New York: Schocken Books, 1968).

125. Bickerman, *Four Strange Books*, pp. 96-97.

126. Elias J. Bickerman, *The Jews in the Greek Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), pp. 51-65.

127. Bickerman, *Jews in the Greek Age*, p. 64.

> Central to the rise of the popular novel is what I term the novelistic impulse: the tendency under certain social conditions for authors to transfer oral stories over to a written medium, to embellish them and create others, using description, interior psychological exploration, dialogue, and other narrative devices that can be easily manipulated in written prose but are not as often utilized in oral. Popular written prose narrative, where it occurs, arises as a result of the novelistic impulse, but its creatures are quite varied.[128]

Wills notes that the book of Daniel has these traits, as do other Jewish writings such as Esther, Judith, Tobit, and Joseph and Aseneth.[129] These five novellas constitute evidence of a proliferation of popular Jewish writings that exercised an appeal to Jewish consciousness different from that which was available before. They create a fanciful atmosphere in which historical figures can be recast at will. Jews can become the most powerful officials in the land, and the tyrant Nebuchadnezzar is capable of repentance—or of being vanquished. They are funny. Wills states: 'The independent narratives [of Daniel 1–6] are charming, even humorous stories… Chapter 3…was probably intended as a humorous satire on the king'.[130] Although Wills would not go so far as to suggest that the narratives of Daniel 1–6 constitute a Jewish novel in themselves, or even that they are novelistic, he does believe that they contain 'the seeds of novelistic interest' in that they contain 'elements of danger, escape, and humor'.[131] This novelistic impulse helps explain both the popularity and entertainment value of these stories.[132]

Several years later, in a chapter entitled 'Serious Entertainment', Philip Davies described literature such as Daniel, Esther, Ruth, Jonah, Tobit and Judith as stories written primarily for pleasure, one of the characteristics of the novella.[133] Like Wills, he maintains that the presence of novelistic forms in these books suggests that these stories probably had oral precursors associated originally with a more narrow scribal audience, but later encompassed a wider popular audience as they spread. The tension between this elite scribal provenance and their ultimate popularity is important in this analysis of Daniel.

At the same time, Erich Gruen demonstrates that, for the Hellenistic Jews writing in Greek, the Hebrew Scriptures unleashed enormous creative ener-

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128. Wills, *Jewish Novel*, p. 5. For a fuller discussion of the interplay between oral and written forms, see Susan Niditch, *Oral World and Written Word: Ancient Israelite Literature* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1996).

129. Wills, *Jewish Novel*, pp. 30-39.

130. Wills, *Jewish Novel*, p. 44.

131. Wills, *Jewish Novel*, pp. 44-45; and Wills, 'The Jewish Novel', in John Barton (ed.), *The Biblical World*, I (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 149-61 (152).

132. Holm, 'Biblical Story-Collection', pp. 120-23.

133. *Scribes and Schools: The Canonization of Hebrew Scriptures* (Library of Ancient Israel; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1998), pp. 142-51.

gies.[134] He notes that many of these texts specifically used humor as a tool of self-preservation:

> The comic vein by no means undermines the serious intent. The texts carry meaningful messages, whether reinforcement of religious conviction, collective enlightenment, maintenance of ancient traditions and practices, or reassertion of national identity. For these authors, humor can advance earnest objectives by deriding their foes—or even by mocking their advocates. No inconsistency exists here. Comedy is rarely more effective than when it is serious.[135]

He argues that there is great interest in rewriting and embellishing stories from the scriptures,[136] and that comedy, irony, and wit are often major elements in many of these rewritings. The development of novelistic forms helps to explain both the popularity and entertainment value of these stories. In the further development of the Daniel traditions, additions to various stories lengthened and highlighted various episodes. Thus, the Hebrew Scriptures inspired not only reverence but also served to stimulate imagination and inventiveness.[137] Gruen notes that Susanna and Bel and the Dragon are

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134. *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), p. 110.

135. Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews amidst Greeks and Romans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 137.

136. *Heritage and Hellenism*, p. 137. The Daniel traditions enjoyed immense popularity during the Hellenistic period, and it is not surprising to find a variety of witnesses to and embellishments upon that tradition. Gruen's theories of textual development and vitality complement well the work of textual critics who acknowledge that textual development may not be linear but rather more dynamic in nature. See, e.g., Eugene Ulrich, 'Double Literary Editions of Biblical Narratives and Reflections on Determining the Form To Be Translated', in Ulrich (ed.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, pp. 34-50. Hengel notes that the significant tendency of Jewish literature in the Persian and early Hellenistic period is towards development with astonishing richness and pluriformity (Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, I, pp. 110-15). The ferment of activity around these traditions can easily be explained as the development of concurrent traditions (Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, I, pp. 38-43; Holm, 'Biblical Story-Collection', pp. 106-109). In his study on Dan. 4, Henze explores the implications of a continuous writing process of the Daniel tales based upon Ulrich's work (Henze, *Madness*, pp. 38-49). Henze agrees that the various versions of Daniel are not reducible to a linear chain of development and further posits that such a search deflects attention from the true multi-faceted character of the Daniel literature and wide-spread popularity (Henze, *Madness*, pp. 47-48). The existence of variant texts confirms the dynamic nature of the Daniel traditions and give credence to the argument that these tales may have circulated in oral as well as written forms (Wills, *Jewish Novel*, pp. 44-46). Although Gruen's work is in accord with this dynamic view of the development of the Daniel tradition, he also states: 'What matters is not so much when, where, why or by whom an individual text was drafted but the fact that these words were read, cited, excerpted and expanded over the course of several generations' (Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism*, p. xviii).

137. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism*, p. 137.

stories that are filled with humorous and comedic elements.[138] These comedic emphases in the later rewritings of the Daniel traditions are not the addition of foreign comedic elements into the Masoretic textual (MT) tradition; instead, they are built upon comedic and satiric elements that are already present in the MT.[139] This study focuses on the MT tradition to illustrate the plethora of such elements. Thus, instead of being fantastic and unrelated additions to Daniel, these stories grow out of the fertile soil of satire already present in the MT. Consequently, this study argues, in line with Bakhtin, that the presence of satiric humor is a key element of the novelistic impulse and invites a new genre designation for Daniel 1–6.

5. *Conclusion*

Genre analysis is at best an inexact science where interpreters test various hypotheses to ascertain the most helpful literary categories that best explain the most prominent features of the text. Paul B. Armstrong notes that interpretive plurality resides in the space between a rigid monistic understanding that there is a single correct reading or genre identification of a text and the nihilism of a radical relativism that all possible readings or genre identifications are equally valid.[140] He suggests three tests for evaluating the validity of a given reading. The first is inclusiveness, which is the way a proposed reading brings coherence to the various elements of a text. The second is intersubjectivity, which is the ability to convince others of the merits of a proposal. The third is efficacy, which is the ability of a reading to lead to new discoveries and continued comprehension of a text.

The common genre analyses that view the Daniel stories as entertaining and edifying court tales, hero narratives, or wisdom tales, much in the way that some read the *Wizard of Oz* books no further than as delightful children's literature, do not pass the first and second tests. Those genre designations that suggest that these narratives are guides to happy, successful, upper crust living under imperialism also fails these tests. The common genre understandings of Daniel 1–6 have served well in helping readers understand and make sense of some aspects of these texts, but many critical questions and areas of contention remain. None of the proposals has brought coherence to

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138. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism*, pp. 167-77. Gruen believes that Bel and the Dragon satirizes Cyrus, the Gentile ruler because he is described as someone who is dimwitted and is easily deluded (Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism*, p. 172). Susanna also uses comedic elements to embarrass those in authority, in this case the Jewish elders (Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism*, p. 175).

139. Henze notes that embellishment is a constituent element of the Daniel traditions (*Madness*, p. 49).

140. *Conflicting Readings: Variety and Validity in Interpretation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), pp. 12-19.

the various elements of the Daniel text. Moreover, none of the proposals has solved completely the remaining four major problems of the book, which are its social history, humor, bilingualism, and seeming conflicting attitude toward foreign powers. These genre classifications have not allowed for as much progress as one might hope. None, therefore, completely satisfies, and none has met anything but limited approval. This proposal, namely that Daniel 1–6 is ancient prenovelistic Menippean satiric literature, will explain more fully the difficult features of these stories.

This analysis suggests that reading the stories of Daniel 1–6 as satire establishes that these narratives are an expression of political and cultural resistance to the blandishments of empire. It therefore corroborates the reading of this material as resistance literature in line with postcolonial interpretations. Such a solution incorporates the full gamut of the literary features of Daniel 1–6. It addresses the social setting of the stories. It furthers understanding of the problem of the bilingualism of the text. Lastly, it reconciles the seeming differences in attitude toward ruling powers in the two major sections of the book. Although this analysis will not solve every dilemma that the book of Daniel presents to us because of its great complexity, this proposal does help further resolve many of the most significant issues that have plagued Daniel studies.

This study consists of six chapters beyond this introduction. Chapter 2 sets forth the methodological parameters for this project. Bakhtin's thought is examined at length. In particular, Chapter 2 sets forth Bakhtin's view of the 14 characteristics of Menippean satire, which will be the primary basis of this analysis of Daniel 1–6. Chapters 3–6 set forth the analysis of Daniel 1–6. The discussion proceeds along the lines of Bakhtin's 14 characteristics and divides into four chapters. The narratives are not necessarily read sequentially in the identification of those aspects of the Daniel stories that are related to each of the 14 characteristics of Menippean satire. Instead, the presence of examples of each characteristic in the text guides the analysis. First is an identification of those characteristics related to the comic and fantastic elements found in Daniel 1–6. The second task is an exploration of those attributes of the text that seek to question and expand the boundaries of personality and world and create a strong sense of the dialogical. Third, there is an assessment of the social and philosophical issues addressed by these narratives. The final analytical chapter examines the unification of diverse language and generic elements into an organic whole within Daniel 1–6. Each of these chapters provides details of how the author used satirical techniques to create an atmosphere of subversion and judgment. Additionally, Chapters 5 and 6 both address how a Bakhtinian analysis of Daniel 1–6 might contribute to the areas of scholarly dispute set forth in this introduction. Lastly, Chapter 7 summarizes briefly the findings of this study and suggests avenues of further research based on the results of this analysis.

Chapter 2

BAKHTIN'S METHOD, SATIRE, AND DANIEL 1–6

> Satire is not easy to write, and when it is read it is frequently misunderstood. Satire is like pornography; we know it when we see it. And like pornography, some people see it everywhere, and other people don't see it anywhere at all.[1]

1. *Introduction*

The works of Mikhail Bakhtin establish the rationale for the identification of Daniel 1–6 as prenovelistic Menippean satires, for his stimulating and suggestive concepts help readers understand Daniel in some new and thought-provoking ways and provide help understanding the intricacies of literary construction and power relations in the narratives of Daniel. This chapter introduces Bakhtin's theories, beginning with an investigation of his theory of language, the utterance, and heteroglossia, followed by his conceptions of dialogism, genre, the nature and development of the novel, and Menippean satire. This discussion of Menippean satire additionally employs the insights of a few theorists of satire, such as Dustin Griffin and John Snyder, who further develop Bakhtin's thought.[2]

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1. Don L.F. Nilsen, 'Satire—The Necessary and Sufficient Conditions—Some Preliminary Observations', *Studies in Contemporary Satire* 15 (1988), pp. 1-10.
2. Dustin Griffin, *Satire: A Critical Reintroduction* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1994); and John Snyder, *Prospects of Power: Tragedy, Satire, and the Theory of Genre* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1991). The work of Dustin Griffin, in particular, lies in the background of this analysis. Griffin is a modern theorist of satire whose work suggests a helpful theoretical structure for the study of satire (*Satire*, pp. 1-5). During the era of New Critical scholarship in the mid-twentieth century, numerous critics such as Robert Elliott, Northrup Frye and Alvin Kernan helped develop the modern theoretical understanding of the genre of satire (Elliott, *The Power of Satire*; Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*; and Alvin B. Kernan, *The Plot of Satire* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965]). They defined satire as a moral exercise that uses various rhetorical techniques to make judgments against recognizable targets. While this definition of satire still exerts strong influence today, Griffin proposes a new paradigm that suggests that satirical works primarily explore moral

2. *The Work of Mikhail Bakhtin*

An exploration of Mikhail Bakhtin's theoretical work is complicated by the circumstances of his life, his possible use of others to publish his works, and the nonlinear nature of his writings on many subjects.[3] His life (1895–1975) in Russia and the Soviet Union was marked by periods of upheaval and exile that often paralleled this contentious period of history. His writings were at times unpublished for many years, destroyed, and occasionally used for smoking materials during times of privation.[4] In some ways, he is the ultimate survivor of a period of time in Russian history where the struggles of authoritarian Soviet dogma with the constant yearning of the human spirit to be free and have individual choice parallels many of the concerns of his life and erudition.[5] In order to understand his work, it is necessary to survey briefly the major components of his thinking and scholarship.

a. *The Utterance, Language, and Heteroglossia*
The starting point for Bakhtin is the utterance, the fundamental unit of social discourse and the communication process.[6] An utterance is any

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issues rather than necessarily pronouncing direct and obvious judgments. His explanatory framework moves beyond the prevailing moral-didactic approach of Elliott, Frye, and Kernan to a more expansive view of satire, one that recognizes the vibrant contributions of the Menippean tradition. Griffin's overall argument is that satire is a more open than closed form. He emphasizes that satire cannot simply be defined by an appeal to formal features such as the use of a rigid verse structure or to its more general moral and rhetorical nature (*Satire*, p. 186). Griffin recognizes that openness to exploration and examination is part of the legacy of a Menippean approach to satire, and he develops his theoretical understanding of satire around this characteristic (*Satire*, pp. 31-34).

3.   For details on his life, see Michael Holquist, *Dialogism:Bakhtin and his World* (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 1-13; and Green, *Bakhtin and Biblical Scholarship*, pp. 11-25. Controversy also exists over several works published under the names of Pavel Medvedev and Valentin Vološinov, as evidence exists that Bakhtin may have been the original author of these works. For a concise summary of this issue and sources, see Vines, *Markan Genre*, pp. 33-34.

4.   For more details on this quasi-apocryphal event in Bakhtin's life, see Philip Alexander Dangler, 'The Mikhail Bakhtin Manuscript Smoking Page' [cited 18 May 2004], online: http://www.phaxda.com/bakhtin/. Also see Caryl Emerson, *The First Hundred Years of Mikhail Bakhtin* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 56.

5.   Green, *How Are the Mighty Fallen?*, pp. 19-20. See also Evelyn Cobley, 'Mikhail Bakhtin's Place in Genre Theory', *Genre* 21 (1988), pp. 321-38 (325).

6.   'The Problem of Speech Genres', in Emerson and Holquist (eds.), *Speech Genres*, pp. 60-102 (71-75).

unit of language from a single word to an entire text;[7] its boundaries are delineated by 'a change of speaking subjects'.[8] Language, according to Bakhtin, has two aspects: that which is repeatable, its basic system; and that which is unrepeatable, its plan or created purpose. An author employs the repeatable aspects of a language to express his or her unrepeatable planned communication.[9] The repeatable aspects of a language are deeply embedded in a history of use and meaning. Words, for instance, always bear the marks of their history. According to Bakhtin, each word has its own set of values because of its historical and social life, and the repeatable aspects of language, especially words, are always 'half someone else's'[10] and the 'common property of society'.[11] Bakhtin uses the term heteroglossia to describe the rich and complex nature of the repeatable aspects of language.[12] Authors select words and forms knowing that they have a certain life of their own. It is the author's selection of these particular repeatable aspects within a given content and structure that make a work unique.

The term heteroglossia embodies, however, more than just the history of words and linguistic and grammatical forms; it also incarnates the diverse ways in which humans use language within a complex of social interactions. Bakhtin explains that languages contain

> specific points of view on the world, forms for conceptualizing the world in words, specific world views, each characterized by its own objects, meanings, and values… As such, these languages live a real life, they struggle and evolve in an environment of social heteroglossia.[13]

Heteroglossia also exists, then, when a single language contains multiple social languages. Bakhtin maintains that heteroglossia 'represents the co-existence of socio-ideological contradictions between the present and the past, between the differing epochs of the past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present, between tendencies, schools, circles, and

7. Pam Morris, 'Introduction', in Morris (ed.), *The Bakhtin Reader* (London: Arnold, 1994), pp. 1-24 (4-5).

8. 'The Problem of Speech Genres', in Emerson and Holquist (eds.), *Speech Genres*, pp. 60-102 (81).

9. Mikhail M. Bakhtin, 'The Problem of the Text in Linguistics, Philology, and the Human Sciences: An Experiment in Philosophical Analysis', in Emerson and Holquist (eds.), *Speech Genres*, pp. 103-31 (105).

10. 'Discourse in the Novel', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 259-422 (293).

11. Vines, *Markan Genre*, p. 50.

12. 'Discourse in the Novel', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 259-422 (291-92).

13. 'Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity', in Holquist and Liapunov (eds.), *Art and Answerability*, pp. 4-256 (193).

so forth, all given a bodily form'.[14] Said another way: 'Heteroglossia…
has been called "Bakhtin's key term for describing the complex stratifi-
cation of language into genre, register, sociolect, dialect, and the mutual
interanimation of these forms" '.[15] For example, there are various types of
speech in any language, such as the languages of a profession, social class,
street slang, literary creation, etc. The fact that speech within an individual
language becomes differentiated demonstrates both the complex nature of
language and the existence of a clash of antagonistic social forces within the
culture.[16] Bakhtin's ultimate perception of language is that it is ideologically
saturated and stratified. The deep social richness of, and conflict within, a
given language gives rise to another manifestation of heteroglossia.

　When two or more languages are used within a culture or literary docu-
ment, another opportunity for heteroglossia exists.[17] This, too, may express
a matrix of intentions and social conflicts, as Sue Vice states:

> Once it enters the novel, heteroglossia does not simply consist of a neutral
> series of different languages; these languages are bound to conflict at the very
> least with the 'author's' language, with each other, and with any surround-
> ing languages which do not necessarily appear in a text. If they appear in a
> character's mouth, they become '*another's speech in another's language*'…,
> expressing the author's intentions but in a refracted way. Heteroglossia is
> thus a double-voiced discourse, as it 'serves two speakers at the same time
> and expresses simultaneously two different intentions: the direct intention of
> the character who is speaking, and the refracted intention of the author'.[18]

Thus, heteroglossia is a three-fold dynamic that reflects the sociological
trajectory of language within a given culture. Bakhtin's understanding that
language is fundamentally heteroglossial and social gives rise to yet another
one of his key concepts, dialogism.

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　14. 'Discourse in the Novel', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 259-422
(291).

　15. Vice, *Introducing Bakhtin*, p. 18. She continues: 'This description of hetero-
glossia takes up terms from contemporary sociolinguistics, such as "sociolect" (dis-
course determined by different social groups according to "age, gender, economic
position, kinship" and so on) and "register" (discourse belonging to "the lawyer, the
doctor, the businessman, the politician")…which were unavailable to Bakhtin' (Vice,
citing Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp.
259-422 [289]).

　16. Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp.
259-422 (272); and Morris, 'A Glossary of Key Terms: Heteroglossia', in Morris (ed.),
Bakhtin Reader, pp. 247-52 (249).

　17. Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp.
259-422 (294-96); Morris, 'Introduction', in Morris (ed.), *Bakhtin* Reader, pp. 1-24
(15-16), and Vice, *Introducing Bakhtin*, p. 38.

　18. Emphasis supplied, *Introducing Bakhtin*, p. 19, citing Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the
Novel', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 259-422 (324).

b. *Dialogism*

Bakhtin offers several definitions of dialogism. Emerson and Holquist summarize:

> Dialogism is the characteristic epistemological mode of a world dominated by heteroglossia. Everything means, is understood, as part of a greater whole—there is constant interaction between meanings, all of which have the potential of conditioning others… This dialogic imperative, mandated by the pre-existence of the language world relative to any of its current inhabitants, insures that there can be no actual monologue.[19]

Bakhtin's use of the term is, however, multi-leveled.

First, dialogism suggests that there is no word, meaning or thought that does not enter into an interactive relationship with its past, present, and possible future meaning, and with the other words, meanings and thoughts contained in an utterance.[20] Vice observes of this phenomenon:

> …as we live among the many languages of social heteroglossia, dialogism is necessarily the way in which we construct meaning. The language we use in personal or textual discourse is itself composed of many languages, which have all been used before. At any moment, our discourse will be synchronically informed by the contemporary languages we live among, and diachronically informed by their historical roles and the future roles we anticipate for them. Each utterance, whether it takes the form of a conversation in the street or a novel, consists of the unique orchestration of well-worn words. As in an everyday dialogue, all these languages will interact with each other, jockey for position, compromise, effect a temporary stabilization before moving on to the next construction of meaning.[21]

Second, the linguistic material of an utterance requires a context and structure in order to communicate meaning. The fact that authors must choose words with a social history to create that content and structure makes clear that there is a complex interaction between the chosen words, the content, and the structure, and this, too, is a dialogical process.

Third, in the author's shaping of his or her artistic creation, more than one intention and voice comes into being. The author's voice cannot exist alone within a piece because its words are not his or hers alone. Texts may contain unconscious, unintended meanings that arise from the heteroglossic nature of language. In this way, multiple intentions and voices find their home in a text, making the text double-voiced or dialogic.[22] As Michael E. Vines acknowledges:

19. 'Glossary', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 423-34 (426).

20. Morris, 'A Glossary of Key Terms: Dialogue', in Morris (ed.), *The Bakhtin Reader*, pp. 247-52 (247).

21. Vice, *Introducing Bakhtin*, p. 46.

22. Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 259-422 (427).

> Bakhtin suggests that a text is able to mean more than its author consciously intended because it may contain intuited meaning. Many texts live a long and productive socio-ideological life… Because great literary works draw on the rich heteroglot potential of language, they possess semantic potential of which the author may be only partially aware. This potential surfaces in later generations when the text encounters new socio-ideological perspectives. Dialogic exposure to positions of genuine alterity often reveals previously unrecognized meaning in great literary works.[23]

As a consequence, in referring of authorial intention that shapes a text, Bakhtin means not the author's original intention but rather the intention of the author within the text, or what is known in contemporary literary criticism as the implied author.[24] To Bakhtin, this particular aspect of the dialogic nature of the utterance disputes any authorial claim to absolute control over the meaning of an utterance.

Fourth, an author inserts his or her unique expression into a pre-existing stream of utterances that is both historic and social. An utterance always responds to what came before it and anticipates that which comes after it.[25] Communication, therefore, is a socially conditioned dynamic process. However unique an utterance may appear to be, it is inherently intertextual and is shaped by social and ideological forces. No one can escape this fact. Bakhtin also used the word 'dialogism' to describe this interactive, intertextual process of communication.[26]

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23. *Markan Genre*, pp. 52-53.

24. Bakhtin addresses authoring in his article, 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes toward a Historical Poetics', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 84-258 (254-57); see also Vines, *Markan Genre*, p. 52.

25. Vines expresses this concept well: 'Unlike the sentence [that is an isolated unit of speech and only capable of abstract meaning], the utterance assumes a definite position with respect to content; it evaluates its subject, deems it adequate or condemns it as inadequate, declares it beautiful or base, pure or defiled. The utterance orients the potential meaning of the sentence to a specific time and place and set it within the scope of a discrete set of social values. The preformed sentence or utterance can only generate a response within this metalinguistic context. Only here can the reader or hearer judge the appropriateness of the utterance, deeming it right or wrong, fair or unfair, good or bad. Bakhtin emphasizes that the utterance's ability to generate a response is a necessary condition for human communication. Without a response, there can be no dialogue and therefore no human discourse. Consequently, every utterance is always oriented toward other utterances. It is simultaneously a response to previous utterances and the basis of subsequent utterance. These metalinguistic aspects of the utterance constitute its active social life. Bakhtin claimed that since the social dimension of the utterance was beyond the scope of the sentence as a linguistic unit, its meaning was completely beyond the range of the science of linguistics' (*Markan Genre*, p. 57).

26. 'Discourse in the Novel', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 259-422 (276).

Last of all, dialogism exists because the intentions of both authors and readers blend in any reading, as Vines observes:

> We cannot confine meaning of a work to its author's original intent in a narrow sense, nor, on the other hand, can the text mean anything someone wants it to mean. The meaning of a text exists in the dialogic space between these two extreme positions.[27]

Utterances are, in complex ways, always responses to other utterances. Hence, the most appropriate context for the interpretation of a text is the socially determined ideological context that birthed its creation. An utterance cannot simply mean whatever the reader wants it to mean because its words, content, structure, and their cultural history and milieu place limits on its meaning. Nonetheless, the rich social diversity in which an utterance is formed encourages the reader to be open and aware of multiple meanings in a given text. The reader, then, is allowed to apply his or her own personal and social contexts to intuit the meaning of a text, which exists in the dialogic space between the two extremes of authorial intention and a reader's construction. Thus, dialogism rests between two extremes in communication: (1) authoritarian objectivism, which is rigidly and abstractly dogmatic; and (2) individualist subjectivism, which is radically relativistic.[28]

Bakhtin's views of dialogism have profound social implications. Authoritarian objectivism, which stands in contrast to the idea of dialogism, produces the monolog that seeks to deny the dialogic nature of existence and attempts to be the only and final word. To Bakhtin's mind, monologic forms are either a primitive form of utterance or an abuse of the utterance because sophisticated discourse is inherently dialogic; hence, certain early types of literature, such as 'the epic, the tragedy, the history, classical rhetoric', are designed to convey information in a monologic fashion.[29] They do not contain the multiplicity of voice allowed by dialogism. Because empires and authoritarian regimes attempt to control speech and thought through the use of the monolog, all instances of dialogism in literature serve to undermine controlling authorities and voices. In addition, a diversity of speech within a classed society may track actual inequality, whether that diversity is the different registers, sociolects, dialects, etc. of a single language or is the use of multiple languages in a culture. Allon White argues: 'because languages are socially unequal, heteroglossia implies dialogic interaction in which the prestige languages try to extend their control and subordinated languages try to avoid, negotiate, or subvert that control'.[30] The dialogic use of socially unequal languages in a text can, therefore, be used to subvert authoritative

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27. *Markan Genre*, pp. 52-53.
28. Vines, *Markan Genre*, p. 40; and Green, *How Are the Mighty Fallen?*, p. 25.
29. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 107.
30. Quoted by Vice, *Introducing Bakhtin*, p. 19, without reference.

discourses.[31] With this background work in Bakhtin's sociological poetics complete, it is time now to address his understanding of genre, which is central to this project.

c. *Genre*

Bakhtin maintains that the typical literary text is a complex combination of content arranged in a particular literary structure that is communicated by language. Reality is socially conditioned and, because it is also progressive, it is unfinalized. Because reality is unfinalized, humans are limited in their ability to understand it, and hence persons seek to create snapshot-like images of reality that are finalized in order to make sense of the world.[32] Aesthetic productions are part of those created images.

In order for an utterance to be finalized and whole, it must have three features: '(1) semantic exhaustiveness of the theme; (2) the speaker's plan or speech will; (3) typical compositional and generic forms of finalization'.[33] Without compositional and generic form a piece cannot reach its full potential: 'The semantic potential of great literary works results from both their heteroglot potential and their relatively stable form of linguistic expression'.[34] Bakhtin defines genres as 'relatively stable thematic, compositional, and stylistic types of utterances'.[35]

Bakhtin believes that genres, just like words, 'are an expression of human consciousness', which is 'thoroughly social'.[36] Genres, according to Bakhtin, are also filled with socio-ideological meaning from their use history, just like words. They are 'semi-stable forms of perception and evaluation', which are 'rich in accumulated meanings and axiological intonations'.[37] In attempting to solve the puzzle of how Dostoevsky's novels seemed to unconsciously bear the features of pre-novelistic Menippean satire, Bakhtin suggests that 'genre remembers what it needs to do and carried Dostoevsky, so to speak, into that project and assisted him to work with the pre-novelistic but dialogic character of those ancient satires. Dostoevsky did not need to know in detail what he was doing; his selected and inhabited genre carried the logic and memory for him'.[38] Each genre carries with it its own baggage for good or evil; in Dostoevsky's case, for good. An author can no more shake off the

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31. Vice, *Introducing Bakhtin*, p. 27.

32. Vines, *Markan Genre*, p. 37.

33. Bakhtin, 'Problem of Speech Genres', in Emerson and Holquist (eds.), *Speech Genres* pp. 60-102 (76).

34. Vines, *Markan Genre*, p. 53.

35. 'Problem of Speech Genres', in Emerson and Holquist (eds.), *Speech Genres* pp. 60-102 (82-83).

36. Cobley, 'Mikhail Bakhtin's Place', pp. 321-38 (324).

37. Vines, *Markan Genre*, p. 53.

38. Green, *How are the Mighty Fallen?*, p. 61.

sociological meaning of a particular genre than the meaning of words. Consequently, genre is 'a literary order which carries social evaluations'.[39]

Vines recognizes that, 'As a metalinguistic rather than a linguistic category, a speech genre is a semi-stable axiological [or socio-ideological] pattern associated with a particular material form and semantic content. It shares this pattern with similar utterances, to which it relates dialogically'.[40] The commonalities within a genre help to give utterances structure and stability, and for this very reason, authors use them to structure utterances.[41] According to Thomas Kent, 'genre constitutes the public forum that an utterance must assume in order to be comprehensible'.[42] As children, we must learn what genre is and how to work with it if our communications are to become socially appropriate and thereby the use of genre becomes finally a deeply embedded, almost intuitive process, which we seize upon in order to structure helpfully our communications.[43] Like words, authors also adapt genres to their intention. Nonetheless, there is one difference between genres and words: genres are not stable in the same way as words; they are much more 'flexible, plastic, and free'.[44] Vines explains,

> In everyday use, the individual utterance may either draw on the metalinguistic resources typical of the speech genre, or nuance the generic pattern by intoning the utterance with a slightly different accent. In this way, a speaker is able to use the resources of a genre to express either agreement or disagreement with its tradition. The creative use of a speech genre also affects its future trajectory.[45]

Genres develop over time in this way.

For Bakhtin, genre is 'the site where social codes intersect with poetic texts'.[46] The author shapes in his or her creation an overarching, socio-ideologically guided form through the use of both words and genres, keeping

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39. Cobley, 'Mikhail Bakhtin's Place', pp. 321-38 (325).

40. Vines, *Markan Genre*, pp. 57-58.

41. There are three synopses of Bakhtin's work on genre, and this analysis utilizes these resources as well as primary source material in the exploration of the nature of genre. These include Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson, *Mikhail Bakhtin:Creation of a Prosaics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), especially ch. 7, 'Theory of Genres', pp. 271-305; Green, *How Are the Mighty Fallen?*, pp. 56-64; and Vines, *Markan Genre*, especially ch. 2, 'Bakhtin's Theory of Genre', pp. 33-68.

42. 'Hermeneutics and Genre: Bakhtin and the Problem of Communicative Interaction', in Frank Farmer (ed.), *Landmark Essays on Bakhtin, Rhetoric and Writing* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1998), pp. 33-49 (41-42).

43. Morson and Emerson, *Creation of a Prosaics*, pp. 291-92.

44. Bakhtin, 'Problem of Speech Genres', in Emerson and Holquist (eds.), *Speech Genres* pp. 60-102 (79).

45. *Markan Genre*, pp. 57-58.

46. Cobley, 'Mikhail Bakhtin's Place', pp. 321-38 (325).

their socio-historical intonations in mind, and this overarching form is what Bakhtin calls the architectonic structure of a piece. He distinguishes between the compositional form of a text, which contains the literary forms of the text, and the architectonic form, which is the ideology of the text.[47] Genre as a social construct is, therefore, more than its taxonomical forms. Although one may be able to see regular formal patterns in specific genres, Bakhtin believes this may be accidental: 'The essence of genre is its metalinguistic form or pattern; what Bakhtin calls its "form-shaping ideology" '.[48] Cobley states, 'If genre is the site where social codes intersect with poetic texts, then generic features must be approached as dynamic carriers of ideological meaning and should not be reduced to static elements in a synchronic configuration'.[49] The end result of the author's effort is a mechanical, compositional, metalinguistic, and architectonic unity[50] that consists of numerous parts that are intentionally interrelated.[51] Due to the workings of heteroglossia and dialogism, however, these parts may also interrelate in some important but quite unintentional ways. This fact requires the interpreter to discern the meaning of a text by considering the work as an architectonic whole, rather than by focusing on any one individual part. The traditional interpretive techniques of linguistics are not entirely helpful in understanding the utterance and traditional genre criticism can offer only incomplete analysis.[52]

Customary conceptions of genre emphasize that characteristic features, formal qualities, and literary techniques of texts help readers understand that groups of compositions, such as comedies, epics, or tragedies, share resemblances and can be fruitfully compared to one another.[53] Traditional genre criticism approaches literature in a way that assumes that if readers know the genre of a particular piece of literature, then that understanding guides and helps the reader read and interpret the work more correctly.[54] Problematically, Evelyn Cobley observes:

47. Vines, *Markan Genre*, pp. 34-35.
48. Vines, *Markan Genre*, pp. 53-54.
49. 'Mikhail Bakhtin's Place', pp. 321-38 (326).
50. Vines, *Markan Genre*, p. 54.
51. Vines, *Markan Genre*, p. 51; citing Bakhtin, 'From Notes Made in 1970–71', in Emerson and Holquist (eds.), *Speech Genres*, pp. 132-58 (148). For theoretical reflections on architectonics and a helpful parallel from the field of architecture, see Green, *How Are the Mighty Fallen?*, pp. 412-16.
52. Vines, *Markan Genre*, p. 57.
53. Alastair Fowler, 'Genre', in Martin Coyle *et al.*(eds.), *Encyclopedia of Literature and Criticism* (Detroit: Gale Research, 1991), pp. 151-63 (151). For instance, Northrop Frye states: 'The study of genres is based on analogies in form' (*The Anatomy of Criticism*, p. 95).
54. Wilfred L. Guerin, 'Genre Criticism', in Wilfred L. Guerin *et al.*(eds.), *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 4th edn, 1999), pp. 307-11 (307).

> Traditional genre theory is called upon to produce classifications according to principles which preexist the particular texts they must account for. Since generic *a priori* principles have been determined by the works of literature these principles seek to explain, individual works are paradoxically used to create the norm against which they are also judged.[55]

She, therefore, goes on to explain:

> Genre theory represents a special case of the hermeneutical circle that Heidegger says plagues all acts of interpretation: 'Any interpretation which is to contribute understanding, must already have understood what is to be interpreted'. Faced with this paradox, genre theorists can either assert the possibility of universal principles or accept the arbitrariness of genre categories. Most genre theorists have attempted to narrow the gap between norms and actual works, trying to maintain scientific rigor while being flexible enough to accommodate historical change.[56]

Recent genre scholarship recognizes that normative genre theories based on absolute and universal principles are limited because they are based on idealistic genre categories outside the text and that these categories only approximately describe the actual features of any particular work.[57] Bakhtin, therefore, rejects two features of traditional genre criticism.

First, he rejects any analysis that focuses on form alone because genre is a flexible socially constructed phenomenon. The main problem of genre study in the past, according to Bakhtin, is the under-appreciation of the social character of literary works. Since genre is a creative human expression, a socio-historical discourse, it cannot be analyzed atomistically but must be interpreted with reference to its specific context. Bakhtin states:

> The separation of style and language from the question of genre has been largely responsible for a situation in which only individual and period-bound overtones of a style are the privileged subjects of study, while its basic social tone is ignored. The great historical destinies of genres are overshadowed by the petty vicissitudes of stylistic modifications…[58]

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55. 'Mikhail Bakhtin's Place', pp. 321-38 (321).

56. Cobley, 'Mikhail Bakhtin's Place', pp. 321-38 (322).

57. This is one of the reasons that one piece of literature can engender so many different genre designations. For example, see Thomas Beebee, where he describes the variety of genre designations for the novel *Moby Dick* (*The Ideology of Genre: A Comparative Study of Generic Instability* [University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994], p. 24). See also Daniel Chandler, 'An Introduction to Genre Theory' (cited January 20, 2008), online: http.//www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/intgenre/intgenre1.html.

58. Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel', in Emerson and Holquist (eds.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 259-422 (259).

Genre analysis is not simply the taxonomic cataloging of characteristics. Instead, it is the attempt to relate a work with other works that are engaged in the same type of dialogue. Comparisons according to similarities and patterns of material, form, and content miss the axiological and ideological position of a work of literature. The socio-historical axiological position is the essence of genre and Bakhtin's socio-historical poetics identifies these qualities.

Second, he believes that genre is the starting point of poetics, not the end of the analytical process: 'Poetics should really begin with genre, not end with it. For genre is the typical form of the whole work, the whole utterance. A work is only real in the form of a definite genre. Each element's constructive meaning can only be understood in connection with genre'.[59] When one begins to read a work, one reads it for the first time without knowing what type of work it is, and thus starts subconsciously or uncritically to supply a genre or infer the genre from clues in the text.[60] While reading, however, it is important to remember that literature is always embedded in a sociological context; it is a creative aesthetic expression that conveys a social and ideological perception of reality. Consequently, an appropriate evaluation of a literary unit needs to comprehend both the text's overall unity and ideology.[61] Informed poetics requires acquaintance with the work as a whole, both in its literary conventions and cultural values.[62] In summary, Bakhtin's 'sociological orientation [of genre] inverts traditional hierarchies and subjects them to different lines of questioning'.[63]

It is not that all other genre analyses ignore that literary texts are embedded in a sociological context. For instance, in biblical form criticism, a presumption exists that particular social situations create specific genres. That is precisely why one can move backward from the forms of a text, to its genre, to the sociological situation lying behind the genre, the text's *Sitz im Leben*. As Joe Foley so helpfully explains:

59. Bakhtin and Medvedev, *Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*, p. 134. This quote is a critique of Russian formalism that asserts that the study of literature begins with the elements of language and then considers increasingly complex elements in ascending order such as the sentence, paragraph… Thus the apprehension of genre comes at the end of a long process of investigation. See also Morson and Emerson, *Creation of a Prosaics*, p. 272.

60. Vines, *Markan Genre*, p. 34.

61. Vines, *Markan Genre*, p. 37.

62. Vines, *Markan Genre*, p. 34. See also James L. Bailey, who uses Bakhtinian categories in describing the apprehension of genre as dependent upon recognizing the patternedness, social setting, and rhetorical impact of a work ('Genre Analysis', in Joel B. Green [ed.], *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995], pp. 197-221 [200-203]).

63. Cobley, 'Mikhail Bakhtin's Place', pp. 321-38 (324). See also Craig Howes, who maintains that Bakhtin 'argues for a new generic hierarchy' ('Rhetorics of Attack: Bakhtin and the Aesthetics of Satire', *Genre* 18 [1986], pp. 215-43 [231]).

> Form criticism…attempted to show that in the development of the generic structures in the biblical texts, there were shifts and changes, often very slight but effective over a period of time and that genre was evidently part of a number of patterned processes by which systems of ideas and beliefs (ideologies) were constructed, transmitted and maintained. Form critics also realized by the foregrounding of the theory of *Sitz im Leben* that the generic structure of the text has to be placed in the wider context of social theory to show the complex relations between discourses, institutions, power and subjects. According to this line of thought then, genres in the Bible can be interpreted as causes and effects of dynamic and changing social processes where maintenance and transmission of biblical texts were constructed so that the people of Israel could make sense (to themselves and to others) of their everyday and institutionally ratified worlds.[64]

The problem with the work of form critics from a Bakhtinian perspective is two-fold. First, 'too often, they abstracted the pericope from its generic context and indulged in overly speculative historical theories about its original cult function'.[65] Bakhtin himself said of similar literary critics of his own time that they reduced the ideological dialogic elements of a text to an 'actual real-life struggle among schools and trends'.[66] Second, Bakhtin argues that one must look at both literary forms and social setting to determine genre. Bakhtin's understanding of genre, therefore, is not purely sociological. He has a few of his own generic lists of the taxonomical features of literature as do traditional critics. Nonetheless, Bakhtin prioritizes the sociological aspect in genre analysis. In essence, Bakhtin moves from sociological context and forms to genre in his analysis. Biblical form critics, on the other hand, move in their analyses from forms to genre to sociological context.

Bakhtin believes that ideology is inseparable from its expression in a particular time and space and is reanimated when the socio-ideological context of its present day performance awakens its potential.[67] The relatively stable axiological or ideological position of the implied author in the text co-exists with the ever-changing axiological position of the reader of the text. What brings a text to life, then, is not an appreciation of its forms or content but the meaningful dialogic interaction between distinct axiological positions. The author creates the literary world where this dialogue takes place, and the aesthetic and axiological characteristics of this created world make up

64. 'Form Criticism and Genre Theory', *Language and Literature* 4 (1995), pp. 173-91 (176).

65. Vines, *Markan Genre*, p. 65.

66. 'Epic and Novel: Toward a Methodology for the Study of the Novel', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 3-40 (7).

67. Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and Chronotope', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 84-258 (256).

the architectonic form of the work, which in turn gives a literary work its unity and constitutes the essence of a work's genre.[68] The most important indicator of the axiological perspective of the author and his/her created world is reflected through the time and space of a work. Bakhtin defines the intrinsic connectedness of time and space relationships that are expressed artistically as the chronotope.[69]

The chronotope of a work is to be distinguished from the author's time and space, as literary works transcend those attributes of the author's world. The chronotope is, rather, the internal content of a work that shapes 'an axiologically charged, spatially and temporally finalized world that provides a specific metalinguistic context for a literary work'.[70] Every aesthetic expression has a chronotope. Nevertheless, in great works of art and literature, the richness and complexity of their internal world allows them to 'break through the boundaries of their own time' and sometimes 'live [lives] more intense and fuller than are their lives within their own time', thereby transcending their authors' and artists' worlds[71] and the world of each performance, seeing, or reading.[72] The text creates a dialogic interaction between the time and space of the implied author as represented in the chronotope and the ever-changing time and space of the text's readers.

Because the chronotope is filled with the author's values and judgments, the chronotope is, for Bakhtin, what best defines genre and generic distinctions.[73] Vines explains, 'Since ideology is inseparable from its expression in a specific time and space, the characteristic chronotope of a text is the best indicator of its form-shaping ideology and therefore the best indicator of its genre'.[74] Specific chronotopes correspond to particular genres that represent particular worldviews. Bakhtin explains chronotope using the categories of epic and novel as foils for one another. The epic is a static genre that has long since completed its development while the novel is by definition in a state of flux and change.[75] The focus of the epic is always in the historical past, and the atmosphere of the genre produces a sense of official truth, while the novel focuses on the present and expresses a variety of values.

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68. Vines, *Markan Genre*, p. 60.

69. Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and Chronotope', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 84-258 (84).

70. Vines, *Markan Genre*, p. 59.

71. Bakhtin, 'Response to a Question from the Novy Mir Editorial Staff', in Emerson and Holquist (eds.), *Speech Genres*, pp. 1-9 (4).

72. Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and Chronotope', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 84-258 (256).

73. Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and Chronotope', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 84-258 (85).

74. Vines, *Markan Genre*, p. 66.

75. Bakhtin, 'Epic and Novel', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 3-40 (3).

> This idealization of the past in high genres has something of an official air. All external expressions of the dominant force and truth (the expression of everything conclusive) were formulated in the valorized-hierarchical category of the past, in a distanced and distant image (everything from gesture and clothing to literary style, for all are symbols of authority). The novel, however, is associated with the eternally living element of unofficial language and thought (holiday forms, familiar speech, profanation).[76]

For Bakhtin, literary works are generically similar when they finalize their internal world similarly.[77] Genre cannot, then, be about a grouping of similar formal qualities of a text, a text's taxonomy. Instead the works within a given genre must have similar 'ideologically trajectories', or share a 'continuous chain of utterances that share a similar perspective on the world', which is fundamentally about chronotope.[78]

Thus, in any Bakhtinian study of genre it is far more important to study ideologically similar works than taxonomically similar works. As Vines concludes,

> From the standpoint of what Bakhtin calls 'great time', literary works that share a similar form-shaping ideology are engaged in an on-going conversation that may span centuries. This conversation may be direct or indirect; what establishes the generic connection is the way an author exploits the axiological potential of a particular form-shaping ideology. It stands to reason that no two aesthetic works will have identical axiological perspectives. Nevertheless, similarities between works whose axiological viewpoints overlap share a generic relationship, and formal patterns. Within these relatively stable patterns, we can expect to find both continuity and transformation. Both aspects are significant. Continuity preserves the particular pattern of perception while transformation adapts the pattern to new socio-historical contexts.[79]

This understanding lays the groundwork for Bakhtin's discussion of the nature and development of the novel.[80]

d. *The Novel*

Bakhtin was particularly interested in the novel. His description of the novel focuses on the fact that it is a unique style of discourse rather than being identifiable by its formal elements or thematic concerns. For Bakhtin, the

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76. Bakhtin, 'Epic and Novel', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 3-40 (20).

77. Vines, *Markan Genre*, p. 63

78. Vines, *Markan Genre*, p. 63.

79. Vines, *Markan Genre*, p. 67.

80. For a recent study of genre and Biblical studies see, Roland Boer (ed.), *Bakhtin and Genre Theory in Biblical Studies* (SemeiaSt, 63; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007).

novel is unique because it is characterized by a social, ideological, historical, and semantic diversity that is a constituent part of every human utterance.[81] As genres have specific chronotopes, the different types of novels have particular chronotopic identities, but the novel is typified by a concern with the present.[82] It commonly introduces flexibility into the usage of various forms by utilizing laughter, irony, humor, and open-endedness. The novel is also characterized by a large diversity of sub-genres, which it often parodies. The novel additionally contains a diversity of languages and voices:

> The novel can be defined as a diversity of social speech types (*sometimes even a diversity of languages*) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized… The novel orchestrates all its themes, the totality of the world of objects and ideas depicted and expressed in it, by means of speech styles and by the differing individual voices that flourish under such conditions.[83]

Bakhtin maintains that the diversity of languages and voices may produce three different types of dialogism within the novel. The first is primordial dialogism of discourse, which arises between utterances inside a single national language. The second is that which arises because of the variety of social speech types. The third emerges from multilingual cultures and polyglot texts. The novel is also polyphonic, which is an aspect of the genre that is greater than its heteroglossia or dialogism. When a novel is polyphonic, the protagonist stands apart from his or her creator and the narrator and is 'a fully valid, autonomous carrier of his own individual word'.[84] The hero is self-conscious and the narrator does not have an overbearing, authoritative voice, nor does the narrator force a monologic word upon the reader.[85]

The novel is not, however, just a random combination of forms, genres, diverse language elements, and free-speaking characters; neither is it characterized by the formation and development of the plot. There are also coalescing forces at work in the novel that bring it into one unified system, a system that transcends plot and its development. To Bakhtin's way of thinking, the emergence of the novel demands that genre theory be radically restructured because the novel brings together into a unified whole a variety of viewpoints and discourses in such a way that they remain in tension with one another.[86]

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81. 'Discourse in the Novel', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 259-422 (291).

82. Bakhtin, 'Epic and Novel', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 3-40 (7).

83. Emphasis added, Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 259-422 (262-63).

84. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 5.

85. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 48.

86. 'Epic and Novel', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 3-40 (8).

It was the novel that brought Bakhtin to his genre theories, and although his analysis primarily concerns the modern novel, he also acknowledges that the modern novel is the end result of a maturation process that began thousands of years ago.[87] He recognizes that there are several times in history when pre-novelistic forms became a dominant type of literature, including most importantly for this study, the Hellenistic period.[88] During the Hellenistic period, the Greco-Roman novelistic innovations of biographies, romances, and satires become more common. These new genres are responses to the social polyglossia, the other-languagedness, of the Hellenistic world. They are new creative literary forms for a heterogeneous world that begin to supplant the older epic literary forms, which were characteristic of a more homogeneous social situation.[89] For Bakhtin, then, the novel refers to whatever form of expression within a literary system that reveals the limits of that system as arbitrary and inadequate thereby rendering the novel as fundamentally a critical discourse. Thus, Bakhtin sees in early novelistic impulses an effort to undermine the official or high culture of its society.[90] One of the precursors of the novel is the development of the literary form known as Menippean satire.

e. *Menippean Satire*

Bakhtin enumerates various precursors of the novel that exist in classical antiquity and includes writings referred to as *spoudogéloion* or 'serio-comical' literature.[91] There are four basic characteristics of the serio-comical. First, despite the great external diversity of these writings, they share a connection to '*carnivalistic folklore*', or '*carnivalized literature*', in which both 'a strong rhetorical element' and an 'atmosphere of *joyful relativity*' sit side-by-side.[92] The concept of carnivalized literature is especially developed in the Middle Ages when times of carnival allowed for the expression of alternative, proscribed, and potentially disruptive challenges and behaviors to status quo versions of reality.[93] The carnival suspended hierarchy, all

87. 'From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 41-83 (50).

88. 'Epic and the Novel', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 3-40 (5).

89. Bakhtin, 'Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 41-83 (63); Vice, *Introducing Bakhtin*, pp. 38-39; and Vines, *Markan Genre*, p. 79.

90. Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist, *Mikhail Bakhtin* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1984), pp. 276-77.

91. Bakhtin's primary discussion of this phenomenon is in *Rabelais and his World*. See also 'Epic and Novel', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 3-40 (21-23); and *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, pp. 106-107; cf. p. 124.

92. Emphasis in the original; Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 107.

93. Although Bakhtin sees the height of the carnival in the Middle Ages, he

the ordinary rules of life, and the normal distance between people, and it allowed participants to work out a 'new mode of interrelationship between individuals'.[94] It promoted the eccentric, making manifest latent sides of human nature. Trickster characters were thus common,[95] and people might be turned into animals via the costume.[96] It permitted linkages of different, strange, and weird things in '*carnivalistic misalliances*'.[97] It also allowed '*profanation*: carnivalistic blasphemies, a whole system of carnivalistic debasings and bringings down to earth, carnivalistic obscenities linked with the reproductive powers of the earth and the body, carnivalistic parodies on sacred texts and sayings, etc'.[98] The grotesque, then, is widespread, including the commonplace of literary sacrificial dismemberment of the body and the exploring and breaching of boundaries of the body.[99] The primary ritual of the carnival was '*the mock crowning and subsequent de-crowning of the carnival king*'.[100] Kingly imagery, such as banquets and other trappings of royalty, is important therefore. Its opposite includes the marketplace and other public venues where the king is de-crowned.[101] This rise and fall of the king symbolizes 'the pathos of shifts of changes, of death and renewal'.[102] Images are doubled or opposites are paired.[103] The double can be turned on its head or the world can be turned upside down with parody.[104] Liminal situations abound and boundaries are shattered that they may be expanded. These aspects of the carnival are, according to Bakhtin, 'concretely sensuous ritual-pageant "thoughts" experienced and played out in the form of life itself… This is why they were able to exercise such an immense formal

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acknowledges that it existed long before that period (*Rabelais*, pp. 70-72). See also Kenneth Craig, *Reading Esther*, pp. 30, 33, 35.

94. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, pp. 122-23.

95. For more on the trickster as one who broadens boundaries and breaks new sociological and ideological ground, see C.V. Camp, 'Wise and Strange: An Interpretation of the Female Imagery in Proverbs in Light of Trickster Mythology', *Semeia* 42 (1988), pp. 14-36; and R.D. Pelton, *The Trickster in West Africa: A Study of Mythic Irony and Sacred Delight* (Hermeneutical Studies in the History of Religions; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

96. For example, the magical changing of a person into another form is one characteristic of the carnival in novels and is often found in eighteenth-century Gothic novels (Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and Chronotope', in Holquist [ed.], *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 84-258 [122]).

97. Emphasis in the original; Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 123.

98. Emphasis in the original; Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 127.

99. Vice, *Introducing Bakhtin*, pp. 155-57, 159-69, 172-74.

100. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 124. Emphasis in the original.

101. Craig, *Reading Esther*, p. 43.

102. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 124.

103. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 126.

104. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 127.

genre-shaping influence on literature'.[105] Bakhtin uses 'the carnivalesque' to refer to the opposition between the official and popular cultures of a society.[106] In such literature, alternative voices and literary constructions challenge the monologic voice of authority and open the possibility of other sources of power. Carnivalized literature questions and critiques accepted norms and constructions of power and control.

Second, they are not impressed with legends or the authority of the epic but instead create imaginative scenarios for the exploration of new ideas, which often critique the past. Their focus is on the present.[107] Craig Howes amplifies this understanding when he says:

> …in fact, they explicitly attack the pious mythology underlying conservative versions of history: 'their relationship to legend is in most cases deeply critical, and at times even resembles a cynical exposé'. The results are often jolting. Characters from 'the absolute past of myth and legend' suddenly come into 'immediate and even crudely familiar contact with living contemporaries'. And, since the 'living *present*' is awash in conflicting discourse, these serio-comic genres are formally 'multi-styled and hetero-voiced'.[108]

Third, they employ a variety of styles, languages, and voices, both serious and comic, which create an atmosphere where accepted power arrangements are brought into question.[109] Bakhtin asserts: '[I]n certain genres a leading role is played by the double-voiced word'[110] and thus they 'reveal language's dialogism', in the words of Julia Kristeva.[111]

Fourth, they share a commitment to the exploration of truth.[112] Bakhtin included the writings known as the Socratic dialogues and Menippean satire as ancient exemplars of the serio-comical. For this study, however, it is Menippean satire that is most important.[113]

Bakhtin gives a brief excursus of the history of Menippean satire. Menippean satire originates with the Greek cynic Menippus of Gadara in the

105. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 123.

106. See also Howes, 'Rhetorics of Attack', pp. 215-43 (236-37); and Craig, *Reading Esther*, p. 30.

107. Bakhtin states of the serio-comic genres: 'their starting point for understanding, evaluating, and shaping reality is the present' (*Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 108).

108. 'Rhetorics of Attack', pp. 215-43 (233).

109. Craig, *Reading Esther*, pp. 37-38.

110. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 108.

111. Julia Kristeva, 'Word, Dialogue, and Novel', in Leon S. Roudiez (ed.), *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), pp. 64-91 (68).

112. Bakhtin gives particulars concerning the inquisitive nature of the Socratic dialogues in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, pp. 109-12.

113. For a helpful, albeit small, bibliography on Menippean satire, see Vines, *Markan Genre*, pp. 108-109 n. 138.

third century BCE,[114] and it subsequently includes some of the works of Roman writers such as Varro, Seneca, Petronius, Lucian, and Apuleius.[115] Examples from the modern prose tradition include works such as Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and *A Modest Proposal* and Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* may be the most famous example of the genre.[116]

Menippean satire consists of a blend of prose, verse, and poetry, often in the form of a loosely constructed narrative or an ironic essay. It is an indirect satire that often delivers a message of judgment through narrative, and the prophetic literature of the Hebrew Bible contains forms of this construct.[117] A wide variety of literary and rhetorical devices are available for satiric writing. Beast fables, dramatic incidents, fictional experiences, sarcasm, irony, mockery, and exaggeration are only a few of the ways an author might employ the satiric wit.[118] Bakhtin notes that the carnivalistic is even more pronounced in the Menippean satire than in the Socratic dialogues.[119] He observes that 'this carnivalized genre [is] extraordinarily flexible and as changeable as Proteus, capable of penetrating other genres…'[120]

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114. Bakhtin uses chronotope as a way to trace the rise of the novelistic impulse back to the Hellenistic period. He identifies three distinct chronotopes that characterize the rise of the novel in this period, and these three are in contrast to the epic. *Adventure time* is most fully developed in the Greek romances and is organized around the theme of love. Time is completely abstract, there are few if any historical referents, and place is unimportant as well. Time and space are abstract and unspecific. *Adventure time of everyday life* moves the story to particular places of common life and how a sudden change or metamorphosis creates a threshold moment (see, e.g, Apuleius's *The Golden Ass*). *Biographical time* is closer to the epic with a focus on heroic and virtuous values, but the biography focuses on how one particular life in a particular place embodies those values. The focus is closer to the present. For discussions of the details of the biography, see Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and Chronotope', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 84-258 (130-46); and Vines, *Markan Genre*, pp. 80-88. For the adventure time of romance and metamorphosis, see Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and Chronotope', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 84-258 (86-129); and Vines, *Markan Genre*, pp. 88-108.

115. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, pp. 112-13.

116. Craig, *Reading Esther*, p. 40.

117. Jemielity, *Satire and the Hebrew Prophets*, p. 63.

118. For another description of the variety of elements found in Menippean satire, see F. Anne Payne, *Chaucer and Menippean Satire* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1981), pp. 3-37. For a critique of Bakhtin's synchronic definition of Menippean satire see, Howard D. Weinbrot, *Menippean Satire Reconsidered: From Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), pp. 1-19. Weinbrot's observations do not materially change the significance of the application of Bakhtin's schema to Daniel 1–6.

119. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, pp. 132-34.

120. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 113.

and containing an elementary form of polyphony.[121] Then Bakhtin extrapolates a list of fourteen characteristics of the genre, which he now calls the '*menippea*'.[122]

These fourteen characteristics form the basis of the analysis of Daniel in this study. First, in the search for truth, a pronounced 'comic element' or spirit is present in the narrative, much more so than in the Socratic dialogue. In menippea, 'the familiarizing role of laughter' is extremely important.[123] The genre 'uses laughter to mock the pretensions of monological ideas'.[124] Dustin Griffin asserts that the wit of the rhetorician is extremely important in Menippean satire.[125] The persistent use of wordplay techniques such as paronomasia, repetition, antanaclasis, and syllepsis demonstrate a playfulness and skill with language that adds to the overall satiric message of the composition.[126]

121. Vice, *Introducing Bakhtin*, p. 131.

122. Emphasis in the original, Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, pp. 114-19. The discussion of the fourteen characteristics below is taken directly from these pages. Direct quotations are indicated by quotation marks but each quotation from this text is not individually footnoted. Only materials from other texts of Bakhtin and other authors will be footnoted. All emphasis in this discussion is in the original.

123. Bakhtin, 'Discourse and the Novel', in Emerson and Holquist (eds.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 259-422 (400-10).

124. Vines, *Markan Genre*, p. 110.

125. *Satire*, pp. 71, 77, 83, 87.

126. This study examines wordplay as one of the important techniques used to create an atmosphere of humor, satire and judgment of king and empire. There has been much development in the concept of wordplay in the Hebrew Bible. The work of Anthony J. Petrotta is the basis of the study of wordplay in Daniel 1–6 (*Lexis Ludens: Wordplay and the Book of Micah* [New York: Peter Lang, 1991]). Petrotta defines wordplay as 'a sophisticated linguistic and literary endeavor that collates sound, sense, and syntax in such a way as to exploit similarities and create ambiguities in an effort to suggest relationships, both cognitive and affective, that go beyond the ostensive reference of the individual phonological, semantic and syntactical units' (Petrotta, *Lexis Ludens*, p. 25). Wordplay is not merely ornamentation to attract a readers' attention but a sophisticated literary device designed to suggest a new way of looking at the world. He notes that many have recognized the presence of wordplay in ancient classical texts and the Hebrew Bible but few have recognized its purpose. He writes, '…wordplay involves the "infinite plasticity" of sounds, words, images and syntax. Like the cockroach and the shark, wordplay is pervasive and perdurable, lingering in dark corners or lurking in the deep, ready to serve, subvert and work its power of persuasion' (Petrotta, *Lexis Ludens*, p. 126; see also L. Peeters, 'Pour une interpretation du jeu de mots', *Semitics* 2 [1971–72], pp. 127-42 [129]). Wordplay serves ideological purposes and persuasion rather than neutrality and logic or ornate speech (Petrotta, *Lexis Ludens*, p. 47). Petrotta simplifies the various definitions of wordplay by the following four-fold delineation. First, wordplay is the comprehensive term used to describe any and all devices used to indicate this 'play with words'. Secondly, a pun is a type of wordplay that focuses on sense play, that is, wordplays that are determined by semantic considerations, or

Second, the menippea is fully liberated from historical constraints and 'external verisimilitude to life'. Bakhtin states: 'The menippea is character-ized by an extraordinary freedom of plot and philosophical inventiveness'. The use of historical or legendary figures does not restrict freedom of inven-tion and the use of fantasy in the menippea.

The third and most important characteristic of the menippea for Bakhtin is that the menippea uses the most daring and unfettered fantasies and adven-tures, which are 'internally motivated; justified and illuminated by a purely ideological and philosophical end'. The goal is to create '*extraordinary*

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the meaning of words. Thirdly, paronomasia consists of sound plays that are deter-mined by the sound of letters and syllables. Finally, sequencing focuses on syntacti-cal aspects of wordplay that are primarily visual devices such as chiasm, parallelism, acrostics, and other similar devices (Petrotta, *Lexis Ludens*, pp. 18-20). The following additional definitions are representative of the many types of wordplay delineated by Petrotta that are utilized in this study and serve as the template for the recognition of wordplay present in the court tales of Daniel (Petrotta, *Lexis Ludens*, p. 153). *Allitera-tion*: the repetition of consonant clusters; *anagrammatical*: the transposition of pho-nemes between terms; *anaphora*: subsequent clauses that begin with identical terms; *antanaclasis*: a single term repeated with different senses; *antonym*: two terms whose meanings contrast; *assonance*: the repetition of vowel sounds; *chiasm*: the inversion of words; *consonance* or *rhyme*: the repetition of consonants at the ends of words; *gematria*: the numerical equivalent of letters, often used as 'codes'; *gradatio*: words that form a 'ladder' effect (A-B; B-C; C-D) between clauses; *homonym*: two terms that sound similar but have different meanings; *hyperbaton*: the disruption of normal word order; *notrikon*: letters of a word considered as acronyms; *onomatopoeia*: sound imitative lexemes; *paronym*: homonyms that may share the same origin; *portmanteau*: two terms fused into a single term; *repetition*: a single term repeated with the same meaning; *syllepsis*: a single term that carries two meanings; and *trope*: general term used for any figure of speech. For precursors to Petrotta's contribution, see Immanu-el Casanowicz, *Paronomasia in the Old Testament* (Boston: Norwood Press, 1894); Elbert Russell, 'Paronomasia and Kindred Phenomena in the New Testament' (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 1920); Alfred Guillaume, 'Paronomasia in the Old Testament', *JSS* 9 (1964), pp. 282-90; J.J. Glück, 'Paronomasia in Biblical Literature', *Semitics* 1 (1970), pp. 50-78; W.L. Holladay, 'Form and Word-Play in David's Lament over Saul and Jonathan', *VT* 20 (1970), pp. 153-56; Jack Sasson, 'Word Play in the Old Testament', *IDBSup* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976), pp. 968-70; Anthony R. Ceresko, 'The Function of *Antanaclasis* (ms' 'to find' //ms' 'to reach, overtake, grasp') in Hebrew Poetry, Especially in the Book of Qoheleth', *CBQ* 44 (1982), pp. 551-69; Robert B. Chisholm, Jr, 'Wordplay in the Eighth-Century Prophets', *BSac* 144 (1987), pp. 44-52; and Russell Cherry, 'Paronomasia and Proper Names in the Old Testament: Rhetorical Function and Literary Effect' (PhD dissertation, Southern Baptist Theo-logical Seminary, 1988). See also Thomas P. McCreesh, *Biblical Sound and Sense: Poetic Sound Patterns in Proverbs 10–29* (JSOTSup, 128; Sheffield: Sheffield Aca-demic Press, 1991); Hal Womack Dixon, *Functions of Wordplay in Paul's Letter to the Philippians* (PhD dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2000); and the series of articles in Noegel, *Puns and Pundits*.

situations for the provoking and testing of a philosophical idea'. Heroes and the wise wander through heaven, visit the netherworld, venture into lands 'unknown and fantastic', and experience extraordinary adventures, all for the purpose of provoking and testing the truth. The journey is always subsidiary to its purpose, the testing of the truth, and the characteristics of the hero are also secondary.[127] Vines points out: 'Thus, each character is an ideologue, not simply a character, but the bearer of an idea. In the course of the hero's adventures, this idea is exposed to the withering scrutiny of parody'.[128] While Bakhtin focuses on fantastic elements here, Griffin notes that a 'wild and parodic display of learning' may also be used to the same ends.[129]

The fourth and a very important characteristic of the menippea is 'the organic combination within it of free fantastic, the symbolic, and at times even a mystical-religious element with extreme and crude *slum naturalism*' or underworld naturalism. No subject or place, no matter how base or evil, is off limits for the testing of truth, and the text can become quite vulgar, having a preoccupation with bodily functions or sexual desires.[130]

Fifth, a boldness of invention and fantasy combine in the menippea with extreme philosophical universalism and ideologism. 'The menippea is a genre of "ultimate questions" …put to the test' and has 'an ethical and practical bias'. The hero's whole life is before the reader in his or her words and actions. Nevertheless, questions of ultimate concern are not answered in abstractly philosophical or religiously dogmatic ways; rather, 'it plays them out in the concretely sensuous form of carnivalistic acts and images'.[131] This taste for play has always been part of the Menippean tradition.[132] The exploration of truth is augmented by the spirit of provocation that is designed as a critique of false understanding. The Menippean satirist raises questions in order 'to expose or demolish a foolish certainty'.[133] Often this provocation takes the form of a paradox, where the way one expects things to be and operate is challenged by a new reality. Paradox serves as an opportunity for the display of rhetorical ingenuity, to advance an unorthodox opinion, or to stimulate a thinking response.[134]

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127. In the Greek romance, by contrast, the hero's moral character is far more important than the testing of an idea (Bakhtin, *Problems in Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 114).
128. *Markan Genre*, p. 110.
129. Griffin, *Satire*, p. 33.
130. Vines, *Markan Genre*, p. 111.
131. Griffin, *Satire*, p. 134.
132. Griffin, *Satire*, pp. 86-87; and Relihan, *Ancient Menippean Satire*, pp. 28-30.
133. Griffin, *Satire*, p. 52.
134. Griffin, *Satire*, p. 53.

   A number of Bakhtin's categories involve other realms or other view-points. The sixth attribute of the genre is that the action in the menippea occurs on a variety of worldly levels. Communication from both the world above and below is common, and often threshold scenes and dialogs take place. Bakhtin calls this 'three-planed construction'. The seventh attribute is the existence of a type of '*experimental fantasticality*' where observation of behavior occurs from unusual vantage points such as from a great height. This 'results in a radical change in the scale of the observed phenomena of life'.

   Bakhtin also notices that fantastic elements seek to disrupt the normal boundaries of person and world. The eighth attribute of the menippea is the existence of 'moral-psychological experimentation'. '[U]nusual, abnormal moral and psychic states' such as 'insanity…, split personalities, unrestrained daydreaming, unusual dreams, passions bordering on madness, [and] suicides', are common occurrences. Such experiences often precipitate a crisis, which destroys 'the epic and tragic wholeness of a person and his fate'. The solidity of the person is questioned, and his or her boundaries are extended in the crisis. The hero, thus, can enter into a dialogic relationship with him/herself. Characters are often doubled in representations of the tragic and the comic. The ninth attribute of the menippea involves 'scandalous scenes, eccentric behavior, inappropriate speeches and performances'. Bakhtin asserts: '…all sorts of violations of the generally accepted and customary course of events and the established norms of behavior and etiquette' exist. As abnormal moral and psychic states destroy the wholeness of the person, 'scandals and eccentricities destroy the epic and tragic wholeness of the world, they make a breach in the stable, normal…course of human affairs and events, they free human behavior from the norms and motivations that predetermine it'. The tenth attribute is that the menippea contains many 'sharp contrasts and oxymoronic combinations', such as the true freedom of the wise man that contrasts with his status as a slave or the emperor who becomes a slave. It 'loves to play with abrupt transitions and shifts, ups and downs, rises and falls, unexpected comings together of distant and disunited things, mésaillances of all sorts'. The world can turn upside down. John Snyder contends that Menippean satire 'excels in sustaining complex ironies'.[135] The eleventh attribute is that '[t]he menippea often includes elements of *social utopia* which are incorporated in the form of dreams or journeys to unknown lands'. The creation of a better society or world is often the goal.

   Furthermore, the menippea is typically composed of other genres that give a strong dialogic feel to the text. The twelfth attribute of the menippea is that it characteristically uses and inserts other genres such as 'novellas,

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   135. *Prospects of Power*, p. 139.

letters, oratorical speeches, symposia', with a mixing of prose and verse, with various degrees of parody and objectification. Bakhtin maintains that menippea 'possesses great external plasticity and a remarkable capacity to absorb into itself small genres, and to penetrate as a component element into other larger genres'.[136] The thirteenth attribute is related to the effect of the inserted genres. They intensify the variety of styles and tones in the menippea, creating a sense of the dialogic nature of the literature, and contribute to the ideological position of the whole. When discussing this aspect of Bakhtin's insights regarding the menippea, Griffin argues that the genres set up a 'multistyled and multivoiced discourse'.[137] The polyglot aspect of the Greek and Roman worlds make the likelihood of multi-voiced discourse in literature much greater than even Bakhtin allows.[138] Additionally, digressions are common.[139]

The fourteenth and final attribute of the menippea deals with ideological issues of the day and thus has a topical and public quality toward important subjects. Bakhtin says: 'This is, in its own way, the "journalistic" genre of antiquity, acutely echoing the ideological issues of the day'. The topics covered are often of current importance. The search for truth and the struggle with ultimate questions are played out in the engagement of contemporary issues. This is not to say that every menippea is set in the time of the author. Rather, the hero may be a figure from the past, and time may be 'supratemporal', dissolving temporal distinctions.[140] Moreover, the protagonist does not necessarily age or mature.[141] Nevertheless, the hero 'represents the values of the present, and not those of his own time'.[142]

3. *Conclusion*

In summary, the Menippean genre contains or manifests:

(1)   comic elements;
(2)   a freedom of plot and philosophical inventiveness;
(3)   a use of extraordinary, fantastic situations or wild parodic displays of learning to test the truth;
(4)   some combination of both crude and lofty imagery, settings and themes;
(5)   a concern for ultimate questions;

136. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 119.
137. Griffin, *Satire*, p. 32.
138. For a fuller discussion of this phenomenon and its effect on the novelistic impulse in Hellenistic Judea, see Vines, *Markan Genre*, pp. 69-108.
139. Griffin, *Satire*, p. 40.
140. Vines, *Markan Genre*, pp. 112-13.
141. Vines, *Markan Genre*, p. 112.
142. Vines, *Markan Genre*, p. 111.

(6)   scenes and dialogue from the earthly, heavenly, and netherworldly realms;

(7)   observation of behavior from an unusual vantage point;

(8)   characters who experience unusual, abnormal moral and psychic states;

(9)   characters who participate in scandals, eccentric behavior, and/or inappropriate speech;

(10)   sharp contrasts and oxymoronic combinations;

(11)   elements of social utopia;

(12)   a variety of inserted genres within the work;

(13)   a multistyled, multitoned or multivoiced work that is dialogic based on inserted genres, voices, and languages; and

(14)   a concern with current and topical issues.

The combination of these seemingly heterogeneous traits creates the unique quality and organic unity of Menippean satire.

This list contains a large number of the characteristics that exist in the fully developed novel, which led Bakhtin to understand Menippean satire as a manifestation of the growing novelistic impulse in the Hellenistic period.[143] He notes that menippea flourishes in a time, such as the Hellenistic era, where both a decay of tradition and ethical norms and an 'intense struggle among numerous and heterogeneous religious and philosophical schools and movements…' are taking place.[144] In the conclusion of Vines's analysis of the menippea in his study of the Gospel of Mark, he notes:

> The fantastic temporal and spatial opportunities of the Menippean chronotope created wonderful opportunities for authors to bring epic traditions into direct contact with the present. In this dialogic encounter, menippea's loyalties clearly belonged to the latter. Menippea treated with utter disdain those who longed to resurrect the epic traditions and restore the glory days

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143. Note, however, that not all Bakhtinian theorists of satire see the menippea as only a precursor to the novel. Howes, for instance, contends disapprovingly: 'Bakhtin goes farther than virtually any other literary theorist in his claims for satire, but its fate is preordained: satire can never be fully valued in itself, simply because at the moment of its greatest artistic development it should become something else. Aesthetic finalization only fully returns with the novel, and satire recedes once more into its role as precursive, or abortive, or immature genre. Like the major conservative theorists, then, Bakhtin privileges the moment at which satire distinguishes itself from discourse in life, thus renouncing its direct social power in return for recognition as fully aesthetic discourse' ('Rhetorics of Attack', pp. 215-43 [231-32]; cf. pp. 237-39).

144. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 119. Cobley states of this phenomenon: '[T]he menippea is said to exhibit the same kind of heterogeneous consciousness that also characterizes the way people live out their relationship to the social environment' ('Mikhail Bakhtin's Place', p. 333).

of ancient Greece. For menippea, the only hope for those living in turbulent times is a healthy dose of laughter. Everything else is just pretentious posturing.[145]

According to Frank Palmeri, Menippean satire 'deploys "leveling strategies", reducing the high to low, spirit to body, while withholding assent from either, in a spirit of "tolerance of heterogeneous languages and forms of understanding" '.[146] Palmeri is more Bakhtinian than Bakhtin because he argues that Menippean satire is always dialogical and unresolved whereas Bakhtin argues that it is more one-sided in that it challenges and subverts orthodoxy from below. Griffin observes of Palmeri that he 'in practice… finds that narrative satire tends to be subversive'.[147] Here, too, the novelistic impulse within the menippea is made apparent.

From this discussion of Bakhtin's views, one can note the apparent connection the Daniel stories have with a number of the key characteristics of Menippean satire. The stories of Daniel include fantastic type scenes such as the fiery furnace incident, the transformation of the king into a wild beast, the writing on the wall, and the lion's den. The presence of multiple kings and their advisors at court also lend to the carnivalistic feel of the stories. Thus, an examination of these stories as a type of Menippean satire promises to be a quite fruitful undertaking. Furthermore, the Daniel stories are an edited product that doubtless draws upon earlier precursors that coalesce in the Hellenistic era, a time when Judaism was threatened by overt and disguised outside forces and philosophies. Additionally, Hellenistic Judea was filled with polyglots, people who spoke and/or read some combination of Aramaic, Hebrew, and Greek, making the dialogic process found in the literature of this place and time more pronounced. Wills and Vines in their studies of Hellenistic Jewish and Christian literature respectively, both note the rise of novelistic impulses in this period.[148] Wills notes that the comedic is one of the key manifestations of the novelistic impulse. For Bakhtin and Vines, the satirical is one of the two major forms of the novelistic impulse. In their minds, the satirical moves from being only a favoring of the literary creation to its structuring principle. A careful study of the Daniel narratives in light of Bakhtin's understanding of heteroglossia, dialogism, genre, the novelistic impulse, and Menippean satire will help identify their genre and understand a number of their literary complexities.

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145. Vines, *Markan Genre*, p. 119.

146. As discussed by Griffin, *Satire*, p. 33, quoting Frank Palmeri, *Satire in Narrative: Petronius, Swift, Gibbon, Melville, and Pynchon* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), p. 12.

147. *Satire*, p. 34.

148. For Wills's views, see *Jewish Novel*, pp. 44-45; 'The Jewish Novel', in Barton (ed.), *The Biblical World*, I, pp. 149-61 (152). For Vines's views, see *Markan Genre*, pp. 69-120.

The next four chapters examine the book of Daniel in light of Bakhtin's list of fourteen characteristics of the menippea. The analysis divides Bakhtin's list into four major types of characteristics and discusses them in the next four chapters. The first set of attributes is related to traditional, non-liminal, comedic, and fantastic elements in the text, which Bakhtin describes in numbers 1 and 3. The second major division involves liminal, boundary shattering episodes in the text that expand the personality of the text's characters and their social world. Bakhtin represents these by attribute numbers 2, 4 and 6-10. The third major division involves the social and philosophical issues made manifest in the text. Attributes 5, 11, and 14 engage these issues. Finally, Bakhtin addresses the import of the presence of multiple genres and languages, whether social or national, to further the satiric cause of the piece as outlined in attributes 12 and 13. This discussion of Daniel 1–6 proceeds along these lines.

Chapter 3

NON-LIMINAL COMIC AND FANTASTIC ACCENTS IN DANIEL 1–6

> Comedy typically delights in various forms of verbal artifice such as
> punning or wordplay, parody, hyperbole, redundancy and repetitiousness.
> Moreover, comedy especially exploits incongruity and irony, highlight-
> ing discrepancy, reversal and surprise. Comedy moves with relish into the
> realm of the ludicrous and ridiculous… Biblical comedy contains the power
> both to subvert and transform political, social and religious structures.[1]

1. *Introduction*

This chapter in the analysis of Daniel 1–6 focuses on the traditional, non-
liminal types of comic and fantastic accents that are an integral part of
Menippean satire. Two categories of Bakhtin's delineation of the character-
istics of Menippean satire provide the basis for this chapter. First, if Daniel
1–6 is an expression of the menippea, there should be a significant number
of comic elements within its pages. These would include such features as
irony, sarcasm, mockery, hyperbole, wordplay, the slapstick, and other dis-
plays of the author's satiric wit as acknowledged in the quote above from
J. William Whedbee. The point of these characteristics is to create an atmo-
sphere of humor and folly. Second, there should be evidence of the heavy
use of fantastic situations and parodic displays of learning that move far
beyond both the ordinary and regular. Evidence of this might include beast
fables, dramatic incidents, fictional experiences, unfettered fantasies, and
daring exploits and adventures. Heroes would wander otherworldly realms
and venture into lands unknown and rife with danger.

Many comic and fantastic elements that various commentators have
already recognized exist in Daniel 1–6. This chapter surveys major instances
of such previously acknowledged comedic accents, as well as identifying
several new humorous features. This appraisal of comic elements demon-
strates that while scholars have identified numerous discrete instances of
the comic in various scenes and stories of Daniel 1–6, the accumulated
critical mass of comic elements throughout these tales illustrates best the
importance of these characteristics in an assessment of these chapters as a

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1.   Whedbee, *Bible and the Comic Vision*, pp. 8, 11.

Menippean satirical creation. Because of the number and variety of comic features in each of the stories of Daniel 1–6, this analysis examines these features in a chapter-by-chapter manner through each of the narratives.

2. Daniel 1: Kings, Courtiers, and Captives

The opening verses of Daniel immediately establish an irony that operates throughout each of the narratives. Daniel 1.1-2 depicts King Nebuchadnezzar as a sovereign who is in total control. The king is introduced as a monarch whose power is without bounds. He has defeated Judah and Jerusalem and has brought symbols of royal and theological power, the sacred vessels, back to Babylon. Like the image of the wizard at the palace in Oz, the king is a mighty figure. It is a little dog that tears away the curtain and reveals the true smallness of the wizard, and a similar comeuppance accosts this king. The king's power is undercut in v. 2 by the narrator's assertion that it is God who allows Judah to fall into his hands, and it is clear that the king has no awareness of this very important fact.[2] In reality, God is the one who is allowing the king to prosper.[3] From the very beginning, Daniel 1 ironically establishes that the authority of earthly kings is limited by divine power and will. Throughout the book of Daniel, earthly kings will ironically claim to be in control even while events prove otherwise.

Daniel 1.3-7 reinforces the initial impression of Nebuchadnezzar as an all-powerful king by the crisp catalog of decisive orders he issues concerning the training of the captured Hebrew nobility. The repetition of forms of the verb to bring (בוא), as well as a string of command verbs in vv. 3-7, with the four captives as the object of these commands (teach them [למד], assign them [מנה], train them [גדל], name them [שים]) all highlight the image of irresistible power.[4] There are, however, indications of overstatement and hyperbole in v. 4 as the king desires only Israelite royal seed and nobility that are without physical defect (אין־בהם כל־מאום), handsome (טובי מראה), skillful in all wisdom (משכילים בכל־חכמה), knowledgeable (ידעי דעת), understanding of learning (מביני מדע), and competent to serve (כח בהם לעמד). The use of lists of various synonymous characteristics and persons is a wordplay technique related to exaggeration that is used exten-

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2. Two scholars have detailed explorations of this change of authority. See Bill T. Arnold, 'Wordplay and Characterization in Daniel 1', in Noegel (ed.), *Puns and Pundits*, pp. 231-50 (233-34); and John Goldingay, *Daniel* (WBC 30, Dallas: Word, 1988), p. 9.

3. Walter Brueggemann, 'A Poem of Summons (Is. 55.1-3)/A Narrative of Resistance (Dan. 1.1-21)', in Rainer Albretz *et al.* (eds.), *Schöpfung und Befreiung: fur Claus Westermann zum 80. Geburtstag* (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1989), pp. 126-36.

4. Goldingay, *Daniel*, p. 10.

sively throughout Daniel 1–6.[5] This first example of hyperbole establishes a pattern that will quickly undermine the reader's belief in the trustworthiness and authority of the king because he appears ridiculously demanding. Furthermore, the king wants these exemplary exiled servants to learn the language and literature of the Chaldeans (v. 5a). In spite of their great skills and aptitude, it will take three years to train them properly for the king's service (v. 5b). This second instance of excess and overstatement contributes to a parodic emphasis on the importance of training and learning for the king's captured servants.

   Although it appears that the king possesses absolute royal control and dominance in Dan. 1.1-7, vv. 8-16 offer another ironic twist that undermines the reader's confidence in the king's authority. Most importantly, the chief official of the king changes the Hebrew captive's names, which is an attempt to eradicate their very identities and an act of enormous domination.[6] The Hebrew verb used here is וישם, with the sense of setting or

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5. Peter W. Coxon, 'The "List" Genre and Narrative Style in the Court Tales of Daniel', *JSOT* 35 (1986), pp. 95-121.

6. For the significance of the resistance of the changing of names, see Philip P. Chia, 'On Naming The Subject: Postcolonial Reading of Daniel', *Jian Dao* 7 (1997), pp. 17-36 (26-29). This study explores the power and identity issues of the changing of names more fully in Chapter 5. The names Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego and Belteshazzar most likely refer to Babylonian kings and deities (George Wesley Buchanan, *The Book of Daniel* (Mellen Biblical Commentary Old Testament Series, 25; [Lewiston, NY: Mellen Biblical, 1999], p. 26). It is possible that they are deliberate corruptions meant as parodies of these deities (Montgomery, *Daniel*, pp. 129-30; and Ernest C. Lucas, *Daniel*, AOTC 20; [Leicester: Apollos, 2002], p. 53). John Goldingay notes that the Babylonian names are grotesque and silly appellations that make fun of the gods they are supposed to honor (*Daniel* [WBC, 30; Dallas: Word Books, 1989], p. 24). Fewell suggests that if this is true, then perhaps the narrator is sharing a joke with the reader behind the characters' backs (*Circle of Sovereignty: Plotting Politics*, p. 137). No consensus on this issue exists, although such deliberate corruptions fit nicely with a satirical reading of this material. The same judgment is warranted for proposals concerning the form of the name Nebuchadnezzar. Adrianus van Selms notes that in the Hebrew Bible there are two basic forms of the name, Nebuchadrezzar, spelled with the letter R (ר), and Nebuchadnezzar, spelled with the letter N (נ) ('The Name Nebuchadnezzar', in *Travels in the Old Testament* [M.S.H.G. Heerma van Voss *et al.* Assen: Van Gorcum, 1974], pp. 223-29). He observes that cuneiform instances of the name always use the form of the name with a R, with the general meaning of 'Nabu, protect the crown prince, my offspring'. Van Selms suggests that the change of the R to N is possibly indicative of a West Semitic tradition that is less than complementary to the Babylonian monarch. Such a change results in a nickname that translates as 'Nabu, protect the mule!' an appellation that refers to Nebuchadnezzar's mixed marriage and the procreative deficiencies of his progeny, Evil-Merodach. Van Selms suggests that such an appellative may have arisen among oppositional groups in Babylon or among the exiles themselves ('Nebuchadnezzar', pp. 223-29 [226]). It is an intriguing suggestion that the selection of the form of the name that has a history of being less than

determining. Daniel's reaction to this determination of new names on the part of the king's servant is not to challenge the new names, which would be risking a direct public confrontation with an order of the king. He instead chooses an area of covert resistance. Daniel determines not to defile himself with the royal rations and in v. 8 the same word, וישם, is used to describe Daniel's determination not to be tarnished with the royal food and wine.[7] The use of the same verb in these two different ways is an example of a wordplay technique called antanaclasis. Antanaclasis is the repetition of a single term with different senses, and here it is used to highlight the direct contrast between the actions of the royal servant and Daniel.

An additional irony exists in the fact that the king's chief official is now willing to negotiate with the captives the terms of their training (vv. 9-14). The chief official has had a strange change of heart—moving from attempting to strip Daniel and his friends of their identity to receiving favor and compassion (לחסד ולרחמים). God is the agent of the change (v. 9). Both Daniel's resistance and God's intervention indicate that the king is not all-powerful, as first indicated. Even though the chief official is willing to show Daniel favor and compassion, he expresses fear of his king and that he might be found out and lose his head (v. 10). He can only go so far.

Daniel therefore goes to work on the official's underling, the palace guard and asks him to see if Daniel's diet does not prove the more worthy in a test (vv. 11-12). Again, the authority of a superior is undermined. The guard agrees to allow Daniel and his friends a ten-day trial period to test whether their proposed diet is superior to the king's training table fare (v. 13). In just 10 short days, the four trainees appear healthier and better nourished by following their own diet than all the other slaves (v. 15). It is amazing that such a profound change, one outstripping all other slaves, occurs in a mere 10 days. These events illustrate two more examples of hyperbole in this story.

Yet another issue regarding the food is lurking in the text. The fact that the king's fare may violate observant dietary restrictions seems to be the key concern in v. 8 and appears to be the surface concern of the text. Below the surface, however, another matter dwells. In v. 10, the chief official says that the king has appointed (מנה) the slave's diet. This is unusual in and of itself because rarely do kings worry themselves over the diet of slaves. This is a parody on kingly behavior. Furthermore, because the official fears that Daniel and his friends might lose weight on a diet of vegetables, it appears that the king is offering food of a higher quality and quantity than the vegetables. Vegetables are something that slaves and prisoners often crave in

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complimentary to the king may have been intentional by the author. See also Lucas, *Daniel*, p. 46.

7. Arnold explores the significance of this wordplay on the characterization of Daniel and his friends ('Daniel 1', pp. 241-48).

their diet because of their scarcity. It is odd indeed that the king has taken such care of these men. Hence, the question remains as to whether Daniel's vegetables are actually a substantially better diet for him aside from the fact that it is an observant one. Daniel may have succeeded in getting more than his religious needs met. In that case, it appears quite easy to manipulate the king's officials.

Verse 17 indicates for a third time that God is involved in this situation. He gives the slaves their ability to learn and understand all kinds of literature and language, and Daniel's special abilities to understand visions and dreams of all kinds. The kingdom can give them wisdom, but only God can give them wisdom in every aspect (מדע והשכל בכל ספר וחכמה). Again, the text draws pictures with grand, bold, exaggerated strokes. The wisdom and erudition of the empire is of little consequence compared to the wisdom of God.

To reiterate, each area of royal command and control enumerated in this chapter, including the changing of names and identity, the provision of royal sustenance and the learning of useful skills, is ironically subverted by the superior power of the Hebrew God. However, Daniel 1 reveals other word-play techniques that heighten this sense of ironic incongruity. The most conspicuous technique is the use of the *Leitwörter*, or leading words, the recurrence of a word or phrase that sets the tone for a passage.[8] Several instances of this technique exist in this chapter.[9] Most significantly, words based on the root מלך occur in various forms numerous times. This is a chapter seemingly about royal privilege and power, and yet the entire chapter describes various scenes of resistance and subversion of the king's wishes. Nebuchadnezzar appears to be in control, but the reality is that the king's servants collude behind his back and help the Hebrew heroes to subvert his wishes. Through the three-fold repetition of the verb to give (נתן) with God as the subject who allows things to happen in the story (vv. 2, 9, 17),[10] the narrator indicates to the reader that an ironical undercurrent is at work throughout this chapter.[11] The king may claim to be all-powerful, but the story indicates that reality is indeed quite different, creating a humorous contrast between the king's self understanding of his power and the reader's knowledge of the true situation.[12]

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8. For a description of *Leitwörter*, see Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), p. 95; Arnold, 'Daniel 1', pp. 231–50 (236); and Edward L. Greenstein, 'Wordplay, Hebrew', in *ABD*, II, pp. 968-71 (970).

9. John Goldingay gives greater detail on these examples of *Leitwörter* and other constructions present in Dan. 1 ('Story, Vision, Interpretation: Literary Approaches to Daniel', in van der Woude (ed.), *The Book of Daniel*, pp. 295-313 (298).

10. Arnold, 'Daniel 1', pp. 231-50 (234); and Goldingay, *Daniel*, p. 9.

11. Goldingay, 'Story, Vision, Interpretation', pp. 295-313 (298).

12. Chia, 'Postcolonial Reading of Daniel', pp. 17-36; Brueggemann, 'A Poem of Summons', pp. 126-36.

Verses 18-21 close this chapter of ironic reversals with the dramatic scene of the presentation of Daniel and his friends for the king's approval. Verses 19 and 20 record two instances of hyperbole where the king finds Daniel and his friends beyond compare, ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters throughout his entire kingdom.[13] Ironically, he does not realize that the change in menu and the blessing of their God has enabled these noble Israelites to excel. The king rewards the heroes for being successful and faithful products of royal training, while the reader knows that the captives have creatively manipulated the king through a conspiracy with his servants to establish some autonomy. The result is the first of many rewards for meritorious service recorded in these stories for Daniel and his friends. These promotions are evidence of God's blessing upon the superior wisdom of the captives, but they also solidify the portrayal of the king as a buffoon-like character who is unaware of the political machinations of his supposedly trustworthy court personnel and the workings of the Hebrew God.

The comic stage has been set through the events recounted in Daniel 1. Various depictions of the great King Nebuchadnezzar treat him as the stooge of the Hebrew deity, a king whose own counselors plot secretly with captured slaves, and a regent who declares Daniel and friends far superior in talent because of the belief that his royal training program, however partial it has been, has successfully reshaped the captives' identities. The reader learns that outward appearances are deceiving, and that Daniel and his friends will courageously stand up and defy the king with skill and conniving resistance. The praise of the foreign courtier's wisdom at the end of Daniel 1 and the ineptitude of the king's advisors at the beginning of Daniel 2 provide a transition between these two stories and sets the stage for the next exciting escapade. Daniel and his compatriots are in a strange and foreign land, and like the protagonists in the Wizard of Oz, they will encounter fearsome challenges and engage in daring exploits and adventures that are characteristic of Menippean story constructions.

3. *Daniel 2: A Distressing Dream,*
A Raging Regent, and A Symbolic Statue

Daniel 2 relates the first of several accounts of nocturnal difficulties for kings in these stories. Nebuchadnezzar experiences trouble sleeping (v.1) and has an incomprehensible dream of a grotesquely shaped statue (vv. 31-35). It is Daniel, not his own court advisors, who comes to the king's rescue (vv. 10-11; 27-28; 30). Even though the dream explanation is less than positive for the king (vv. 37-45a), Nebuchadnezzar responds to the interpretation with effusive praise of Daniel (v. 46).

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13. Good, 'Apocalyptic as Comedy', pp. 41-70 (50). The reference to ten times better also produces a link to the ten-day test earlier in the chapter.

　　Many aspects of this dream interpretation story contribute to the sense that the narrative is funny and subverts the king's authority. First, throughout this chapter, the king finds that the usual royal solutions do not work, and he must rely on outsiders to solve his problems. Second, the king's needs are met through the action of the Hebrew God, which undermines the notion of the king's ultimate authority. Third, the chapter contains slapstick scenes of increasingly absurd behavior. Fourth, wordplay techniques heighten the ambiguity and playfulness of the narrative. Fifth, irony and exaggeration are once again in evidence.

　　Nebuchadnezzar responds to the dream and his sleeplessness by calling in his advisors, a list of characters composed of practitioners from a variety of cultures (v. 2). Smith-Christopher notes that these advisors (ולכשׂדים לחרטמים ולאשׂפים ולמכשׁפים) comprise a veritable international assembly of practitioners and religious functionaries. This list symbolizes the imperial power represented by the procurement of the finest and best for the king.[14] On the surface, the king's request is the seemingly simple task of dream interpretation, and that is precisely how the advisors respond in v. 4 to his request (אמר חלמא לעבדיך ופשׂרא נחוא). Their opening remark to the king, recorded in Aramaic, 'O King, Live Forever!' (מלכא לעלמין חיי) is a standard royal greeting, but given later developments in the chapter, this becomes an ironic greeting since the dream concerns the ultimate denouement of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar.[15] A close reading reveals that in v. 2, the king is really asking the advisors to tell the king his dream (חלמתיו להגיד למלך). Verse 3 also reports that the king is expressing the need to know the dream (לדעת את־החלום). The king, therefore, is asking them to tell him both the contents of the dream and its interpretation (תהודעונני חלמא ופשׂרה), but this does not become clear until vv. 5-6.[16] In spite of the king's new clarity, the advisors still do not understand the king. This is made clear in v. 7 when they repeat their request for the king to tell them the dream so they can interpret it (חלמא יאמר לעבדוהי ופשׂרה נחוה). The king now charges them with stalling and makes another demand upon them (vv. 8-9). Once they begin to understand each other, the advisors cannot believe the king is asking them to interpret the dream without telling them its contents. Their statement in vv. 10-11 is that the king's request is impossible. The way the conversation develops as the king and advisors volley

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　　14. Smith-Christopher, 'Daniel', pp. 17-152 (50).

　　15. Smith-Christopher, 'Daniel', pp. 17-152 (51); and Bill T. Arnold, 'The Use of Aramaic in the Hebrew Bible: Another Look at Bilingualism in Ezra and Daniel', *JNSL* 22 (1996), pp. 1-16 (11-12).

　　16. Fewell notes that whether the king knows the content of the dream or forgot it, the result is the same: the advisors are presented with a seemingly impossible request (*Circle of Sovereignty: Plotting Politics*, pp. 25-26).

requests back and forth has a slapstick quality. Tell me the dream; tell us the dream and we will interpret it; no, tell me the dream and then interpret it—or else; please tell us the dream and we will interpret it; you are stalling, tell me the dream; we can't tell you the dream![17] Both the intransigence of the king and the fecklessness of the advisors become more apparent as the conversation progresses. When the king asks the counselors to tell him the content of his dream, he uses a form of the verb to know (ידע) in vv. 3, 5, and 9. His counselors respond numerous times with a form of the verb to declare (חוה), a technical term with the nuance to interpret (vv. 4, 7, 10, 11). The shifting use of these synonyms highlights the cross-purposes of the king and his advisors, and the entire scene takes on a humorous tone.[18]

 All through Daniel 2, the author uses lists of multiple synonyms in order to heighten the hyperbolic quality of this story. These include lists of sages (vv. 2, 10, 27), rewards (v. 6), rulers (v. 10), power (v. 37), shattering (v. 40), and homage (v. 46).[19] This is a technique that is used in many instances throughout the court tales of Daniel. Each time the lists are repeated there is further evidence of the exaggeration that is so much a part of these narratives.

 The king's fury is another important aspect of this chapter. When the king does not get his way, he makes his request a public decree (מני אזדא מלתא) subject to punishment (v. 5a). The penalty for noncompliance with the king's decree is dismemberment and destruction (ובתיכון נולי יתשמון הדמין תתעבדון), a hyperbolic statement that foregrounds the cruelty of king and empire (v. 5b). This type of movement from request to decree with the king's threat of the direst of consequences reinforces the image of a capricious sovereign who is willing to visit incredibly brutal punishments upon those who displease him. When this threat is set against the rewards for compliance in v. 6, the arbitrary power of the king receives a double underlining. The king again threatens a verdict (אזדא מני מלתא) in v. 8. The king's vindictive power is clear. When the king's advisors inform him that he seeks the impossible from any who are human, the king reacts furiously and condemns all the wise men of Babylon to death (v. 12), thereby casting a net so vast that it will trap Daniel and his friends although they are not present (v. 13). The king's judgment is summary. No due process is allowed for anyone.[20] This is reinforced later in stories such as the fiery furnace and the lions' den.

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 17. Meadowcroft also notes that in v. 4 the advisors address the king in the imperative mood, tell (אמר) us the dream, then we will interpret it (*Aramaic Daniel*, p. 176). As they realize the impossibility of the king's request, later in v. 7, they change to the jussive form, please tell (יאמר) us the dream. It is as if the advisors, beginning to realize what the king really wants, start to plead with the king!

 18. Meadowcroft, *Aramaic Daniel*, pp. 175-78.

 19. Goldingay, *Daniel*, p. 43; and Lucas, *Daniel*, p. 68.

 20. For a summary of the complex legal procedure of the Neo-Babylonian and

Daniel and his friends finally enter the scene in v. 13. The reader is aware of the ironical contrast between the court advisors who are unable to do the king's bidding and the excellent abilities of Daniel as described in Daniel 1. Nevertheless, all are included in this decree of judgment against the wise courtiers of Babylon. Such wild swings of action and emotion, as well as the gross, overly sweeping actions of the king, are characteristic of each of the court tales and underline the satirical nature of the Daniel stories. The advisors are incompetent, and the king is wildly reactive, creating a laughable portrait of life in the royal court.

As in Daniel 1, there is an intermediary figure that appears to be less than eager to carry out the orders of the king (vv. 14-15). Arioch is the commander of the king's guard who is charged with the duty of carrying out the king's execution order. When Daniel inquires politely as to why he is so urgently about to lose his head (התיב עטא וטעם...ענה...מה דתא מהחצפה באדין דניאל), Arioch explains the situation to Daniel rather than summarily carrying out his orders,[21] whereupon Daniel goes to the king to request a short stay of execution so that he might be allowed to attempt to reveal and interpret the dream for the king (v. 16). The executioner is clearly depicted as being on Daniel's side, not the king's.

The whole scene strikes one as funny. Is it possible that captured slaves were generally allowed to inquire why they were about to die? That they would be prudent and discrete in that harrowing moment? Would executioners typically explain themselves to the condemned? Is it likely that a condemned man could leave the executioner's block to address the king? Would such a man, given a royal stay of execution, be allowed to return home rather than to perform on the spot the promised behavior that won the stay (v. 17)? No, of course not. The entire scenario is fantastic, a mockery of a true royal execution.

In this story, Daniel does indeed go home, where he prays with his companions for God's mercy that he might spare all the wise of Babylon (v. 18). This aspect of the text establishes once again a contest between divine and human authority.[22] God reveals the dream to Daniel (vv. 19, 23b), but the

Persian empires, see F. Rachel Magdalene, 'On the Scales of Righteousness: Law and Story in the Book of Job' (PhD dissertation, Iliff School of Theology and University of Denver [Colorado Seminary], 2003), pp. 48-94. Although the Daniel stories date to the Hellenistic period, Magdalene maintains that legal procedure in the ancient Near East was fairly static and developed few unique procedural elements even in the early to mid-Hellenistic period ('On the Scales', pp. 27-28).

21. Fewell notes that Arioch appears less than eager to carry out the king's commands (*Circle of Sovereignty: Plotting Politics*, p. 27).

22. The insertion of prayer in the narrative is an illustration of the use of various genre forms that is typical of Menippean Satire. The significance of this and other prayers in Dan. 1–6 are considered in Chapter 6.

reader still does not know the details of the revelation. The long hymn of praise of vv. 20-23 builds reader anticipation and slows down time. It focuses the reader on God's goodness, wisdom, and power in contrast to the cruelty, foolishness, and false power of the king. It is a reminder that God determines the nature and extent of life, not the king. It also foreshadows the power of this God to cause both King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4 and King Darius in Daniel 6 to break out in songs of praise.

In Dan. 2.24, Daniel returns to Arioch, asks him to stay the other executions, and requests to be brought back before the king in order that he might bring the interpretation. Arioch quickly brings (בהתבהלה הנעל) Daniel back to the king and introduces him to the king as one of the exiles. Many see this reintroduction of Daniel, who has already visited the king in v. 16, as an awkward seam that indicates the possibility of a different source for Dan. 2.13-23.[23] Another option is that Arioch acts hastily in a spirit of self-aggrandizement and introduces Daniel in order to take some of the credit for finding Daniel and bringing him before the king.[24] After all, a capricious king is one that the discerning servant toadies up to whenever possible! It is entirely plausible that the credit that Arioch attempts to steal, in the face of the king's prior knowledge, is a humorous bit—in a series of humorous bits—that make up the chapter.

A second reason for introducing Daniel again is the fact that he is referred to as one of the exiles. This term is part of a paronomastic wordplay determined by the sound of letters and syllables. Daniel is introduced by Arioch as a son of the exile (גלו) (v. 25), and he is subsequently the one to whom the mystery is revealed (גלא) (vv. 19, 22, 28, 30, 47).[25] God reveals (גלא) the dream and interpretation to Daniel the exile (גלו). This introduction of Daniel as an exile to whom God reveals the dream and its interpretation reinforces the inescapable ironic contrast between human and divine capabilities.

Another synonym wordplay in this passage is the varied use of the words interpretation (פשר) and secret (רז). While the king and his advisors frantically search for an interpretation (פשר) (v. 4), it is God through Daniel who provides the hidden answer to the mystery (רז) (v. 19), creating an ironic contrast between the supposed knowledge of the counselors and the true knowledge from on high.

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23. In fact, many see Dan. 2.13-23 as an insertion into the text. P.R. Davies argues that the text makes good sense without this account, which includes the hymnic prayer of Daniel and his three friends ('Daniel Chapter 2', *JTS* 27 (1976), pp. 392-401). P.M. Venter notes that Dan. 2.1-12 is from the point of view of the king, while v. 13 moves the narrative to Daniel's point of view and sets up the ironic contrast of between what the king knows and the knowledge that is revealed to Daniel ('The Function of Poetic Speech in Daniel 2', *HTS* 49 [1993], pp. 1009-20 [1017]).

24. Fewell, *Circle of Sovereignty: Plotting Politics*, p. 30.

25. Meadowcroft, *Aramaic Daniel*, pp. 182-83.

Lastly, the introduction of Daniel as a Judean exile recalls that Daniel is on an adventure, although surely not one of his own making. Bakhtin indicates that, in Menippean satire, both heroes and the wise venture into lands unknown and fantastic to experience extraordinary adventures. Both Dan. 1.3 and this passage signify that Daniel is in a strange place and that whatever occurs will be daring and unusual. Expectations are raised for more strange events to unfold. For all the above stated reasons, the view that this pericope is original to the chapter is plausible.

The detailed exploration of the dream and its interpretation (vv. 29-45) waits until Chapter 4 of this study because it is a liminal event rather than straight humor. A few of its elements are, however, appropriate for discussion here. First, Daniel reiterates, in vv. 27-28, what the Chaldeans said in vv. 10-11. No mortal can reveal the mysterious dream and its interpretation, only a god can do it. Once again, the contrast between human and divine power is vividly portrayed, which sets up the coming irony.

Second, the description of the dream refers to an image that is lofty and striking, one that reinforces the imperial might of the various kingdoms the statue represents. The use of such an extraordinary image of royal power heightens the force of the rock hewn without hands from the mountain that is able to destroy such an impressive image. Yet again, the contrast between human and divine power is vividly portrayed, this time reinforcing the irony of the seemingly all-powerful Nebuchadnezzar being subject to the authority of the Hebrew deity (v. 45).

Third, Nebuchadnezzar prostrates himself before Daniel in homage and orders the presentation of offerings and incense to him (v. 46). The king's overblown reaction of homage to Daniel's interpretation is in character with his previous violent rage toward his inept advisors; only this time the response is outside of expected royal behavior and serves as a satirical barb against the king. Nebuchadnezzar is prostrating himself before an exile, proclaiming the wisdom and power of the Hebrew deity (v. 47), a ludicrous image that serves to belittle and make fun of the king. He has been turned from a vicious, violent victor to a sniveling, submissive supplicant. This chapter further turns royal power and privilege on its head as Daniel receives a promotion and lavish gifts, as well as approval for his request that his three friends receive rewards (vv. 48-49). The master not only becomes the supplicant of the slave, the slave also becomes the master of others. This is a laughable and most satisfying portrait of King Nebuchadnezzar, the arch villain of the Hebrew Bible.[26] It is also a laughable and most satisfying portrait of the fate of the exile. He or she will be redeemed and revered in the very empire that created the Diaspora.

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26. Good sees Nebuchadnezzar as grossly sycophantic ('Apocalyptic as Comedy', pp. 41-70 [51]).

Many commentators, both ancient and modern, have difficulty with the image of Daniel receiving such worship-like behavior because there is no indication in the text that Daniel objects to this behavior.[27] Standard solutions include the proposal that Daniel recognized these actions as being directed to his God, not himself, or that Daniel simply ignores the king's homage and gifts as is typical of the other Daniel stories (e.g., Dan. 5.29). This scene is not so problematic in this interpretation because the primary foci of the chapter are the dreams, actions, and fate of the king, not Daniel's response. Moreover, Daniel's silence casts him as a quiet, reserved, humble man who speaks only when necessary. The king, on the other hand, is noisy and grandiose. Goldingay nicely captures the overall characterizations of the protagonists of this chapter,

> The characterization of the main figures in the story is effected by means of cartooning so as to polarize them: Nebuchadnezzar in the extremes of his original violence and anxiety and of his later reverence and gratitude, the sages exposed in their pretension and incompetence, Daniel as a model of wisdom and piety.[28]

Daniel also exhibits reticence of speech.

The hyperbolic accounting of the spoils (including religious power in the king's worship, financial power in the form of gifts, political power as ruler over the province of Babylon, and legal/scribal power as chief prefect over the wise men [v. 48]) of successful dream interpretation is yet another humorous element of the text. This gives Daniel a vast range and amount of power and authority—all for the mere interpretation of a dream. Additionally, the last point in v. 49, that Daniel remained at the king's court, implies that the king is dependent upon him. These things make the king look nothing short of weak and foolish.

Perhaps it can be argued that vv. 46-49 raise expectations in the reader that the king honestly recognizes the superiority of the Hebrew God. Nonetheless, the next story, ironically, centers on a new statue and new demands for worship and fealty toward the king and his empire. The dream statue of Daniel 2 and the golden image of Daniel 3 provide together a connecting point for these two stories, and the golden image in Daniel 3 reinforces the overall satiric nature of the Daniel 2.

4. *Daniel 3: The Fantastically Fiery Furnace*

Many scholars recognize the comedic overtures of this chapter.[29] Of all the stories of Daniel 1–6, Daniel 3 is the one most often recognized as a

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27. For discussions of this issue, see Buchanan, *Daniel*, pp. 79-80; Gowan, *Daniel*, p. 59; Lucas, *Daniel*, p. 77; and Meadowcroft, *Aramaic Daniel*, pp. 188-89.

28. Goldingay, *Daniel*, p. 43.

29. Montgomery notices 'the satirically exaggerated details of the heathen ceremo-

narrative deliberately constructed with comedic and satiric intentions, the product of a playful storyteller. The analysis of this chapter therefore builds upon an already substantial corpus of evidence that recognizes the satirical quality of this narrative.

The plethora of word and sound plays comprise one of the most striking features of this chapter. To demonstrate, this discussion could begin by saying: The story of Daniel's three friends and their refusal to profess faithfulness and fidelity to the king, which results in the fiery furnace episode and finishes up with the fulsome praise of the Hebrew God by the flabbergasted king, is filled with fine ironies and fun-filled wordplays that forever make fun of the royal foundation of power. This run-on sentence, with the alliterative preponderance of "f" sounds, illustrates how this particular chapter is structured and written. The sentence is an amusing, witty expression of something that could be said in a much more straightforward manner. Many other humorous elements underscore the impotence of the king and his lackeys. These include irony, mockery, hyperbole, and the fantastic. This chapter is a highly structured, rhetorical masterpiece that accentuates both the king's grandiose view of himself and his true powerlessness.[30]

The chapter begins with the hyperbolic description of an ironically towering (but probably tottering) golden statue (צלם דהב) that represents the king and the power of his empire (v. 1). The image looms over the first part of this chapter both literally and literarily. The word צלם is the most significant *Leitwört* of the chapter, occurring 13 times. Scholars recognize that the obelisk-like dimensions of this statue, with a base approximately nine feet across and a height approximately ninety feet high, presents a rather oddly shaped statue.[31] The statue is mentioned numerous times in this chapter (vv. 2, 3, 5, 7, 12, 14, 18), and in each instance Nebuchadnezzar is referenced as the one responsible for the creation of this outrageous stele. The repetitive use of variations of the term for image of gold that the king erects makes it clear that the king is orchestrating this scene in every detail. This repetition of the terms for the statue heightens the irony of the use of the same term in a much different way later in the chapter. The emphasis on bureaucratic power and top-down control comes through again and again as we read that it is the king who has ordered the construction of this great statue. The erection of such a large statue out of gold symbolizes the permanence and

nials and the king's arrogant defiance to their God' (*Daniel*, p. 193). Collins recognizes the hyperbolic style of the entire chapter (*Daniel: A Commentary*, p. 181). Gunn and Fewell recognize that 'the narrator's repetitive style and love of tedious detail set a tone of ridicule and absurdity' (*Narrative in the Hebrew Bible*, p. 175).

30. Gunn and Fewell perhaps best portray the rhetorical dimensions of this chapter (*Narrative in the Hebrew Bible*, pp. 174-88).

31. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, p. 181.

economic might of royal power. It is ironic that it both signifies the opposite and is suggestive of the undoubtedly heavy burden of taxation and servitude forced upon the king's subjects and the wasteful extravagance of imperial domination centered upon this royal image of the king.[32]

Moreover, one cannot help but to notice the connection between this golden statue and the one in Daniel 2, with its head of gold.[33] It is as if Nebuchadnezzar tries to topple the dream by building a statue that is entirely gold. Somehow, if he can build this tribute to his power, subsequent weaker kingdoms will not undo it. He can put off this Hebrew deity to whom he just bowed down. Readers know, however, what he does not. Erecting the statue is nothing short of foolishness. It is a monument to the king's tragic flaw.

Verses 2-7 relate how the king commands his officials and subjects to bow down and worship before the statue. They contain litanies of government officials (vv. 2, 3; cf. 27), musical instruments (vv. 5, 7, 10, 15) and subjects of the king (vv. 4, 7, 29; cf. 31 [Eng. 4.1]). The intentional repetition of these lists is a wordplay technique that highlights the ludicrousness of this scene. Both the lists and their repetition highlight the rhetorical and ironical artistry of this chapter.[34] These staccato lists paint a striking word picture of a king and his subjects who act in mechanical, lockstep, and robotic ways.[35] Hector Avalos suggests that the repeated lists of officials and musical instruments throughout the chapter function as an integral technique in the author's satire on pagan culture and behavior.[36]

In v. 2, Nebuchadnezzar summons seven specific classes of officials as well as any others he might have missed to come to the dedication of the image, 'Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to assemble *the satraps, prefects, governors, counselors, treasurers, judges, magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces* to come to the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up'. As noted in the list of the wise in Daniel 2, this list demonstrates the all-inclusive nature of Nebuchadnezzar's summoning. It is an exaggerated response.

Verse 3 follows with the information that all those summoned did come and assemble before the image: 'Therefore *the satraps, prefects, governors, counselors, treasurers, judges, magistrates, and all the officials of*

32. Smith-Christopher, *Daniel*, pp. 61-62.

33. Fewell, *Circle of Sovereignty: Plotting Politics*, pp. 38-39.

34. Coxon observes that, while at one time such constructions were considered as primitive and undeveloped forms of narrative technique, today the association of the form of the text with the overt meaning of the text is recognized as an example of sophisticated literary artistry ('List Genre', pp. 95-121 [107]).

35. Cf. Avalos, who identifies the purpose of the lengthy list of government officials as a picture of the mindlessness of the entire Chaldean bureaucracy ('Comedic Intentions', pp. 580-88 [585]).

36. Avalos, 'Comedic Intentions', pp. 580-88 (581).

the provinces assembled for the dedication of the statue that King Nebu-
chadnezzar had set up and stood before the statue'. This identical list of
officials repeated in the very next verse is a clue that the author is report-
ing something more than factual verisimilitude.[37] Rather, the repetition
of list signals another rhetorical purpose.[38] The point is that whatever the
king wants, the king gets! Whether the area with which the official is
connected is government, law, finance, or wisdom, the king has ultimate
control.

Before the officials, in vv. 3b-6, the king commands the people to fall
down and worship the statue whenever they hear music from a band. The
command to fall down and worship (יפל יסגד) is variously repeated in
vv. 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, and 18. The list of people, nations, and tongues
(עממיא אמיא לשניא) in v. 4 is repeated verbatim later in vv. 7 and 29.[39] In
v. 5, the author lists the musical instruments that comprise the summoning
band (קל קרנא משרוקיתא קיתרוס סבכא פסנתרין סומפניה זני זמרא). This
list is repeated with minor variations in vv. 7, 10, and 15. Scholars have
discussed at length the types of instruments and the origins of the various
musical terms.[40] It is more interesting for this analysis, however, to note
the ritualistic nature of the musical calls for total and immediate obeisance
in the form of falling down and worshiping the image. The repetition of
the image of gold, along with the endless list of bureaucratic officials and
people summoned to fall down and worship whenever they hear the royal
band play, creates an image of the rhythmic demand and adherence of
acceptable behavior to the imperial vision. The rote response of the people
to the sound of the music in v. 7 betrays the mindless and absurd behavior
of the king's followers. This Pied-Piper-like behavior will stand in sharp
contrast to the simple eloquent refusal of the three Jews to acquiesce to the
king's directives later in the chapter (vv. 16-18). The rhetorical structure
of this section with its reiterations and its stilted human behaviors mirrors
the message that everything is controlled by the king's wishes. Verses
10-11 continue with similar techniques to underscore the rote obedience
demanded of the king's subjects to his commands and the ludicrous nature
of lists of subjects hearing the musical summons of lists of instruments.

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37. Discussions of the historical significance of each government position are of
interest, but these deliberations miss the main point of the narrative. For such discus-
sions, see Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, pp. 182-83; and Hartman and Di Lella,
Daniel, pp. 154-56.

38. Gunn and Fewell suggest that the repetition of the list enacts the power structure
of the story (*Narrative in the Hebrew Bible*, p. 175).

39. This is also repeated with slight variation in v. 31 (Eng. 4.1). This verse is dis-
cussed with Dan. 4.

40. For example see Pierre Grelot, 'L'orchestre de Daniel III 5, 7, 10, 15', *VT* 29
(1979), pp. 23-38.

Verse 6 introduces the penalty for independent thinking and behavior. Violators will be thrown into the blazing furnace (אתון נורא יקדתא). The recurrence of this image of being thrown into the fire in vv. 6, 11, 15, and 20; the repetition of the references to the red-hot blazing furnace in vv. 17, 21, 23, 26; the mention that the furnace is superheated extraordinarily high in vv. 19 and 22; and the five repetitions of fire (נורא) in vv. 24, 25, 26, and 27 (2×); all make the furnace with its fire the predominant image in this chapter.[41] It surpasses even the *Leitwört* צלם. Those who refuse to bow down before the image will be brought low by the punishing fire. Those who refuse to participate in this ritual to the royal ego will pay a huge price. The threat or execution of the punishment is more important than the worship of the image itself. The king values fear of him more than worship of him.

Wordplay is important to vv. 2-7, as well. In the Aramaic, the repetition of the list of officials in vv. 2 and 3 also results in an example of consonance. Consonance is a rhyming technique based upon the repetition of consonants at the end of words. This occurs because of the Aramaic definite article appended to each term (סגניא ופחותא אדרגזריא גדבריא דחבריא תפתיא וכל שלטני מדינתא). Many translations do not indicate this effect because of the decision to only use one instance of the definite article collectively for the entire list.[42] Verse 4 is an example of paronomasia where the herald cries out (כרוזא קרא). He addresses all peoples, nations, and languages (עממיא אמיא לשניא). Once again, there is consonance based on the definite article ending. Also, this phrase is an example of synonymic assonance and alliteration. The repetition of consonant and vowel sounds highlights the formulaic nature of the material. Verse 7 closes this first section of the chapter with a summary statement based on paronomasia. When all (כל) the people hear the sound (קל) of all (כל) kinds of music, they are to bow down and worship. This wordplay reinforces the bureaucratic lockstep obedience that the king requires, and this behavior will provide an ironic contrast to the dignified steadfast refusal of the three heroes to follow the orders of the king later in the chapter (vv. 16-18).

Verses 1-7 constitute a finely constructed section using multiple wordplay techniques to create a picture of absolute obedience. The overall effect of vv. 1-7 is that royal power is absolute, obedience is unquestioned, and conformity is the only acceptable option.[43] Even though the king's power appears to be absolute, the exaggerations in the scene when combined with the wordplays give it an absurd air. The statue itself is grotesque, immense,

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41. Cf. Coxon, 'List Genre', pp. 95-121 (109).

42. For example, the NRSV, KJV, and NASB correctly translate each instance of the definite article. The NIV, NAB, and NJB only include the definite article with the first term in the list.

43. Gunn and Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible*, p. 175.

out of proportion, and made entirely of gold. All the king's officials of whatever governmental domain must appear. All the peoples, nations, and languages that the king has conquered must bow down. A great band will herald the command. The penalty for disobedience is horrific. The depiction of vv. 1-7 is a caricature of kingly authority and the people's forced obedience. This rhetoric emphasizes the king's foolishness first established in v. 1.

Verse 8 changes the scene. A discordant note in the royal symphony is sounded. The king's advisors come forward to denounce the Jews, and they do so with the same language and lists of the previous verses in this chapter, symbolizing their rigid automaton-like loyalty to the king. Their sycophantic appeals to the king and their accusations against the Jews are in consonance with royal policy. First, the Chaldeans repeat the statement of Dan. 2.4: 'O King, Live Forever!' (v. 9). Each succeeding repetition of this phrase (5.10; 6.6, 21) sounds less convincing and more ironical. The Chaldeans repeat once again the royal command to fall down at the sound of the music and the penalty of a burning death for those who refuse (vv. 10-11). The recalcitrant Jews are indicted with the king's own words. Verse 12 contains the first instance of 13 repetitions of the names of the three Jews who refuse to follow the king's orders in this chapter.[44] The Chaldeans snitch on and accuse Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego for they pay no heed to the king, they do not serve the king's gods, and they do not worship the statue. This begins a legal proceeding against Daniel's three friends in the king's court for violating the king's decree.[45] The king has legal authority to enforce his decrees, even if they are absurd. The entire section also serves as an ironic foreshadowing of the fate of those who accuse the Jews (אכלו קרציא) because it is they who will be eaten by lions in Daniel 6.[46]

The next section, vv. 13-18, is the focal point of the story both structurally and thematically. It is the trial of the accused Jews, where they refuse to accede to the royal decree. The king's reaction in v. 13, instead of being consistent with a more detached and objective legal process, is one of total loss of control. He is certainly on his rights to summon the defendants to court.[47] The problem is that he flies into yet another furious rage as in Dan. 2.12. This is becoming the predictable kingly response in these Daniel stories. In the book of Daniel, few royal behaviors are normal or measured responses in kind. Kings lack emotional control, and their distorted

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44. Avalos notes that such repetition is another example of the comedic intentions of the author to use lists and repetitions over and over and over again ('Comedic Intentions', pp. 580-88 [587]).

45. For a discussion of legal accusations in the ancient Near East, see Magdalene, 'On the Scales', pp. 60-68.

46. Coxon, 'List Genre', pp. 95-121 (112-13).

47. Magdalene, 'On the Scales', pp. 71-72.

responses to events stand in sharp ironic contrast to the control and authority supposedly inherent in royalty. Kings are portrayed as violent buffoons when measured against the calm, measured, steadfast, and effective acts of the Jewish protagonists of the stories.

In Nebuchadnezzar's legal investigation, he inquires as to whether or not the defendants did the outlawed conduct (v. 14).[48] Then he gives them another chance to show their obeisance, once again mouthing the list of commands and the persistent demand that they fall down and worship (v. 15a). If they do not obey, a blazing furnace promises a hot time indeed (v. 15bα). He mocks them, inquiring who is this god that can save them from their fate (v. 15bβ). He apparently has no memory of the god who revealed his dream and its interpretation to Daniel—or at least any confidence in him. This god may be the God of gods and the Lord of lords who reveals mysteries (Dan. 2.47), but he cannot save one from a fiery furnace. The king's faith is indeed short-lived and shortsighted.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego reply simply that they will not defend against the charges (v. 16).[49] Rather, they will rely on their God for good or evil (vv. 17-18).[50] They will take their royal punishment, but God will determine their fate. Their response is in sharp contrast with the rest of the chapter. It is brief and measured. There are no lists, no rhetorical flourishes, only a simple refusal to serve the king's gods or worship his statue, even at the threat of a tortuously painful execution.[51] In this section of the dialog, all the blustering, pompous commands of the king are deflated by the simple articulate refusal of the three Hebrews. The king is helpless. He can order them into the furnace but he cannot necessarily take their lives. They will depend on the abilities of their God.

The king's response, typical of the book, is to react wildly to the direct affront of these men with a third furious rage (v. 19a). There are no measured responses here, no simple announcement of the verdict in the case and orderly execution of sentence.[52] The stately royal symphony again

48. For a discussion of legal investigations in the ancient Near East, see Magdalene, 'On the Scales', pp. 68-71.

49. The requirement that the defendant answer the charges if he or she hopes to win is discussed in Magdalene, 'On the Scales', pp. 72-73.

50. Verses 17 and 18 are much discussed concerning the issue or whether God is able to save the three Hebrews. It is clear from v. 18 that the principle of faith in God and resistance to the king's request is paramount and the outcome of being thrown into the fire is insignificant. For a discussion of these matters, see Philip W. Coxon, 'Daniel III 17: A Linguistic and Theological Problem', *VT* 26 (1976), pp. 400-409; and Lucas, *Daniel*, pp. 90-91.

51. Gunn and Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible*, p. 181.

52. For further on verdicts and executions of judgment, see Magdalene, 'On the Scales', pp. 86-89.

transforms into a cacophonous response. In this third instance of the king's rage, his face (צלם) contorts with rage. The writer uses the same word for Nebuchadnezzar's countenance as for the image (צלם) of gold set up by Nebuchadnezzar (v. 1). Here, in v. 19a, image (צלם) is used as a description of how the king's face changes because of his fury toward the recalcitrant heroes. This is an example of antanaclasis, the repeated use of single term with different meanings. Meadowcroft suggests that this wordplay may imply that the original statue may have been an actual image of the king.[53] If so, it would reflect the king's pomposity. It may also be an allusion back to Daniel 2 where the statue (צלם) is ultimately destroyed. Without a doubt this word picture playfully satirizes the king.[54]

Nebuchadnezzar, in his fury, takes charge once more and the ludicrousness increases. The following farcical furnace scene of vv. 19b-27 is filled with a veritable smorgasbord of Menippean-like satirical tactics. The blazing furnace is the focus of this section, and it now becomes clear, after the third episode of the king's wrath, that the fire symbolizes the fury and rage of the king as well as the consequences of disobedience.[55] The ludicrousness of the scene is emphasized by its many references to the red-hot blazing furnace (vv. 20, 21, 23, 26) and the fire that does not consume them (vv. 24, 25, 26, 27). Verse 21 introduces another alliterative list, this one of the clothing of the three conspirators (לרבלתהון ולבשיהון וכרבלתהון ולבשיהון בסרב), another reminder of the author's fondness of lists.[56] Even the reiteration of the fact that the heroes were bound (vv. 20, 21, 23, 24) in contrast to their final unbound state (v. 25) contributes to the sense of absurdity. In their unbinding, it is the king's will that will be undone.

The superheating of the oven seven times normal (v. 19) is an example of distortion and hyperbole. This fantastic event results in a fire so hot that it immediately consumes the king's soldiers who approach it bearing Daniel's friends (v. 22), a rather grotesque scene. It seems that the king's rage is dangerous even for his servants, who did bow down! The soldier's actions are in contrast with those of Daniel's guard in Daniel 1 and his intended executioners in Daniel 2. The servants of Daniel 1 and 2 assisted Daniel and his friends and came to no harm. These servants, on the other hand, die while assisting the king in carrying out his sentence. Their ending has a double ironic twist in it.

The fire, intended to destroy the heroes, does not, in fact, harm them. Not only are Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego uninjured, (fantastic enough

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53. *Aramaic Daniel*, p. 148.

54. Fewell, *Circle of Sovereignty: Plotting Politics*, p. 51.

55. Terry L. Brensinger suggests that furnace (אתון) serves as a *Leitwört* for this chapter ('Compliance, Dissonance, and Amazement in Daniel 3', *EJ* 20 (2002), pp. 7-19 (12).

56. Coxon, 'List Genre', pp. 95-121 (104).

in itself), they are also unbound and walking freely with a fourth person whose appearance Nebuchadnezzar himself describes like that of a son of the gods (בר־אלהין). The expected outcome of a gruesome death by fire is instead ironically transformed into a time of deliverance as well as a theophanic experience. Nebuchadnezzar approaches the fiery furnace, like his soldiers before him, yet he is not consumed as they were (v. 26a). He, too, is somehow protected. He now orders the three men to come out of the fire. This command they will obey. The sentence rendered by the king fails. Verses 8-27 constitute an excellent parody of a royal trial.

When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego come out of the furnace, v. 27a describes one last abbreviated list of officials, almost like a last gasp of official royal control.[57] Then the officials are described as crowding around the three, inspecting their bodies, their hair, their clothes and their smell (v. 27b). This in itself is a rather humorous, even ridiculous word picture, as if they are examining the men for lice. They have to make absolutely sure that the deliverance is real.

After inspection of the three, Nebuchadnezzar spontaneously utters the pious prayer of a supposedly converted king in v. 28. The king's praise of the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego is as good as any devout Jew might utter. He now makes a new decree. If anyone from among the whole people of his empire blasphemes against the deity of the Jews they will be torn limb from limb and their houses destroyed (v. 29). The king then promotes the three in the province of Babylon (v. 30).

The great majority of commentators read this and other kingly prayers literally. They view this and similar scenes of repentant kings in Daniel as true conversions.[58] This possibility is too good to be true, just like the royal declaration of Dan. 2.47. It will not last. The king is portrayed here as reacting wildly to the circumstances at hand, just as he was portrayed in Dan. 2.46-49. There, the king's prostrating before Daniel is absurd. Now, it is the full embrace of the Hebrew deity and the enforcement of his laws. What ideal ancient Near Eastern king would embrace the god of his conquered subjects as against his own?[59] In addition, v. 29 may give the reader a hint that a less than complete conversion may have occurred since the king is quite willing to hack anyone to death who defames the God of the three.[60]

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57. Perhaps the most trenchant observation for this entire chapter belongs to Good, who notes that the exact repetition of the list of officials in vv. 2 and 3 contrasts with the final shorter listing of these same officials in v. 27 because finally 'some weary copyist decided, "Oh, to hell with it!" ' ('Apocalyptic as Comedy', pp. 41-70 [52]).

58. Joseph Telushkin is one of the few commentators to question the legitimacy of the prayers and conversions found throughout Daniel (*Biblical Literacy* [New York: William Morrow, 1997], p. 380).

59. Good, 'Apocalyptic as Comedy', pp. 41-70 (52).

60. Fewell, *Circle of Sovereignty: Plotting Politics*, pp. 56-58.

It seems that kings and leopards perhaps do not change their spots so easily. An additional anomaly rests in the promotion of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. With each story, the king intends to give Daniel and/or his companions more and more rewards and power. That is made manifest. But to what further position can Nebuchadnezzar actually promote Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? They were already appointed over the affairs of the province in Dan. 2.49. The royal grant of still more power is another fantastic exaggeration. This chapter draws a preposterous and laughable portrait of a ruler who vacillates, is easily swayed, is overwrought, collapses, and gives away too much under pressure. The storyteller is once again communicating with us tongue in cheek.

The overall effect of Daniel 3 is a portrayal of a king who blusters and splutters, issuing royal commands that are in the end thwarted and frustrated. As in the rest of the book of Daniel, kings are never quite as powerful or in as much control as it may appear at the time. Once again, the text contrasts human and divine power in dramatic terms, reinforcing the irony of the seemingly all-powerful Nebuchadnezzar who is, in fact, subject to the authority of the Hebrew deity. Recognizing the humorous nature of this material is another important clue in recognizing that kings and their power are being thoroughly lampooned within Daniel 1–6. Although Daniel 3 ends with Nebuchadnezzar's decree of total destruction for anyone who blasphemes the God of the three heroes, ironically it will be Nebuchadnezzar who blasphemes their God in Daniel 4 and suffers the humiliating consequences. This king never learns.

5. *Daniel 4: Nighttime Traumas, Towering Trees, and Terrible Transformations*

Daniel 3.31-33 (Eng. Dan. 4.1-3) are an interesting set of transitional verses that different versions have placed either at the end of Daniel 3 or the beginning of Daniel 4.[61] An epistolary prescript introduces a royal letter sent to all

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61. A consideration of MT Dan. 4 is complicated by the differences in versification between the Aramaic text and the Old Greek versions. Daniel 4.1-3, the opening verses of most modern translations, appear as Dan. 3.31-33 in the MT. Lucas indicates that chapter divisions in modern editions of the MT follow the medieval chapter divisions of the 13th century Latin Vulgate, thus including Dan. 4.1-3 as the end of Dan. 3 (vv. 31-33) (*Daniel*, p. 107). This study will follow the versification of most modern translations, using Dan. 4.1 to refer to Dan. 3.31 in the MT, following through to the end of the chapter at Dan. 4.37. The recognition of this structuring device is important for this analysis of Dan. 4. Daniel 4 exhibits a rhetorical artistry that scholars recognize in a variety of ways. Buchanan relates the conclusions of R.H. Charles who notes that Dan. 4 is poorly preserved and composed because of the existence of the variant OG and MT traditions (*Daniel*, pp. 104-105). The confusion of these two traditions,

peoples, nations, and languages (עממיא אמיא לשניא) in Dan. 3.31, the same group encountered in Daniel 3.4, 7, and 29.[62] Nebuchadnezzar declares that he is pleased to recount the signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for him (vv. 32-33). He then sings a hymn to the Most High God that is a great tribute and consistent in tone with the line of biblical songs extending from Moses to the Psalms (v. 33). The obvious repetition of the peoples, nations, and languages would seem to place this pericope within Daniel 3. Moreover, the hymn seems to continue the praise of God articulated in v. 28. Nevertheless, the first person voice of the letter is in keeping with MT Dan. 4.1-15, which is also in the first person. Henze notes that the introductory formula of Dan. 3.31 (Nebuchadnezzar, the King,) parallels the opening formula of Dan. 3.1 (Nebuchadnezzar, the King,) and Dan. 5.1 (Baltasar, the King,).[63] It is his view that this structuring device was overlooked in the Middle Ages when the book was divided into chapters. Furthermore, Henze notes that the doxological content of Dan. 3.31-33 and 4.33 seem to serve as bookends for this chapter.[64] Finally, five of the six chapters end with Daniel and/or his friends receiving a reward or prospering in some way (Dan. 1.19; 2.48-49; 3.30; 5.29; 6.28). The letter's placement

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along with the repetitiveness of much of the text, thus gives indication of a less than skillful composition. Today, the existence of variant traditions is seen as evidence of a vibrant Daniel tradition, existing in multiple forms and not necessarily related to one another in a linear developmental scheme. Many have noted that the inclusio and chiastic structures of the chapter are evidence of a skillful hand. The complex poetry structures of the chapter are also evidence of rhetorical artistry. The repetitions of this chapter are again an indication of rhetorical purpose, and are not necessarily evidence of a careless redactor. Buchanan's conclusions concerning this chapter are especially helpful: 'Among the insights gained from reading the Jewish medieval literature is the realization that there is no one single way in which all ancient scholars had to compose literature. They did not fit everything into any certain groove that can be determined a millennium later. Just because a twentieth century scholar is able to remove awkward expressions and smooth out organizational imperfections does not prove that the final result is the earliest form of the document. One story can be preserved in this literature in many different versions, copied, paraphrased, and restructured by many authors over a long period of time. Such a story was obviously well known, and it is difficult or impossible to discern its true origin and respective modifications' (*Daniel*, p. 108).

62. One of the interesting aspects of this chapter is that it appears to be in the form of a royal letter. The structure of the sender's name (Nebuchadnezzar) before the recipients (to all the peoples, nations and languages), followed by an initial greeting (may your peace abound!), is typical of standard Neo-Babylonian and Persian correspondence style. Many scholars have noted this feature. Buchanan calls it a royal epistle (*Daniel*, p. 110). Meadowcroft posits that it is a deliberately crafted epistle in order to present the story in an autobiographical form (*Aramaic Daniel*, p. 33).

63. Henze, *Madness of King Nebuchadnezzar*, p. 16.

64. Henze, *Madness of King Nebuchadnezzar*, p. 25.

at the end of Daniel 3 seems to disrupt this pattern. On these grounds, these verses belong at the beginning of Daniel 4.

Having said all this, however, whether such verses belong to Daniel 3 or Daniel 4 is less important for this discussion than it would be for some others. This is because the transitional, liminal aspect of these verses appears to be another indicator of the menippea-like novelistic nature of Daniel 1–6. Their connection to both chapters indicates that the author or final redactor wished to tie these stories together into a unity such that the break point was obscure. This is a point explored in the sixth chapter of this study.

Within the letter (Dan. 4.1-3), Nebuchadnezzar appears to be a humble and contrite servant of the Most High God as his doxological language gives witness to his piety. It is consistent with his praise of the Hebrew God in Dan. 3.28. Just as the king's praise and defense of this God in Dan. 3.28-29 is totally unexpected and raises both suspicion and curiosity, so does the king's statement and song of praise in Dan. 4.2-3.[65] This confession is filled with irony as the infamous ruler of the Babylonian captivity is portrayed as piously dependent upon the God of his captives.[66] It is as if the king's song of praise puts the final touches on the author's portrait of the king as fool. George Buchanan notes that the overall purpose of this chapter is apologetic: 'It is designed to make the most powerful of the gentiles look stupid and be forced to recognize the superiority of Judaism. The historical value of the narrative in itself is questionable, but that which is obvious is the point of view of the author'.[67] This assessment points readers in the proper direction. As a royal edict, it is absurd that the arch villain of Israel, the great king Nebuchadnezzar, would launch into such effusive praise of the God of Israel! The use of such a widely recognized royal form of communication in such an unbelievable manner is an example of what Bakhtin describes as the use of a genre in a parodic way. In this instance, the royal letter, a formally serious and authoritative type of official communication is parodied in Daniel 4 by using the form to recount a scene in the life of Nebuchadnezzar that portrays him in an unflattering and ridiculous manner. The praise of the Hebrew God by the Babylonian monarch is the apogee of incongruity. The remainder of the chapter, with its dream account of royal humiliation

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65. Fewell asserts that this opening statement surprises and disorients readers. The use of an official proclamation form implies reality and authority, but the message is incongruous with the messenger (*Circle of Sovereignty: Plotting Politics*, p. 62).

66. Seow observes the parallels of this doxological language with the performance of signs and wonders of the Exodus tradition (*Daniel*, p. 65). Fewell sees the king's absurdly pious doxology as an outrageous example of unmitigated gall on the part of the one who exiles the people of God claiming to be God's chosen representative (*Circle of Sovereignty: Plotting Politics*, p. 64).

67. *Daniel*, p. 108. Montgomery, *Daniel*, p. 222, writes that as an edict the letter is historically absurd.

and degradation, gives further evidence of this parody of the king's power using one of the most recognized forms of royal communication.

An abrupt shift takes place between vv. 3 and 4. Although Nebuchadnezzar is still speaking in the first person, his audience seems to have shifted from the people to Daniel based on Dan. 4.18. This part of the story opens with Nebuchadnezzar content and prosperous or luxuriant at his palace (ורענן בהיכלי) (v. 4). The Aramaic word רענן is a Hebrew loan word that suggests the lavish growth of plants and trees.[68] A possible connection exists with the Arabic root *r'n* that implies both a sense of foolishness or weak-mindedness and the idea of height or tallness. This wordplay creates a double-entendre concerning the king's self-description.[69] The sense of tallness also reminds us of the statue of Daniel 3.

As in Daniel 2, the king once again has a dream that he does not understand (v. 6). Only this time, he is not demanding and blustering in quite the same way he was in Dan. 2.2, 6-7, and 8-9; rather, he reports that he was afraid, nay, terrified. One wonders why this dream is more terrifying than the last (v. 5). Is it because the interpretation of the last dream bore bad news for the king? Is it because of the intervening humbling that he received at the hand of the Most High God? The idea that a conquering, brazen, egocentric, grandiose, and raging king should admit to anyone that he is afraid is preposterous. Again, the depiction of the king is satirical.

The expected list of advisors, the wise men of Babylon, the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the diviners, is summoned once again (vv. 6-7a). As usual, they are unable to interpret the dream, even though this time they are told its contents (v. 7). By this time in the narrative, readers expect the advisors to fail.[70] Daniel comes once again before him and the king asks him to interpret the dream (vv. 8-9). In these two verses, the king refers to Daniel as one who is endowed with the spirit of the holy gods (רוח אלהין קדישין), chief of the magicians (רב חרטמיא), and one for whom no mystery is too difficult (רז לא אנס). Nonetheless, he also refers to Daniel with his appellative of subjugation, Belteshazzar. This is yet another indication that the king who claims so forcefully to be a servant of the Most High is perhaps less than sincere.

The king then relates the contents of the dream that consists of the vision of an enormous tree that provides safety and abundance for all the creatures of the earth (vv. 10-12).[71] Its size is so great that it reaches up to the heavens

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68. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, p. 222; and Seow, *Daniel*, p. 66.

69. Peter W. Coxon, 'The Great Tree of Daniel 4', in *A Word in Season: Essays in Honour of William McKane* (ed. James D. Martin and Philip R. Davies, JSOTSup, 42; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986), pp. 91-111 (97); and Lucas, *Daniel*, p. 108.

70. Gowan, *Daniel*, p. 74.

71. On the symbol of the cosmic tree and connections with royalty and life, see Geo Widengren, *The King and the Tree of Life in Ancient Near Eastern Religion* (Uppsala:

and is visible to the ends of the earth (v. 11). The image of the great tree represents the power of the Neo-Babylonian Empire that is visible to all, both gods and people, and can feed and protect all of creation. The dream account of the mammoth tree in this chapter marks the third time that Nebuchadnezzar and colossal images are intertwined. The dream in Daniel 2 focuses on an immense statue representing various kingdoms of the world, while in Dan. 3 the royal stele is a witness to the great power and might of the king.[72] The tree dominates the middle portions of Dan. 4 and is reflected in the chiastic literary structure of the narrative.[73]

This false image of empire as protection and fulfillment, however, is one that is only in the king's mind, for the dream relates that it is soon to be axed (v. 13). As in the previous stories, the power of the king is undercut. In vv. 13-17, a supernatural messenger or watcher (עִיר) appears in the dream and pronounces judgment by commanding that the tree be toppled and indicating that the king will be transformed into an animal-like creature.[74] This abrupt change of image is often seen as an indication of a conflation of two sources with different imagery.[75] An intriguing explanation is that the shifting descriptions perhaps defy logic because that is the precisely the nature of fantastic dream images.[76]

This recurring motif of large images related to the king and his empire and their ultimate falling accentuates the ongoing conflict between divine and human sovereignty and the ultimate failure of human pretensions of grandeur. One cannot help but recall in the bands of iron and bronze around the fallen tree in v. 15, the image of the dream statue that is made up of iron and bronze along with gold, silver, and clay in Daniel 2. The iron and bronze were weakened kingdoms in that first dream and could symbolize a weakened kingly grasp on the once strong empire.

Lundequist, 1951). Coxon briefly explores the tree imagery of the Hebrew Bible ('Great Tree', pp. 91-111 [94-96]).

72. Coxon, 'Great Tree', pp. 91-111 [91-92].

73. William H. Shea, 'Further Literary Structures in Daniel 2–7: An Analysis of Daniel 4', *AUSS* 23 (1985), pp. 277-95 (202). In addition to the chapter's chiastic structure, Alexander A. Di Lella notes that the purpose of the colorful and dramatic poetry is to accentuate the contrast between the Most High and the towering pride of human kings ('Daniel 4.7-14: Poetic Analysis and Biblical Background', in A. Caquot and M. Delcor, *Melanges bibliques et orientaux en l'honneur de M. Henri Cazelles* [AOAT, 212; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1981], pp. 247-58 [258]).

74. For details on the significance of עִיר, see Collins, *Daniel*, p. 224-26.

75. Collins sees a 'lapse in literary consistency', which is evidence of the incomplete melding of two sources (*Daniel: A Commentary*, p. 227). The bands of iron and bronze have been seen as either ornamental arboreal decoration or as fetters suitable to confine an animal. For detailed discussion of this issue, see Henze, *Madness of King Nebuchadnezzar*, pp. 83-90.

76. Seow, *Daniel*, p. 68.

It is interesting that Nebuchadnezzar reports that the dream contains a legal judgment. A sentence is rendered by decree of the watchers (פתגמא בגזרת עירין), and a decision given by orders of the holy ones (שאלתא ומאמר קדישין) (v. 17). The dream discloses that the king suffers a judgment to teach all who live that the Most High is sovereign and is finally in control of all. The many decrees and legal judgments of the king within Daniel 1–3 are seemingly coming back to haunt him.

Nebuchadnezzar ends his account of the dream with a plea for Daniel to interpret the dream (v. 18). He acknowledges once again that the wise men of his kingdom (כל חכימי) cannot interpret the dream, symbolically demonstrating the impotence of the empire. Daniel is different, however, because Nebuchadnezzar notes that the spirit of the holy gods (רוח־אלהין קדישין) is in Daniel. The king once again betrays his conflicted sympathies. He knows that Daniel's holy gods are more powerful than all the wise men of the empire.

There is something surprising about Nebuchadnezzar's request of Daniel. This dream's meaning should be clear given what has occurred in Daniel 2. Also the judgment at the end of the dream is delivered in a completely straightforward manner. The lack of understanding by the king and his advisors in this situation is a reminder once again that they are dolts and desperately need instruction by the wise. In spite of the king's stupidity (or maybe because of it), Daniel appears to be genuinely afraid and concerned for the king's welfare in v. 19, although it may be that he is simply observing proper 'dream report protocol' in his response to the king.[77] It feels formulaic and most politic. Given the hyperbolic and antithetical nature of the opening of this chapter with the overenthusiastic praise of the Hebrew God by Nebuchadnezzar, it may not be surprising to see Daniel portrayed as being sympathetic to the sovereign's plight, thus creating another implausible scene.[78] After expressing a perfunctory wish that the dream be for the king's enemies, he launches into his scathing interpretation that portends woe and judgment (vv. 20-26). This rejects the interpretation that Daniel in his terror and his concern for the king are an expression of genuine concern.

There are a number of interesting wordplays in the dream and Daniel's interpretation that heighten the sense of judgment of this narrative. The rise

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77. Smith-Christopher, 'Daniel', pp. 17-152 (74). Most commentators wrestle with Daniel's concern and identification with the king. Redditt characterizes Daniel as 'ever the diplomat' (*Daniel*, p. 82). Collins also observes that the expressions of concern here and the later plea for repentance by the king in v. 27 are merely part of the expected standard procedure for delivering negative news to the king (*Daniel: A Commentary*, p. 230).

78. Surely it is an overstatement to portray this statement of concern as 'a suggestion of warmth in the relationship between the two men in this chapter' (Baldwin, *Daniel*, p. 113).

and the fall of the great tree in this chapter sets forth the antithesis of human and divine kingship in no uncertain terms. The synonyms great (רב) and mighty (תקף) (vv. 8, 17, 19, 27, 33) and king (מלך) and rule (שלט) (vv. 14, 22, 23, 29, 31) are used to establish this contrast. Nebuchadnezzar boasts of his greatness, but his words are hollow compared to the God of heaven who is truly great. The hyperbolic boastfulness of the king is ironically contrasted with the true power of God. This is reinforced by the numerous references to the antonyms earth or ground (ארע), the realm of earthly rule (vv. 1, 10, 11, 15, 20, 22, 23, 32, 33, 35), and heaven (שמיא), the abode of God (vv. 11, 12, 15, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 31, 33, 34, 35, 37).[79] These two words serve as antithetical *Leitwörter* that signify the contrast between human and divine sovereignty.[80]

Two other examples of paronomasia in vv. 17 and 19 make clear the connection between the tree and the king and that the fall of the tree necessarily parallels the fall of the king. In v. 17, the tree's height reached to heaven (ימטא לשמיא) and, in v. 19, the king's greatness reaches to the heavens (ומטת לשמיא). In v. 17, the tree's appearance is to all the earth (לכל ארעא), while the king's rule is to the end of the earth (לסוף ארעא).[81]

The second part of the interpretation notes that, not only will the king collapse like the tree, but his judgment also includes a transformation into an animal-like creature (vv. 22-25). The king will be cast out from society until he learns the lesson that the Most High is sovereign over all the kingdoms and gives to whom he pleases (v. 25).[82] Not until then will the Neo-Babylonian Empire be restored to the king (v. 26). Daniel ends his interpretation with a plea that the king might repent and do what is right to possibly avoid this message of judgment. Again, this plea does not need to be interpreted as a statement of positive concern for the king's welfare by Daniel. It may simply be a standard indication of the possibility of revocation of judgment common to prophetic pronouncements.[83] But how outlandish it is to think that this king, who has twice groveled before Daniel or his friends and sung hymns to the Most High, now needs such a reminder. Rather, the scene portrays the king as an imbecile with a very short attention span who requires the disciplining of the Most High God. It is uproariously funny, and it gets still better.

The scene abruptly changes to the roof of the royal palace in Babylon one year later with the simple, stark words of the narrator: 'All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar' (v. 28). This understatement of what is about

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79. Goldingay, *Daniel*, p. 85.

80. Lucas, *Daniel*, p. 102.

81. Meadowcroft, *Aramaic Daniel*, p. 47.

82. For Smith-Christopher this casting out is apropos for a king who has cast out thousands in his campaigns of conquest ('Daniel', pp. 17-152 [75]).

83. Lacocque, *Daniel*, p. 81.

to happen is ironic anticipation. The king struts upon his palace, boasting of his power and greatness, when a voice from heaven pronounces judgment. The king is immediately transformed into an animal-like creature (vv. 29-33). There are medical and psychological descriptions suggested for this transformation. They are unnecessary. A more likely, literary explanation is that the image is related to Babylonian folklore traditions.[84] It is the vivid portrayal of another of the series of fantastic and dramatic images that define the menippea-like satirical nature of this material. The king is humiliated and degraded beyond human boundaries. He is not only stripped of his power, but of his very humanity. He moves from the highest position a human can occupy to the basest situation imaginable. This depiction once again severely ridicules and parodies the power and might of imperial earthly sovereignty. This power is nothing compared with the divine, who can strip a man of his very humanity.

Verses 34-35 record the restoration of Nebuchadnezzar to human status and again he expresses hymnic praise of God. The king says all the right words, and yet in v. 36 his focus again is on the power, status and glory that are restored to him as King of Babylon.[85] The king's conversion seems predicated on his return to power rather than any understanding of Israelite religion.[86] Although Nebuchadnezzar says in v. 37 that the king of heaven is able to bring low those who walk in pride (ודי מהלכין בגוה יכל להשפלה), he is oblivious to the fact that he is being prideful yet again. The final verse of the chapter is autobiographical in form as in vv. 4, 18, and 34 (אנה נבוכדנצר), functioning as a tie throughout the chapter. It ends both the beginning and ending hymn of the chapter and serves with the hymns as an inclusio. Its tone is reminiscent of the blessing of God in Dan. 2.28. This verse then becomes a signature to this chapter and brings this letter structure formally to a close.[87] He apparently ends his song with the sour notes of conceit and smugness, missing the tone of true praise. Chapter 4 ends with Nebuchadnezzar's restoration but his failure to comprehend his full blasphemy and pride. Daniel 5 continues with the theme of blasphemy and recounts the prideful behavior and irreverence of Belshazzar and the ultimate demise of the king.[88]

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84. Lucas summarizes the views of several commentators concerning a diagnosis of zooanthropy or lycanthropy, a mental illness in which a person thinks s/he is an animal and behaves accordingly (*Daniel*, p. 111). Pierre Grelot rejects natural explanations and makes connections with folkloric themes ('Nabuchodonosor changé en bête', *VT* 44 [1994], pp. 10-17). These connections are explored further in Chapter 4.

85. Fewell explores these ambiguous statements of the king (*Circle of Sovereignty: Plotting Politics*, pp. 75-79).

86. Gowan states that Nebuchadnezzar is not 'converted' and does not learn the name of Daniel's God, let alone Israelite theology (*Daniel*, p. 83),

87. Henze, *Madness of King Nebuchadnezzar*, p. 25.

88. Lenglet states: 'le récit qui raconte comment le roi Balthasar s'attire sa con-

6. *Daniel 5: Carousing, Cryptic Communication, and Kaopectate*™

The setting of this chapter is a great banquet hosted by King Belshazzar (v. 1). Lavish banquets are common royal events, and at this great banquet a thousand nobles are drinking wine with the king. The number 1,000 is a typical hyperbolic convention to indicate that this spread is no ordinary feast.[89] The excesses of royal power and privilege are designed to trumpet the power and might of the king. The presence of wine is interpreted various ways by commentators, as some describe the scene as an orgiastic feast while others see it as a libation or wine tasting that is often part of royal parties.[90] In either case, the opulence is apparent.

An ironic counterpoint exists between the scene in Daniel 1 where Daniel and his friends refuse the king's food and drink, and the Bacchanalian scene played out in this chapter. This serves notice that imperial power claims are destined to fail. A strong suspicion arises that the party atmosphere that is present at the opening of this chapter will end in some diminishment of the king or his power. The text reports that the king is under the influence of the alcohol (v. 2a). In his inebriated state, he commands that the vessels of gold and silver that were plundered from the temple under the reign of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 1.2b) be brought to the feast so that the king, his lords, his wives, and concubines can drink from them. This use of the temple's sacred vessels is a horrific affront to Hebrew readers of the text. He uses the fruit of conquest to enjoy the fruit of the vine. He desecrates the temple's implements for his debauchery. It casts Belshazzar as a cruel and idolatrous man. The king's commands are followed: the vessels are brought in (v. 3). The king, his lords, his wives, and his concubines drink wine from them and praise the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone (v. 4).

In vv. 2 and 3, a significant wordplay indicates that this is a carefully constructed narrative. There is an example of the literary device known as phrasal repetition, where entire statements are repeated with small but important changes.[91] The reader learns that Belshazzar causes the temple

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demnation ne peut se comprendre qu'à la lumière du document qui le precede' ('La structure littéraire', pp. 169-90 [187]).

89. Seow characterizes this scene as one of ostentatious opulence (*Daniel*, p. 78).

90. Several commentators, among them Fewell and Seow, downplay the significance of the drinking of wine and possible drunkenness as a factor in this story, instead focusing on the introduction of the sacred vessels as the primary issue of this story (Fewell, *Circle of Sovereignty: Plotting Politics*, pp. 83-86; and Seow, *Daniel*, p. 78). The mention of the drinking of wine in each of the first four verses suggests, however, that inebriation plays a significant role in the developing scene and prepares the reader for the crude and comic images that soon follow.

91. The analysis of these verses follows the suggestions of Bill T. Arnold, 'Wordplay And Narrative Techniques In Daniel 5 And 6', *JBL* 112 (1993), pp. 479-85.

vessels to be brought forth in v. 2, but v. 3 adds that these vessels are from the house of God. The narrator subtly introduces his point of view with the addition of the words 'from the house of God'. The repetition of the phrase in v. 2 in the following verse with the addition of another phrase lends emphasis to the addition. These vessels are from the temple in Jerusalem, and the addition intensifies the ominous and idolatrous nature of the king's actions. The idolatrous nature of this king is further developed by the narrator's report in v. 4 that the company praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone. This language is reminiscent of Dan. 2.31-35, 38-43, 45. There, the statue of Nebuchadnezzar's dream was made of gold, silver, bronze, iron, and clay. Stone struck the statue and made it fall. Clay is no longer in the materials list. Wood has entered the list in its place. The slight change in the list once again highlights it. The implements once used to serve the Most High God are now used in praise of the gods of these materials. As the statue of the king's dream will fall to ruin by the hand of the Hebrew God, so will these gods.

It is not long before the hand of God appears in the form of the fingers of a human hand that writes on the wall of the palace (v. 5a). Fingers writing on stone walls bring to mind the stone hewn from the mountain without hands that destroyed Nebuchadnezzar's dream statue in Daniel 2. This hand is from God and like the hewn stone, it heralds destruction to Belshazzar and his empire. The hand and its writing immediately change the atmosphere of the party. The king stops partying and instead he watches the hand (v. 5b). Another wordplay based on the verb to bring forth (נפק) exists within the text. The verb to bring forth (נפק) is used in the *haphel* in vv. 2 and 3 and refers to the moving of the vessels, while in v. 5 it is used in an atypical way in the *peal* to describe the appearance or bringing forth of the fingers of a human hand that proceed to write on the wall. Arnold notes that this is an example of a subtle polysemantic wordplay that uses the same word deliberately with a calculated, ironic nuance.[92] This paronymous wordplay underlines the ironic contrast between the human insolence of the king and the divine response toward this rebellious behavior.[93] The king brings forth the vessels taken as booty by Nebuchadnezzar and these same vessels result in the bringing forth of the hand of judgment against him.

Further, just as the king was sitting before (לבקל) the thousand nobles, the writing on the wall appears before (לבקל) the king. This possibly suggests that the writing appears on the opposite wall, behind those seated before the king. In this scenario the king sees the writing, but the crowd only sees the king and his reaction. What happens next can only be described as a royal flush that definitely would not play well in a poker hand. As the king

92. Arnold, 'Wordplay in Daniel 5 and 6', pp. 479-85 (480).
93. Arnold, 'Wordplay in Daniel 5 and 6', pp. 479-85 (482).

watches the hand write upon the wall, something extraordinary happens to him. The king's color changes,[94] his thoughts alarm him, his limbs give way (וקטרי חרצה משתרין), and his knees knock together (v. 6). Shalom Paul comments the king's terror and his change of coloring is referenced three times in this chapter (vv. 6, 9 and 10), signifying the very great fear caused by this scene.[95]

   The full extent of the king's fear is not made wholly apparent on the face of most English versions. The phrase וקטרי חרצה משתרין has been translated a number of different ways, often with the sense of his legs or hips giving way and resulting in his falling down.[96] The phrase has, however, a much more graphic and base meaning than is communicated by this usual translation. The three words literally mean the knots of his loins were untied. The various euphemistic translations of this phrase mute the hysterical scene playing out before the thousand nobles, who at this point may not even be aware of the disembodied hand or the writing on the wall.[97] The king is having a Kaopectate™ moment! Al Wolters describes this delicious irony:

> We must look at the story from the point of view of an Aramaic-speaking
> Israelite audience who had suffered much at the hands of the Babylonians.
> The Babylonian king is described as first insulting the Israelite God and
> then, when the latter responds with the mysterious handwriting on the wall,
> as being so frightened that the 'knots of his loins were untied'. This igno-
> minious spectacle is enough to elicit hoots of derisive laughter on the part
> of the audience.[98]

   If the writing hand is indeed behind the king's company so that they cannot see that to which the king is reacting, the ludicrous nature of the royal despoilment is further enhanced. This loosening of the loins is not only highly embarrassing for the king, but it also implies impotence. The king's sexual prowess and power inferred by the presence of many wives and concubines as related in v. 3 stands in sharp contrast to a king who has had the contents of his bowels frightened right out of him. Athalya Brenner writes regarding this:

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94. Meadowcroft suggests an ironic comparison of Belshazzar's state with the greatness of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4.33) and the splendor of the statue (Dan. 2.31) where the same phrase (זיוהי שנוהי) is used (*Aramaic Daniel*, p. 79).

95. 'Decoding a "Joint" Expression in Daniel 5.6, 16', *JANESCU* 22 (1992), pp. 121-27 (122-25).

96. Al Wolters surveys various translations ('Untying the King's Knots: Physiology and Word Play in Daniel 5', *JBL* 110 [1991], pp. 117-22 [117]).

97. Meadowcroft and Lacocque both propose this possibility (Meadowcroft, *Aramaic Daniel*, pp. 72-73; and Lacocque, *Daniel*, pp. 94-95).

98. Wolters, 'Untying the King's Knots', pp 117-22 (121). See also Paul who comes to a similar conclusion concerning the ironic *double entendre* of this scene ('Decoding a "Joint" Expression', pp. 121-27 [126-27]).

> Insinuations of sexual misconduct and incontinence are made; moral, mental and intellectual inferiority to a social subordinate, a woman, is attributed to the king. Thus is the foreign ruler disqualified from office and his fate justified. The sexual and toilet humour is dark and might not be to our liking, but it achieves a serious critical aim; the subversion of (proverbial) foreign powers who act against Jews and Judaism. Contempt is well served by such a presentation, which allows verbal aggression even where political conditions exclude physical retaliation against foreign oppressors and their leaders. To impute impotence to somebody potent and powerful is almost the only kind of revenge available to the impotent and powerless.[99]

He has been humiliated before both his nobles, whose fidelity he owns, and his wives and concubines, whose sexuality he owns.[100] The king seems to ignore his soiled state and calls for the same sorry list of enchanters, Chaldeans, and diviners of earlier chapters to read and interpret the writing on the wall (v. 7a). When they appear, he promises them the costume and power of rank if they can perform (v. 7b). As usual, they fail (v. 8), and the king becomes even more frightened and terrified (v. 9a).

According to the narrator, apparently now the company of nobles has seen the hand, and they are also perplexed (v. 9b). Their perplexity seems understated given the situation, especially so in the face of the great terror of the king that has left him drawn, quaking, and befouled. The king's agitated state is ridiculed by the relative calm of the company of nobles. Readers should understand that the king has made a spectacle of himself. This is a very base, very funny scene. It is then that a new character enters the scene. The queen mother appears in the banquet hall when she hears the commotion and greets the king with the stock royal greeting, 'O King, Live Forever!' (v. 10). In the context of what is happening in this chapter and the king's disgusting state such an appellation of respect is another ironic jab at the king. The queen mother must address her son, even in such an embarrassing condition, with words of respect. Such respect is empty of meaning. It is silly. She may take an additional verbal swipe at the king when she tells the king that it is Daniel who can loosen the knots (משרא קטרין) of the writing in his interpretation (v. 12). As Dana N. Fewell colorfully writes:

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    99. 'Who's Afraid of Feminist Criticism? Who's Afraid of Biblical Humour? The Case of the Obtuse Foreign Ruler in the Hebrew Bible', *JSOT* 63 (1994), pp. 38-55 (51).

    100. For more on male ownership of female sexuality, see Carolyn Pressler, 'Sexual Violence and Deuteronomic Law', in A. Brenner (ed.), *Feminist Companion to Exodus to Deuteronomy* (FCB, 6; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), pp. 102-12; and F. Rachel Magdalene, 'Ancient Near Eastern Treaty Curses and the Ultimate Texts of Terror: A Study of the Language of Divine Sexual Abuse in the Prophetic Corpus', in A. Brenner (ed.), *Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets* (FCB, 8; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995), pp. 326-52 [338].

Her praise of his ability 'to solve problems' may also set up interesting overtones. The phrase, which is literally 'to loosen knots', connects Daniel's ability to solve problems with the 'loosened knots' of the king. While we cannot be sure whether or not the queen is aware of her word play, we cannot help but wonder, at the suggestion of her words, if she has not only noted the color of the king's face, but also a puddle at his feet! If the handwriting on the wall has 'loosened the knots of the king's loins', what does the queen think Daniel's interpretation will do?[101]

The unnamed queen is the only intelligent person in the court. Her reassurance of the king to fear not (v. 10b) and her nonhysterical counsel (vv. 11-12) stands in extreme contrast to the conduct of the first carousing and later perplexed royal party.[102] The queen mother's advice to Belshazzar is to call upon Daniel, whom she says is a man endowed with a spirit of the holy gods (רוח־אלהין קדישׁין) (v. 11). The queen mother sings Daniel's praises quite fully. She even uses the exact words of Nebuchadnezzar in Dan. 4.8-9 and 18 as she describes Daniel's wisdom and knowledge (v. 11) and then adds another accolade. Daniel has an excellent spirit (רוח יתירה) (v. 12). This is perhaps a subtle putdown of Belshazzar as he is being compared unfavorably to his father Nebuchadnezzar twice in v. 11.[103] Moreover, Belshazzar looks quite stupid in contrast to the wise Daniel. Belshazzar does not measure up to either the father-king or his servant. The fact that such advice is coming from a female character only adds to the sarcasm of the scene.[104] There is little doubt that this entire scene is filled with severe and extreme ridicule of the king.

At this point the king meekly follows the queen mother's advice, and Daniel is summoned to the court (v. 13a).[105] Verse 13b indicates that the king betrays himself and shows that he has previous knowledge of Daniel as he identifies Daniel as one of the exiles that his father brought from the land of Judah.[106] Arioch's knowledge of Daniel, which he shared with

101. *Circle of Sovereignty: Plotting Politics*, pp. 88-89.

102. Athalya Brenner, 'Some Observations on the Figurations of Woman in Wisdom Literature', in Heather A. McKay and David J.A. Clines (eds.), *Of Prophets' Visions and the Wisdom of Sages: Essays in Honour of R. Norman Whybray on his Seventieth Birthday* (JSOTSup, 162; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), pp. 192-208 (207).

103. Fewell, *Circle of Sovereignty: Plotting Politics*, p. 89.

104. H.J.M. van Deventer maintains that the queen mother plays the role of a female rebuker in the narrative and that in the narrative world this is a standard role for a female character. Nevertheless, her speech and actions serve to ridicule the king further ('Would the Actually "Powerful" Please Stand? The Role of the Queen [Mother] in Daniel 5', *Scriptura* 70 [1999], pp. 241-51 [247]).

105. It may be that the queen mother brings Daniel in while the king passively allows developments to take place (Fewell, *Circle of Sovereignty: Plotting Politics*, p. 90).

106. There are indications that Belshazzar may have an inferiority complex concerning Nebuchadnezzar, his father in the story line of Daniel 5. He uses the temple vessels

Nebuchadnezzar in Dan. 2.25, has filtered down to Belshazzar. The wise slave stands before the fearful, soiled king. In this state, the king repeats his mother's many accolades of Daniel in his request that Daniel interpret the sign (vv. 14-16a). It seems that the king is quite slavish in his following of this mother's lead. There is, perhaps, doubt, fear, or even sarcasm in Belshazzar's words to Daniel. In a final ironic twist of words in v. 16, however, the king promises the great rewards he offered to his other wise men to Daniel if he is able to loosen the knots (וקטרין למשרא) of the writing on the wall. The king's own words crudely and brutally lampoon himself. Wolters best captures the wicked satire of this overall scene:

> After the pagan wise men have failed to interpret the riddle, the queen mother recommends the Israelite prophet Daniel, whom she describes as particularly competent to 'untie knots' for him. The unwitting *double entendre* evokes more derisive laughter. Finally the king himself comes face to face with Daniel—the pagan king Belshazzar before the Israelite prophet Belteshazzar—and says, in effect, 'I understand that you can untie my knots for me'. Again we can imagine the audience's uproarious laughter as the hapless pagan king unwittingly makes a fool of himself before the prophet of the Lord. We see how the story uses burlesque humor to underscore the sovereignty of the Israelite God, before whom the great kings of the earth can at a moment's notice be reduced to figures of fun, preparatory to being brought to justice.[107]

Daniel responds to the king's request for an interpretation and the promised compensation in the most negative manner to this point in these tales.[108] He proceeds in prophetic style to tell the king to keep his rewards and gifts and launches into a scathing indictment of the reign of Belshazzar (v. 17). Daniel recalls the greatness of Nebuchadnezzar and reviews the fate of his father as recounted in Daniel 4 (vv. 18-21). Daniel notes that at one time, all peoples, nations, and languages (עממיא אמיא לשניא) trembled and feared (זאעין ודחלין) Nebuchadnezzar (v. 19), but the Most High God brought him down. The juxtaposition of these two concepts is an ironic play on the power of the king. Nebuchadnezzar uses this expression to demonstrate his command over all people in both Daniel 3 and 4. He uses it as a

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that his father seized from the Jerusalem temple (5.2), and the queen mother reminds him that Nebuchadnezzar appointed Daniel as chief counselor (5.11). Both Lacocque and Fewell indicate that Belshazzar resists identification with his father Nebuchadnezzar and minimizes Daniel's abilities in a futile attempt to prop himself up (Lacocque, *Daniel*, p. 98; and Fewell, *Circle of Sovereignty: Plotting Politics*, pp. 91-94).

107. 'Untying the King's Knots', pp. 117-22 (121).

108. Many commentators note that Daniel confronts Belshazzar rather than being deferential as in his dealings with Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel's anger is an appropriate response to Belshazzar's idolatrous actions. See Fewell, *Circle of Sovereignty: Plotting Politics*, p. 94; Smith-Christopher, 'Daniel', pp. 17-152 (82).

display of power. The people were supposed to fear him, but instead, he feared (יבהלני) (Dan. 4.5). So, too, Belshazzar fears in vv. 6, 9, and 10 (יבהלוך...מחבהל...יבהלונה). Nebuchadnezzar thought he had power over all until he was humbled by the power of God. For Belshazzar, the judgment will be even worse, for he saw the fate of his father and still insists upon dishonoring God. Nebuchadnezzar took the vessels from the temple and stored them (Dan. 1.2); Belshazzar, on the other hand, removed them from storage and desecrates them by allowing his lords, wives, concubines, and himself to drink wine from them in the midst of a feast (v. 23a). Belshazzar has praised powerless gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone (vv. 4, 23b) rather than the God of power, the Hebrew God, which his father praised (Dan. 2.23; 4.34, 37).

Finally, Daniel returns the focus to the indecipherable writing on the wall (vv. 24-28).[109] There has been an extensive scholarly debate over the meaning of the terms מנא, תקל, and פרסין.[110] Most agree that they are terms of value, either coins or weights, and that they are declining in value. The terms are often considered together with the identification of the four kingdoms in Daniel 2, and the addition of a fourth term מנא in the Old Greek version of the text is related to this schema or simply to an instance of dittography. Wolters argues that the interpretation of the writing on the wall is a finely crafted paronomastic structure that judges Belshazzar on multiple levels.[111] Three separate levels of meaning are represented in the words themselves and their interpretation. On the first level, the words represent the scale weights: מנא, תקל, and פרס.[112] The analogy established is that Belshazzar's reign is to be weighed and measured. Daniel then adds two further levels of meaning that further explain God's judgment. The second level is God's actions of reckoning and evaluation: God has reckoned your kingdom, (מנה־אלהא מלכותך), you have been weighed in the scales (תקילתה במאזניא), your kingdom has been assessed (מלכותך פריסת).[113] The third level is God's judgment of Belshazzar and his empire:

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109. A number of proposals offer reasons why the advisors could not understand the apparition. Pierre Grelot suggests they were in cuneiform ('L'ecriture sur le mur [Daniel 5]', in A. Caquot *et al.*, *Mélanges bibliques et orientaux en l'honneur de M. Henri Cazelles* (AOAT, 215; Kevelaer and Neukirchen–Vluyn: Butzon and Bercker and Neukirchener, 1985), pp. 199-207. Michael Hilton surveys various rabbinic proposals, including codes, the placement of letters, and the obvious idea that all could read the words but only Daniel had the ability to interpret them ('Babel Reversed-Daniel Chapter 5', *JSOT* 66 (1995), pp. 99-112 (105-106).

110. For summaries of proposals with references to various commentators, see Lucas, *Daniel*, p. 122; and Smith-Christopher, 'Daniel', pp. 17-152 (83-84).

111. The following analysis follows the proposals of Al Wolters, 'The Riddle of the Scales in Daniel 5', *HUCA* 62 (1991), pp. 155-77.

112. Wolters, 'Riddle of the Scales', pp. 155-77 (160-65).

113. Wolters, 'Riddle of the Scales', pp. 155-77 (165-70).

hand over or paid it out (והשלמה), found too light (והשתכחת חסיר), and given to the Medes and Persians (ויהיבת למדי ופרס).[114] The three images make reference to a pair of scales as symbolic of the judgment of God. According to Wolters, this is a finely crafted and balanced literary structure that is designed to symbolize the image of weighing, described by the images.

Wolters also suggests that the prominence of the image of the scales in Daniel 5 gains further significance when one recognizes that the annual rising of the constellation Libra (the scales) took place on the eve of Babylon's fall to the Persians.[115] Thus, Daniel not only interprets an exceedingly complex verbal riddle, but simultaneously also delivers a sophisticated satirical blow to the Babylonian astrologers who are unable to decipher this message of the heavens.[116] The inability of the king and his trusted advisors to read and interpret the writing is an indication of the utter helplessness of the royal ruling apparatus.[117] The king and his advisors fail in both wisdom and power. Belshazzar rewards Daniel as promised with purple clothes, a gold necklace, and the rank of third in the nation (v. 29). It seems an odd, almost empty gesture after the oracle. If Belshazzar was afraid before, what must he be feeling now? He will soon be destroyed. Nevertheless, he is silent on any possible concern he might have. Rather, he bestows blessings on the messenger of such bad tidings. Note the similarities here with Nebuchadnezzar's rewarding of Daniel's bad news in Daniel 2, although that bad news did not immediately affect the king. Belshazzar is a man who is completely out of touch with reality.

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114. Wolters, 'Riddle of the Scales', pp. 155-77 (170-77).

115. Al Wolters argues that the reference to the scales (מאזניא) most likely refers to the constellation Libra (the Scales) and that the annual morning rising of Libra took place just before the fall of Babylon, the setting of the story in Daniel 5 ('An Allusion to Libra in Daniel 5?', in Hannes D. Galter (ed.), *Die Rolle der Astronomie in den Kulturen Mesopotamiens: Beiträge zum 3 Grazer Morgenländischen Symposium (23-27 September 1991)* [Graz, Austria: Graz, 1993], pp. 291-306). Wolters states: 'It now becomes clear that the interpretation of the riddle which Daniel gives not only makes fools of the Babylonian wise men in general, by deciphering the sophisticated Aramaic wordplay of the enigmatic inscription which had baffled them, but also turns the tables specifically on the astrologers, by interpreting a celestial phenomenon in a thoroughly anti-astrological way' ('Allusion to Libra', pp. 291-306 [304]).

116. 'The allusion to Libra is therefore not a reference to a standard omen from the handbooks of celestial divination, but rather a mocking parody of the whole astrological project of reading the will of the gods in the writing of heaven' (Wolters, 'Allusion to Libra', pp. 291-306 [305]).

117. Donald C. Polaski, 'Mene, Mene, Tekel, Parsin: Writing and Resistance in Daniel 5 and 6', *JBL* 123 (2004), pp. 649-69, nicely elucidates how writing, a bureaucratic instrument of great power in kingdom and empire building, is used as a cipher to destabilize power and control.

The wordplay that closes out this chapter combines paronomasia, which is determined by the sound of letters and syllables, and the pun, which is determined by the meaning of words: the weighing (תקל) of the king's actions results in the slaying (קטיל) of the king (v. 30).[118] Belshazzar enters the story without an introduction and just as abruptly exits the scene when he is killed that very night.[119] In hindsight, the Queen mother's address, 'O King, Live Forever!' was sarcastic. She seems to call on the gods to help her son live forever, yet she brings Daniel, whose morbid prediction was quickly fulfilled, to the king. She becomes, thereby, an agent in her son's death. She is wise and, therefore, participates in the demise of her son's reign. Daniel too is wise, in contrast to the king. Daniel is a man very much in touch with reality. The servant has again transcended his master in knowledge and outlived him as well.

Daniel 5 records the death of the king who transgresses the divine law. In the next scene, Daniel is given a death sentence for his transgression of the immutable law of the empire. An opposition is set up—but it is resolved. It is the advisors who are ultimately killed for their nefarious behavior toward Daniel. It is Daniel 3 all over again.

7. *Daniel 6: A Feeble Monarch and Ferocious Felines*

Daniel 6 is often compared to Daniel 3 because of the supernatural deliverances that occur in both and the use of a number of similar literary techniques, including a plethora of repeated lists.[120] While there are fewer lists in Daniel 6, many words are used again and again, which lends a stilted parodic quality to the narrative.[121] This chapter is also similar to Daniel 3 because of its tone of exaggeration and the fantastic events that occur.

After Belshazzar dies, Darius the Mede takes the kingdom (v. 1).[122] One immediate indication of the exaggerated and hyperbolic qualities of this chapter is the appointment of 120 satraps by Darius as administrators of his kingdom, who serve under three presidents (vv. 2-3a).[123] A bureaucratic

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118. Goldingay, *Daniel*, p. 105.

119. Fewell, *Circle of Sovereignty: Plotting Politics*, p. 103.

120. Lucas succinctly summarizes the similarities of Daniel 3 and 6 (*Daniel*, pp. 145-46).

121. Goldingay gives a complete list of repeated words in Dan. 6 (*Daniel*, pp. 124-25).

122. The English version moves Dan. 6.1 to Dan. 5.31. This is inappropriate because it disrupts the pattern of beginning the chapter with naming the king. This chapter follows the Hebrew text and will not note the English numbering.

123. Collins notes the hyperbolic quality of this figure. This large number of officials is reminiscent of a similar scene in the book of Esther where King Ahasuerus appoints similarly large numbers of officials to oversee royal affairs. This unwieldy bureaucratic

overload is present in this story, and there is a sense that the multiple layers of satraps and administrators are necessary to prevent graft and corruption (v. 3b).[124] According to the story, Daniel quickly distinguishes himself as the best administrator because he has an excellent spirit (רוח יתירא) (v. 4a). This is the same accolade that Belshazzar's mother bestowed on Daniel in Dan. 5.12. Because of Daniel's spirit and work, the king intends to promote Daniel (v. 4b). This is an interesting twist. Usually, the promotion of Daniel and/or his friends come at the end of the story, not the beginning. Consequently, the reader expects some crisis related to the possible promotion to develop. This expectation is fulfilled. The narrative tension rises as his fellow administrators and satraps resent his success and seek to find ways to accuse Daniel of disloyalty to the king (v. 5). Daniel's professional conduct and behavior are irreproachable, so the group decides that Daniel's religious life and observance of the law of his God is their best avenue of attack (v. 6).

Several wordplay techniques contribute to the humorous and satiric nature of this chapter and are established in these few verses. The words 'seek' (בעה) and 'find' (שכח) serve as *Leitwörter* that recur throughout this chapter.[125] Daniel's enemies seek (בעה) in v. 5 to find (שכח) (three times in v. 5, twice in v. 6) some fault to use against him. The concentration of these verbs in two verses focuses the attention of the reader upon the frantic activity of the officials to find some fault with Daniel and foreshadows their later frenetic behavior. Moreover, as the story develops, first in v. 8 and then in vv. 12-14, seek (בעה) is used in the sense of praying or seeking a petition from royalty or a deity. This antanaclastic usage of the same word with a slight difference of meaning illustrates that there is a subtle contrast between how Daniel prays to and seeks his God while his enemies seek his destruction. This irony is emphasized further by the fact that counselors are attempting to find (שכח) a fault in Daniel in v. 5 but instead find (שכח) him praying to God in v. 12. Then in vv. 23 and 24, Daniel is found (שכח) innocent and no harm is found (שכח) on him when the king greets him after a night spent in the company of hungry lions. The irony is that the enemies seek to find Daniel's weakness, but his praying instead is the source of his strength and success.[126]

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structure in Esther is part of the overall parodic description of life in the Persian kingdom, and a similar atmosphere is intended here in Dan. 6 as this story develops (*Daniel: A Commentary*, p. 264). T.A. Boogaart maintains that the themes of kingdom and sovereignty in Dan. 6.1, 3, 4, 7, and 26 provide the structure of this chapter ('Daniel 6: A Tale of Two Empires', *Reformed Review* 39 [1986], pp. 106-12 [107]).

124. Seow sees the implication in v. 2 that even the protectors of the kingdom need supervision so that the king suffers no loss (*Daniel*, p. 88). The irony becomes clear when the king's advisors become the cause of Daniel's predicament.

125. Arnold, 'Wordplay in Daniel 5 and 6', pp. 479-85 (482-84).

126. Arnold, 'Wordplay in Daniel 5 and 6', pp. 479-85 (485).

When the advisors approach the king to fulfill their plot against Daniel (v. 7), the narrative quickly morphs into a scene that recalls Daniel 3 both in style and tone. One of the most farcical images of the chapter concerns the behavior of the officials as they move back and forth between Daniel and the king. According to v. 7 in the MT, the administrators and satraps appear to move as a group, all 123 officials, in bringing their concerns to the king. The Aramaic verb here is הרגשו and the primary meaning of this verb has the connotations of thronging or causing a tumult. Many translations mute this primary understanding of רגש, however, by translations such as 'they went as a group' (NIV) or 'they conspired and came' (NRSV).[127] In fact, v. 7 pictures the entire group of over 100 thronging (רגש) to the king. Then, in v. 11, they throng (רגש) as a group to see Daniel praying. Finally, in v. 15, they throng (רגש) once again to the king to report their findings. The sense is that the entire group is thrashing about the stage back and forth from Daniel to the king, looking for something to accuse Daniel with before the king. Collins nicely captures the spirit of this scene: 'the Aramaic text implies that all 120 satraps, as well as the other triumvirs, were involved in the conspiracy. There is then, a strong element of ridicule in the portrayal of them all rushing around in a throng'.[128]

The ubiquitous list of advisors that grows within this verse addresses Darius with the customary salutation, 'O King, Live Forever!'[129] Alert readers remember from earlier stories in Daniel that this is, as usual, a statement full of irony. Last time, it ended in the death of the king. The same result might happen yet again.

In order to trap Daniel, the conspirators persuade Darius to pass a law (דת) that anyone who prays to any god or man, except the king, for the next thirty days shall be thrown into the lions' den (v. 8). The mendacity and tenacity of the group is becoming more pronounced. The edict itself is a finely crafted piece of satiric hyperbole that functions as the means by which the advisors get their own way.[130] Their request seems to be one of extreme reverence for the king. The irony is that their request is in reality a way to manipulate the king to accomplish their own ends. There is no doubt that the group is attempting to manipulate the king, which, according to the

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127. This muting began very early in the translation tradition because the LXX translators used the words 'approached' and 'watched' to translate this verb. See Meadowcroft, *Aramaic Daniel*, p. 97.

128. Collins, *Daniel*, p. 266.

129. Fewell observes that in v. 7 the conspirators' list of supporters grows to include previously unmentioned prefects, advisors and governors; thus the conspiracy is apparently growing (*Circle of Sovereignty: Plotting Politics*, p. 109). The list recalls the lists of Dan. 3.

130. Montgomery, *Daniel*, p. 270.

text, is easily done. Darius asks no questions and is portrayed as a king who meekly follows the advice of his counselors (v. 10).[131]

The plausibility of such a decree is open to debate.[132] One reason to doubt the historicity of the passage and to understand it as comedic is the fact that kings take religious policies most seriously. They do not change them for 30 days on a whim. Second, this decree cannot be changed or revoked (v. 9). Real law cannot be that inflexible; it must be subject to change—even for a period of thirty days, although practical considerations make it unlikely to be changed within such a short period of time. Furthermore, the historical record indicates that Persian law, at least, quite likely underwent a major reform under Darius I.[133] If it is true that Darius I made such reforms, it is quite paradoxical that this text supports the notion that a king possibly modeled on him is trapped by an inflexible rule. It is more satire. The main concern of this scene is not the law itself but rather how easily the king is duped and manipulated by honoring gestures.[134] Furthermore, one of the important wordplays in this chapter is based upon the usage of the word law (דה) to contrast the law of God (v. 6) and the law of the Medes and Persians (vv. 9, 13, 16). The law of the God of Daniel has now been set in sharp contrast against the law of the king. Finding no prior fault in Daniel's conduct, they decide to use the law of the Medes and Persians as the means to indict Daniel's behavior of following the law of his God.[135] Law is one of the defining themes of this chapter, a theme that also ties the chapter back to Daniel 3. It is not used, however, in a historical fashion but a literary one.

Daniel's reaction to the new decree is to continue what he has always done before. Verse 11 notes that Daniel returns home to pray three times daily before the open windows that face Jerusalem. Are Daniel's actions a direct challenge toward the king's authority? In the Aramaic, it is clear that the windows were opened (פתיחן), passive tense) toward Jerusalem, implying that they were normally in an opened state. Many commentators conclude that Daniel's defiance was not an intentional act but merely an expected result since he continues his normal routine. Various textual traditions such as the Old Greek, the Vulgate and Ethiopic texts change this

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131. Redditt portrays Darius as a powerful but witless dupe (*Daniel*, p. 105).

132. Montgomery comments on the unrealistic quality of this edict (*Daniel*, p. 268). Hartmann and Di Lella argue that such a decree does not fit well with what is known of the tolerance of Persian monarchs (*Daniel*, p. 198). John H. Walton proposes that the decree reflects the struggle between supporters of a pure Zoroastrianism and those open to syncretistic practices ('The Decree of Darius the Mede in Daniel 6', *JETS* 31 (1988), pp. 279-86.

133. This reform is subject to dispute. For bibliography on this point, see Magdalene, 'On the Scales', pp. 30-31, esp. n. 28.

134. Fewell, *Circle of Sovereignty: Plotting Politics*, pp. 110-11.

135. Meadowcroft acknowledges this contrast (*Aramaic Daniel*, p. 99).

construction to the active voice, implying an intentional resistance by Daniel.[136] Additionally, the text reports that Daniel praises God just as he had done previously (מן־קדמת דנה) It is interesting, however, that prior use of the word praise (ומודא) is not associated with Daniel in this book. Nebuchadnezzar praises God in Dan. 2.23 and Dan. 4.34 and 37. Belshazzar and his cohorts praise idols in Dan. 5.4 and 23. Is the narrator reliable in this case? Does Daniel continue prior acts *or begin new acts of resistance*? Whether the verb open (פתח) is passive or active in construction, whether the narrator is reliable or not, whether Daniel's behavior is intentional or habitual, Daniel engages in an act that he knows is subversive of the royal edict and realizes the implications of his actions.

The reaction is swift. The group throngs (רגש) once again and discovers Daniel seeking (בעה) someone other than Darius (v. 12). These previously discussed wordplays heighten the incongruity of the scene. The group as a whole approaches the king to have him move against Daniel. The throng of officials is running back and forth, seeking to discredit Daniel (v. 13a). They begin further manipulations of the king. They do not initiate their accusation of Daniel directly. Instead, they have a roundabout approach by first reminding the king of the new decree, as though he was not smart enough to remember it (v. 13b). The king ignores the slight by not answering with an acknowledgment of the decree. Instead, he reminds them that it is not alterable. The royal law is sacrosanct and should be respected. Nonetheless, they have sprung the real trap. The king is fixed in his position, however unpleasant the consequences. The king's officials formally accuse the favored, well-performing, soon-to-be-promoted Daniel of breaking the law. The exile from Judah pays no attention to the decree in order to pray to his God. The official's repetition of Daniel's description as an exile of Judah (Dan. 2.25; 5.13) emphasizes that he should have a lowly position in the empire, not be in line to be second only to the king and master of so many native officers of the realm (v. 14). This is an ethnic slur. Such a man cannot possibly worship Darius. He obviously must worship some other God.

Now Darius is confronted with the consequences of his actions. He hears the official's arguments (אסר), yet he despairs of his actions (v. 15a). Again this is the image of a king who is manipulated and not in control. Although Darius is determined to save Daniel and makes every effort to do so, he cannot because the law cannot be changed (vv. 15b-16). It is interesting that, while the king allegedly makes every effort to rescue Daniel, Daniel is not summoned to court as his friends were in Daniel 3 to present a defense.

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136. Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, 'Gandhi on Daniel 6: Some Thoughts on a "Cultural Exegesis" of the Bible', *BibInt* 1.3 (1993), pp. 321-38 (329). This article explores how Mahatma Gandhi also read Daniel 6 with great interest and drew support for his own program of active resistance.

Daniel never gets to testify in his own behalf. This is a kangaroo court. Daniel is tried and convicted *in absentia*. The most significant thing the king could do to save Daniel is to give him due process of law, which he does not finally do. So much is made of the law in theory, but in application the law is abused. The proposition in v. 15 that the king did everything he could is, from this perspective, a bald-faced lie. Is the narrator again incorrect in stating that the king was very much distressed? Is the king a liar? Is the king so foolish as not to know what he was supposed to have done in this instance? This king is depicted as so foolish as not to understand the most basic tenets of legal procedure. This great king, responsible for maintaining justice in his empire, does not give Daniel, his most respected advisor, his day in court.[137] He is easily manipulated indeed.

So it is that Daniel is thrown into the lions' den (v. 17a). The king thinks he seals his fate as he seals the den (v. 18). A ray of hope exists, however. The king hopes and desires that Daniel's God deliver him because he is faithful (v. 17b). This is certainly possible given the wondrous results of the friends' stroll in the fiery furnace in Daniel 3. The king's hope is, however, in stark contrast to the mockery Nebuchadnezzar offered up to Daniel's three friends as they were about to enter the fiery furnace in Dan. 3.15b. Darius now trusts in the living God (חיא אלהך) to rescue Daniel because the king's efforts were in vain. Even though he is king and desires to change the situation, he is powerless to do so. He, too, is in the trap set by his advisors. The king fasts; sleeplessness is his fate, as was true for King Nebuchadnezzar in Dan. 2.1 (cf. 6.19) It is significant that this time it is not Daniel who cannot eat the king's food as in Daniel 1, it is the king himself. He depends entirely on Daniel's God and follows in Daniel's ways. This entire description of the king and his relationship to Daniel's God is ludicrous and hilarious.

The description of this pit of ferocious creatures is one of the most memorable in the book of Daniel, and fits well with the many other fantastic scenes depicted in the book. The king hurries down to the den, hoping against hope that Daniel has been saved (v. 20). Daniel, indeed, has been rescued from the mouths of the lions, and the king rejoices in his deliverance (vv. 20-24a). As in Daniel 3, God saves the condemned because he is both faithful and innocent of real wrongdoing (v. 23). He violated the false edict, but he did not actually violate the king. As in Daniel 3, his body is

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137. Throughout the ancient Near East, kings were to uphold justice. As Magdalene states: 'all legal authority ultimately derived from the king, who was both the source and defender of justice. In earlier historical periods, the king played a more prominent role in adjudication than he did in the Neo-Babylonian period. In this later period, he delegated most of his authority' ('On the Scales', pp. 49-50; p. 161 n. 63). By the Neo-Babylonian period, she means the cultural and linguistic period that includes both the Neo-Babylonian and Persian empires ('On the Scales', p. 7, n. 12).

closely inspected and found to be unharmed (v. 24b). It seems that Daniel was not given a trial based on rational evidence but underwent trial by fire. It is significant that such ordeals apparently disappeared in the Neo-Babylonian period in favor of trials based on rational evidence.[138] This king is taking his empire backward in time from a legal perspective. He is a dolt when it comes to justice. God is in charge.

Now, the king acts on an unstated claim of false suit. Because they have falsely accused Daniel of acting against the king's interests, they are subject to the same penalties to which Daniel would have been subject if proven guilty—death in the lions' den.[139] The conspirators are thrown to the lions. Verse 25 notes that the ones who had eaten the pieces (אכלו קרצוהי) of Daniel are themselves devoured by the hungry felines—not only the 123 conspirators but also their wives and children are victims of this grisly fate. The tables are turned against the king's officials. Their plot ends in their own death. The lions overpower or rule over them (שלט), a term associated with sovereignty throughout the Aramaic portion of Daniel. This is a nice wordplay that encapsulates the power struggle present in the entire book.[140] Ultimately, God rules over all. The fact that the wives and children are also thrown to the lions indicates, once again, a fantastic overblown situation so reminiscent of Menippean satire.

The chapter ends with the issuance of a new decree by Darius, this time enjoining everyone in the kingdom, all peoples and nations of every language (עממיא אמיא לשניא), to fear and reverence the God of Daniel (vv. 26-27a). The legislating of political and religious allegiance has already been problematic for Darius, but he seemingly harbors no doubts about his ability to discern and decree what is good for the entire kingdom. Gowan notes that such actions are most often an exercise in futility.[141] The king completes this episode with a hymn to Daniel's God, the living God, just as King Nebuchadnezzar sang in Dan. 4.2-3, 34-35, 37 (cf. 6.27b-29). The stories of Daniel 1–6 end with the narrator reporting that Daniel prospered during the rest of Darius' reign and that of Cyrus the Persian (v. 29). He lived happily every after.

8. *Conclusion*

Daniel 1–6 is a collection of stories filled with wit, wordplay, hyperbole, redundancy, repetition, irony, incongruity, discrepancy, reversal, surprise,

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138. Magdalene, 'On the Scales', pp. 74-80 (esp. p. 78); and Bruce Wells, 'The Law of Testimony in the Pentateuchal Codes' (PhD dissertation, The Johns Hopkins University, 2002), pp. 148-75.

139. Wells, 'Law of Testimony', pp. 189-209; and Magdalene, 'On the Scales', pp. 88-89.

140. Fewell, *Circle of Sovereignty: Plotting Politics*, p. 152.

141. Gowan, *Daniel*, p. 100.

sarcasm, mockery, parody, slapstick, and many other indices of humor. Fictional experiences, fantastic situations, daring exploits and adventures, and dramatic incidents contribute to the overall humorous and satiric quality of these tales. The frequency of these constructions indicates that this humor is intentional and is an integral key for understanding the purpose of these stories. They are not inexplicable additions to serious stories of success in the foreign court. Rather, they demonstrate strongly the presence of two of Bakhtin's indices of the menippea, the presence of comic elements and extraordinary, fantastic situations or wild parodic displays of learning. The next chapter explores the presence of several other characteristics of Bakhtin's conception of Menippean satire in Daniel 1–6, particularly those liminal episodes so important to this genre that further accentuate the testing of boundaries.

Chapter 4

TRANSGRESSION, LIMINALITY, AND THE
CARNIVALESQUE IN DANIEL 1–6

> The Bible, then, does not stand deliberately athwart modernity. If it once
> was fantastic, it was so as it subverted other, older realities. The Bible's
> ancient 'central impossibility' …is its commitment to the divine sover-
> eignty as a fantastic alternative to various imperial sovereignties.[1]

1. *Introduction*

One of the key elements of Menippean satire is its transgression of regular
and normal physical, temporal, spatial, emotional, and social states and
boundaries of life.[2] Such transgressions are part of the carnivalesque orien-
tation of the menippea.[3] Bakhtin suggests that the menippea uses fantastic,
otherworldly, mystical, bizarre, and even very base elements to contra-
vene the norms and limitations of everyday life. It uses liminal situations
and trickster characters to expand the horizons of the reader.[4] It sets out

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1. Richard Walsh, 'Ancient Biblical Worlds and Recent Magical Realism: Affirm-
ing and Denying Reality', in George Aichele, Jr. and Tina Pippin (eds.), *The Monstrous
and the Unspeakable: The Bible as Fantastic Literature* (Playing the Texts, 1; Shef-
field: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), pp. 135-47 (137).

2. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 123.

3. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 134. Bakhtin notes the impor-
tance of the carnivalesque in the following statement: 'We can now say that the clamp-
ing principle that bound all these heterogeneous elements into the organic whole of a
genre, a principle of extraordinary strength and tenacity, was carnival and a carnival
sense of the world'.

4. A moment or a subject may be liminal. A liminal moment is the point of transi-
tion between two moments. Subjects can also be liminal. They are known as tricksters,
and they often exist at liminal moments. As Claudia V. Camp explains, a liminal subject
must first separate him- or herself from an earlier fixed point in the social structure;
then, he or she becomes ambiguous, passing through a cultural realm that seems distant
from the attributes of both the past and future states; then the subject is 'reincorporated
into a stable, but new, social or cultural state' ('Wise and Strange: An Interpretation of
the Female Imagery in Proverbs in Light of Trickster Mythology', *Semeia*, 42 [1988],
pp. 14-36 [30]; citing Victor W. Turner, *The Ritual Process* [Chicago: Aldine, 1969],

extremes, oppositions, doings and undoings, and reversals, all to understand and encourage transitions and boundary-crossings. The menippea does all this in order that a new world might be born. Bakhtin, therefore, argues that any examination of menippea ought to reveal the presence of several related elements. These include: scenes, dialogue, and/or characters from the earthly, heavenly, and netherworldly realms; observation of behavior from an unusual vantage point; characters who experience unusual, abnormal moral and psychic states or participate in scandals, eccentric behavior, and/or inappropriate speech; some combination of both crude and lofty imagery, settings and themes; and sharp contrasts and oxymoronic combinations. Several studies exist on dreams,[5] visions,[6] the fantastic,[7] crude

pp. 94-95). Quoting Turner, Camp argues: 'Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and [the] ceremonial. As such, their ambiguous and indeterminate attributes are expressed by a rich variety of symbols in the many societies that ritualize social and cultural transitions. Thus, liminality is frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon' ('Wise and Strange', pp. 14-36 [30]; quoting from Turner, *Ritual Process*, p. 95). Liminal subjects are important transforming agents with a culture. As Camp elucidates: '[T]he liminal state is the source of personal and social regeneration' ('Wise and Strange', pp. 14-36 [31]; relying on R.D. Pelton, *The Trickster in West Africa: A Study of Mythic Irony and Sacred Delight* [Hermeneutical Studies in the History of Religions; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980], pp. 34-35). Tricksters often take on animal bodies as part of their liminality.

   5. Shaul Bar, *A Letter That Has Not Been Read: Dreams in the Hebrew Bible* (HUCM, 25; Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 2001); Robert Gnuse, 'The Jewish Dream Interpreter in a Foreign Court: The Recurring Use of a Theme in Jewish Literature', *JSP* 7 (1990), pp. 29-53; Jean-Marie Husser, *Dreams and Dream Narratives in the Biblical World* (Biblical Seminar, 63; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999); Suzanne MacAlister, *Dreams and Suicides: The Greek Novel from Antiquity to the Byzantine Empire* (London: Routledge, 1996); James E. Miller, 'Dreams and Prophetic Visions', *Bib* 71 (1990), pp. 401-404; Patricia Cox Miller, *Dreams in Late Antiquity: Studies in the Imagination of a Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994); Scott Noegel, 'Dreams and Dream Interpreters in Mesopotamia and in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament)', in Kelly Bulkeley (ed.), *Dreams: A Reader on Religious, Cultural, and Psychological Dimensions of Dreaming* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 45-72; and A. Leo Oppenheim, *The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East: With a Translation of the Assyrian Dream Book* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1956).

   6. Achim Behrens, *Prophetische Visionsschilderungen im Alten Testament: Sprachliche Eigenarten, Funktion und Geschichte einer Gattung* (AOAT, 292; Munich: Ugarit-Verlag, 2002); and Susan Niditch, *The Symbolic Vision in Biblical Tradition* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1980).

   7. George Aichele, Jr, 'Biblical Miracle Narratives as Fantasy', *ATR* 73 (1991), pp. 51-58; Aichele and Pippin (eds.), *The Monstrous and the Unspeakable*; George Aichele, Jr, and Tina Pippin (eds.), *Violence, Utopia, and the Kingdom of God: Fantasy*

and lofty imagery,[8] madness,[9] and reversals[10] in the Bible generally and in Daniel specifically, all of which attempt to explain and interpret these formal features. The goals of this chapter are to supplement that work with regard to Daniel 1–6 to include aspects of the transgressive, liminal, and carnivalesque, to illustrate the preponderance of these elements in the Daniel narratives, and to demonstrate how these elements contribute to a Menippean satirical message against king and empire.

2. Wandering, Weird, Wonderful, and Not So Wonderful Worlds

Bakhtin notes that the menippea has a fantastic, otherworldly aspect to it. Characters often come from other worlds or strange lands. Scenes may take place in them. Dialogue may cross them. Characters may stand poised at thresholds between them. Furthermore, characters or the narrator may observe behavior from a radically different or unusual perspective, often from on high. This 'experimental fantasticality', as Bakhtin calls it, results in a drastic shift in the perceived scale of observed life phenomena. These two characteristics in Bakhtin's 14-point schema describe encounters and settings that are noteworthy because they occur on the margins or thresholds of everyday normal life and consist of unusual natural circumstances

and Ideology in the Bible (London: Routledge, 1998); Mary Katharine Deeley, 'The Shaping of Jonah', *ThTo* 34 (1977), pp. 305-10; Colin Manlove, 'The Bible in Fantasy', *Semeia* 60 (1992), pp. 91-110; and Jack Zipes, 'The Messianic Power of Fantasy in the Bible', *Semeia*, 60 (1992), pp. 7-22.

8. Ferdinand Deist, 'Murder in the Toilet (Judges 3.12-30), Translation and Transformation', *Scriptura* 58 (1996), pp. 263-72.

9. Philip F. Esler, 'The Madness of Saul: A Cultural Reading of 1 Samuel 8–31', in J. Cheryl Exum and Stephen D. Moore (eds.), *Biblical Studies/Cultural Studies: The Third Sheffield Colloquium* (JSOTSup, 266; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), pp. 220-62. David Halperin, *Seeking Ezekiel: Text and Psychology* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), p. 5, describes Ezekiel as experiencing various psychological states bordering on madness. But see Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, 'Ezekiel on Fanon's Couch: A Postcolonialist Dialogue with David Halperin's *Seeking Ezekiel*', in Ted Grimsrud and Loren L. Johns (eds.), *Peace and Justice Shall Embrace: Power and Theopolitics in the Bible* (Telford, PA: Pandora Press, 1999), pp. 108-44 (134), where he describes Ezekiel's reaction to the experience of the exile as a manifestation of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

10. Chris A. Franke, 'Reversals of Fortune in the Ancient Near East: A Study of the Babylon Oracles in the Book of Isaiah', in Roy F. Melugin and Marvin A. Sweeney (eds.), *New Visions of Isaiah*, JSOTSup, 214 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), pp. 104-23; Frank Anthony Spina, 'Reversal of Fortune', *BR* 17 (2001), pp. 24-30, 53-54; Zdravko Stefanovic, 'Daniel: A Book of Significant Reversals', *AUSS* 30 (1992), pp. 139-50; Stefanovic, 'Go at Once! Thematic Reversals in the Book of Esther', *AJT* 8 (1994), pp. 163-71.

or alternative realities. The menippea plays with various planes of existence, alternative realities, earthly space, and transitional movements and moments and are quite apparent in Daniel 1–6.

Although the netherworld is never mentioned directly in Daniel, heaven (שמיא) is mentioned 20 times and the word earth (ארעא) appears 12 times.[11] These two realms are manifest in Daniel 1–6. The netherworld is not, however, entirely ignored. The image of the great tree of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 4 alludes indirectly to the netherworld because the tree evokes the arboreal image of Ezekiel 31 that serves as a judgment upon the king of Egypt. When the tree in Ezekiel is cut down, it descends to the netherworld (Ezek. 31.15-18). Otherworldly realms are very much before the reader in Daniel 1–6.

So too are strange lands. Although Dan. 1.2 tells of King Nebuchadnezzar's removal of the divine vessels from the house of the Hebrew God, we understand from Dan. 1.3-4; 2.25; 5.15 and 6.13 that Daniel and his friends have journeyed into strange lands from their home in Judah. Babylon is a weird and dangerous place, where they are enslaved. This compulsory passage from Judah to Babylon is not, however, the only journey they undergo. Daniel 1 also records their journey from untrained captives to skilled royal advisors. Daniel and his three companions are secluded from their native community and undergo various experiences, both educational and identity-altering, in order to transform their talents, allegiance and lives into functional and valuable assets for the empire. Danna Fewell describes this process as a classic rite of passage.[12] All rites of passage contain challenges and confrontations. The covert resistance of the four Judeans and their collusion with sympathetic court officials prefigure the overt confrontations that are recounted in later stories between the faithful servants and their royal overseers. Nothing in the above indicates, however, that such physical and intellectual journeys are more than what is typical to an epic tale. Yet, when such journeys are combined with humor, parody, and the downright weird, it is likely that the events in Babylon are part of the overall Menippean strategy.

In the menippea, characters from these otherworldly realms and strange lands are important to the storyline. Daniel 1–6 obviously contains a host of characters from Babylon, including kings, a queen mother, officials, magicians, executioners, lords, and many, many more. It also introduces us to

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11. The word heaven appears in Dan. 2.18, 19, 28, 37, 44; 4.11, 13, 15, 20, 23 (2×), 25, 26, 31, 33, 34, 35, 37; 5.21, 23. The word earth appears in Dan. 2.10, 35, 39; 4.1, 10, 11, 15, 20, 22, 35 (2×); 6.28.

12. *Circle of Sovereignty: Plotting Politics*, pp. 15-18. See also Victor W. Turner, 'Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage*', in *The Forest of Symbols* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967), pp. 93-111.

characters from heaven that interact with those on the earth, including God, a holy watcher (עִיר וְקַדִּישׁ), a son of god (בַר־אֱלָהִין), and an angel (מַלְאַךְ). Only God, however, plays a significant role. God never appears or speaks directly in the Daniel stories. God is an off-stage character. Nonetheless, the deity is a central player in the story. The opening of the book makes this absolutely clear when the narrator reports that the Hebrew God allowed (וַיִּתֵּן) the exile to take place (Dan. 1.2).[13] The God of heaven acts repeatedly in worldly events. God allows (וַיִּתֵּן) Daniel's guard to show him favor and compassion in Dan. 1.9. Daniel 1.17 reports that God gave (נָתַן) knowledge and skill in every aspect of literature and wisdom to Daniel and his friends, but to Daniel alone he gave insight into all visions and dreams. He seemingly endowed Daniel with a godly spirit (Dan. 4.8, 9, 18; 5.11, 14). God gave Nebuchadnezzar his kingdom, power, might, glory, greatness, and rule over all the humans and animals of the earth (Dan. 2.37-38; 5.18-19). God gave Belshazzar his very life and being (Dan. 5.23), but God also tries and convicts him, numbers his days, and gives his kingdom away (Dan. 5.26-27). God works signs and wonders for Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4.2) and Daniel (Dan. 6.28). God reveals earthly mysteries and discloses future earthly events (Dan. 2.28, 47). Moreover, the day will come when God will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed and will crush all other kingdoms (Dan. 2.44). God offers mercy to those on earth (Dan. 2.18; 6.12). God sends angels (Dan. 3.28; 6.23) and delivers his servants out of the hands of crazed tyrants and their servants (Dan. 3.28, 29; 6.17, 21-23, 28). This God is sovereign over all according to both King Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4.3, 17, 34) and Daniel (Dan. 4.22, 25, 26, 32; 5.21).[14] God is all-powerful and whatever ability and authority human players have is because God gives it to them for his divine purposes. Heaven controls earth.

Even though God remains offstage, other heavenly beings, supernatural visitors, do appear on earth. When the three comrades are tossed into the furnace, the king observes that not only are they unharmed but that a fourth person walks with them, one like a son of the gods (בַר־אֱלָהִין) (Dan. 3.25), later described as an angel or messenger (מַלְאַךְ) (Dan. 3.28).[15] The holy watcher (עִיר וְקַדִּישׁ) who comes down from heaven delivers the verdict of judgment against the great tree in Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan. 4.13, 17, 23).[16] Yet another angel (מַלְאַךְ) apparently appears to keep the lions'

13. This point is also emphasized in Daniel 7, the first chapter of the apocalyptic visions.

14. This list only includes divine action related directly to the characters or storyline and does not include the general actions of God related to humanity recounted in the various hymns and proclamations of Daniel 1–6.

15. For a discussion of these terms, see Collins, *Daniel*, pp. 190-91.

16. Collins, *Daniel*, pp. 224-26. The watchers of heaven are also called the holy ones (קַדִּישִׁין) in Dan. 4.17.

mouths closed against Daniel, thereby saving him from a ghastly end (Dan. 6.23). These mystical otherworldly beings reflect the intervention of God, are indications of power and judgment from his heavenly realm, and are instrumental in representing the negative verdict of the Hebrew deity on aberrant royal behavior.

God and humans also communicate through various means across the divide between these realms throughout Daniel 1–6. Several scenes indicate that prayer, communication from the earthly to the heavenly realms, is important to the overall plot. These include the prayers, blessings, hymns, and proclamations by the various kings (Dan. 2.47; 3.28; 4.3, 34-35, 37; 6.27-28), as well as those of Daniel and his friends (Dan. 2.17-23; 6.11-12).

Shaul Bar notes that dreams in the ancient world are channels of communication between human beings and external sources.[17] They are threshold experiences wherein the divine touches the human psyche.[18] Within the stories of Daniel there are several such examples, including the dreams and night visions of Daniel 2 and 4. Kings are important, and so are their dreams. Royal dreams and their meanings are well attested in ancient Near Eastern literature.[19] Many dreams in biblical literature are a compositional technique that allows an author to introduce communication between God and a human being.[20] The dream thus serves as a structuring device for the overall narrative. Dream narratives may be message dreams where a verbal message is conveyed to the dreamer. These dreams, such as Solomon's dream at Gibeah in 1 Kings 3, require little or no interpretation.[21] Symbolic dreams and night visions are less common in biblical literature but are more dramatic because of their vivid imagery. Nebuchadnezzar's dreams and night visions are deeply troubling to him (Dan. 2.1; 4.5). He is fearful and sleepless. Even Daniel is terrified by the second dream (Dan. 4.19). The king naturally seeks explanations for these nocturnal messages.[22] Nebuchadnezzar cannot find anyone within his realm who is able to interpret his dreams (Dan. 2.2-11, 27; 4.7, 18a). There is a tradition of Jewish dream interpreters who decipher the

17. Bar, *Letter That Has Not Been Read*, p. 1.

18. Cf. Dan. 2.29.

19. For examples from Sumer, Assyria and Babylon, see especially Oppenheim, *Interpretation of Dreams*, pp. 245-54. Artemidorus compiled the dreams and interpretations of kings and emperors in his work on dream interpretation *Oneirocritica* see Artemidorus, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (trans. Robert White; New York: Noyes, 1975).

20. Husser, *Dreams and Dream Narratives*, p. 104.

21. Husser, *Dreams and Dream Narratives*, pp. 123-38.

22. Husser, *Dreams and Dream Narratives*, p. 104.

dream of a foreign king when the court officials fail in their task.[23] Like those interpreters, Daniel is able to interpret these dreams through the gift God gives him (Dan. 1.17) and his own nighttime visionary experience (Dan. 2.19). Daniel has received his own communication from the deity (Dan. 2.23b) and declares that he is able to interpret the dream not because he is inherently wise but because the king needs to know what it means (Dan. 2.30). This indicates the supernatural nature of the communication, which is confirmed by Daniel's statement in Dan. 2.45 that the great God has informed the king, through Daniel, what shall be hereafter.

Daniel recounts and interprets the dream of Daniel 2 to the king in vivid pictorial terms. The figure is enormous, extraordinarily brilliant, and frightening (Dan. 2.31). Such statues were often erected for propagandistic purposes in ancient Near Eastern times and were an ancient expression of 'shock and awe'.[24] It is a statue composed of a variety of materials, with a head of gold, a torso of silver and bronze, legs of iron and feet of iron and clay (Dan. 2.32). Scholars have offered several interpretative explanations of the significance and meaning of these metals.[25] Nevertheless, an even more powerful image in this dream is the stone that is not cut by human hands. It shatters the statue and then expands to fill the entire earth (Dan. 2.34-35). The image is fantastic and arresting, and the interpretation of the dream describes an image of the destruction of worldly power and sovereignty by an unstoppable divine intervention.

The dream images of the great tree and the beastly transformation of Daniel 4 provide two more outstanding and unforgettable symbolic images. As mentioned above, the tree brings to minds the arboreal image of Ezekiel 31 that is a judgment of the Egyptian king. The reference to touching heaven (שמיא) recalls connections with the hubristic traditions of the Tower of Babel in the Book of Genesis.[26] When the tree in Ezekiel is cut down, it descends to the netherworld (Ezek. 31.15-18) and provides a correlation with the descent of the king from the human to the animal realm.[27] The king's journey of transformation from human to animal and back again (Dan. 4.32-34) is in keeping with the Menippean tradition. The king who once had control over the wild animals of the field and the birds

23. Gnuse, 'Jewish Dream Interpreter', pp. 29-53 (29-32) observes that the Joseph novella in the Genesis narratives provides the template for this genre.

24. Seow, *Daniel*, p. 43.

25. Robert B. Kruschwitz and Paul L. Redditt, 'Nebuchadnezzar as the Head of Gold: Politics and History in the Theology of the Book of Daniel', *PRS* 24 (1997), pp. 399-419.

26. Louis F. Hartman, 'The Great Tree and Nabochodnosor's Madness', in John L. McKenzie (ed.), *The Bible in Current Catholic Thought* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1962), pp. 75-82 (78).

27. Hartman, 'The Great Tree', pp. 75-82 (79).

of the air (Dan. 4.12b, 21) now becomes one of those creatures. The king, in becoming an animal, becomes a trickster character. He loses his social standing as part of the status quo and opens up new personal and social possibilities. The writer of Daniel utilizes these arresting images to create a dramatic scene of judgment upon the overweening pride of the king and to form a rift in the social structure, allowing an alternative reality to come into being.

According to Daniel, God also speaks to King Belshazzar through the specter of human fingers writing on the plaster of the wall (Dan. 5.24). Daniel reports that the hand was sent from God's presence and the writing inscribed (באדין מן־קדמוהי שליח) on the wall. Once again, the king's wise men cannot interpret the sign (Dan. 5.7-8, 15), and once again, Daniel's interpretive abilities are called upon to discern the meaning of the enigmatic writing (Dan. 5.11-16). Daniel functions here, as in the two dream interpretations, as the mediator or go-between of the earthly and heavenly realms. Daniel communicates for a third time judgment on the king. This time, it is a death sentence for the sovereign.

Divine-human communications are not the only characteristic of the menippea. Other types of threshold dialogues, offered either at the edge of different places and spaces or across them, are appropriate to the genre. In Daniel 1–6, two earthbound threshold dialogues occur between persons in contrasting positions and settings. First, Nebuchadnezzar is able to observe and communicate with the three Hebrew counselors as they are walking about in the sizzling oven (Dan. 3.26). Second, the conversation between Darius as he stands outside the lions' den and Daniel as he safely rests among the wild animals (Dan. 6.21-23) represents another encounter of extreme contrasts.[28]

As indicated above, another sign or element of the menippea is that characters or the narrator may observe behavior from a radically different or unusual perspective. There might also be a drastic change in the scale of the observed phenomena of life. Literary hyperbole is an essential feature of the menippea to express this change in scale. Such phenomena are in evidence throughout Daniel 1–6. First is an exploration of the issue of different perspective, then the issue of the change of scale.

The kings of Daniel often perceive things from an otherworldly, unusually broad, or suprarational perspective. Within the dream of Daniel 2, King Nebuchadnezzar has a perspective from beyond the earth in that he can see

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28. Additionally, the text employs other unusual forms of communication within the earthly realm. Most importantly, the music of a great orchestra signals when the people are to bow down before the golden image in Dan. 3.5, 7, 9, and 15. The herald, who can easily communicate the order to follow the music to the crowd (Dan. 3.4), does not suffice for the order for the worship to begin.

a stone become a great mountain and fill the whole earth (Dan. 2.35). He observes the three friends through the opening of the fiery furnace and also sees the angel that rescues them (Dan. 3.25-26). The king's second dream also demonstrates an unusual perspective. He can see the tree's roots at the very center of the earth, its branches at the top of the heavens, and that it is visible to the whole earth (Dan. 4.11, 20). He also observes the holy watcher coming down from heaven (Dan. 4.13b, 23a). In this chapter, the king also stands on the roof of the palace, admiring his glorious Babylon, declaring his greatness. Although the king's angle of vision is not suprarational, it is highly ironic because he views the grandeur of this kingdom from a great elevation immediately before his figurative fall from the heights of boastfulness to the depths of animal transformation (Dan. 4.29-30). Repeatedly in the Daniel stories, Nebuchadnezzar seems to take on God's perspective. In these incidents of experimental fantasticality, we see the menippea playing with perspective in order to challenge the imperial way of viewing the world.

Things are often on a grand scale in Daniel. Natural phenomena take on gigantic proportions or are perfection itself, huge numbers of people congregate, and the narrator and characters use hyperbolic contrasts. The crushing stone of Daniel 2 and the great tree of Daniel 4 are what first come to mind when thinking of gigantic natural phenomenon. Although the two statues of Daniel 2 and 3 are not natural phenomenon, they are of massive proportions. Huge numbers of people assemble or are named in all but the first chapter of Daniel 1–6. These include the wise of Daniel 2, 4 and 5; the administrators of Daniel 3; the people, nation, and languages of Daniel 3, 4, 5 (cf. Dan. 6.26); the banquet assembly of 1000 lords and all the king's wives and concubines in Daniel 5; and the 120 satraps and other administrators of Daniel 6. Just a few instances of the fabulous contrasts of Daniel 1–6 include the food Daniel and his friends eat that makes them better and fatter than all the other young men in a mere ten days (Dan. 1.15); no one among the slaves compares to Daniel and his friends (Dan. 1.19); Daniel and his friends are ten times better in wisdom and skill than all the magicians and enchanters in whole kingdom (Dan. 1.20); Daniel has wisdom like the gods (Dan. 5.11); and Daniel distinguishes himself above all other administrators (Dan. 6.4).

The occurrence of dreams and visions, apparitions, animal transformations, animal dens, and furnace encounters in Daniel 1–6 shift the viewpoint from normal everyday reality to the unexpected and the divine. These encounters are at the various limits of earthly and heavenly experience and provide the settings for the shattering of rigid spatial boundaries and communication norms. The narrative gives one a sense of the 'betwixt and between' that is common to liminal, transformative events. The text's descriptions and events transcend the common, shocking the reader into a

new point of view. These aspects of the text are a part of Menippean literary constructions.

3. *Eerie Episodes, Morning Madness, and Palace Poltergeist*

Bakhtin notes that the menippea is typified by representations of unusual and abnormal moral and psychic human states, including uncontrolled daydreaming, unusual dreams, split personality, passions bordering on madness, and outright insanity. Even suicides and beastly transformations are possible. Scandal scenes, eccentric behavior, inappropriate speeches, and all sorts of violations of generally accepted conduct are also standard Menippean fare. These depictions are not simply dramatic devices but indicate the dissolution of the personality and wholeness of the character.[29] The unusual moral and psychic states precipitate a crisis that extends the character's boundaries, which, in turn, allows the individual to enter into a more complicated, dialogic relationship with him- or herself. Often a character or an image is doubled, which represents both the tragic and comedic. The double may be turned on its head and reversals are common. Furthermore, odd behavior makes manifest latent sides of human nature. They open up a rift in the stable, normal course of human affairs. This disrupts not only the wholeness of the character, but also that of the whole world. It, too, is turned upside down with parody. Such episodes free people from the usual norms and motivations that drive them. Carnivalesque episodes offer an alternative reality to the status quo. These features are exceptionally evident in the Daniel stories as the unrestrained actions and reactions of kings to changing circumstances create a wholly unflattering impression of the royal persona.

The depiction of Nebuchadnezzar is particularly fragmented and disjointed. In Daniel 1, he appears initially as a conquering sovereign who is supremely successful and in control. From an outside perspective, his kingdom is prosperous and he directs both his conquered subjects and his loyal courtiers. Readers know, however, that this control is illusionary for it is God who really holds the power (Dan. 1.2).

Soon his visible life and character begin to disintegrate. His interior life is disturbed by a dream that is both incomprehensible and distressing (Dan. 2.1-3).[30] The king makes an absurd request of his wise men to tell him

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29. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, pp. 116-17. Other biblical characters that experience forms of dissolution include Saul and Ezekiel. See David M. Gunn, *The Fate of King Saul: An Interpretation of a Biblical Story* (JSOTSup, 14; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980), p. 78; and Halperin, *Seeking Ezekiel*.

30. Stuart Lasine, *Knowing Kings: Knowledge, Power and Narcissism in the Hebrew Bible* (SemeiaSt, 40; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001), pp. 97-99, notes that the private life of a king is open to public scrutiny; even his dreams are not his own.

both the dream and its interpretation (Dan. 2.2-7). They object strenuously, knowing it is completely irrational (Dan. 2.10-12). When his advisors are unable to comply, the king throws a temper tantrum, accusing them of lying to him (Dan. 2.8) and then impetuously flies into a violent rage, pronouncing a death sentence on all the wise men of Babylon (Dan. 2.12-13). Daniel enters the story and is able to fulfill the king's wishes, resulting in a stay of execution. The king falls down before Daniel in an attitude of worship (Dan. 2.46), even though the interpretation of the dream is extremely negative for the king, manifesting highly inappropriate speech and behavior. He gives Daniel great rewards (Dan. 2.48), and meekly accedes to Daniel's request that his three friends also receive promotions (Dan. 2.49). This king, who earlier seemed so much in control, is metamorphosizing into a regent who impulsively reacts with increasingly eccentric behavior.

The boundaries of his character continue to evaporate in Daniel 3. In spite of just recently having fallen down in worship of Daniel's god, Nebuchadnezzar indulges in fantastically egocentric behavior by building this huge statue to himself, ordering all his officials and subjects to assemble before it, and demanding absolute obeisance on the sounding of a great orchestra (Dan. 3.1-7). This is somewhat bizarre behavior, but not completely out of the realm of kingly action. What makes it especially odd is that it comes on the heels of the prior worship of the Hebrew God. This flip-flopping behavior is suggestive of an unstable personality. When the three friends refuse to worship him, he again snaps in furious rage and decrees capital punishment by fire after a quick trial (Dan. 3.13, 19). It is as though he has learned nothing from the prior episode with Daniel. This inability to learn from prior experiences is another evidence of his psychologically imbalanced state. The fire intended to kill Daniel's companions is so hot that it kills three of the king's guards, but he cares not in his extraordinarily murderous rage (Dan. 3.22). After the condemned are thrown into the furnace, Nebuchadnezzar observes the three men and an angel walking about the fire and orders them to come out (Dan. 3.24-26). Because the hand of the Hebrew God rescues the three friends, Nebuchadnezzar again reverses himself and engages in adulation of the Hebrew deity for a second time (Dan. 3.28; 4.1-3), and announces promotions for the heroes (Dan. 3.30). In the process, he makes a third lethal decree that anyone who utters blasphemy against the Hebrew God will be torn limb from limb and their houses laid in ruins (Dan. 3.29). This monarch is out of control and seems to present two alternating personalities. The impetuosity and rapidity of change in the king's behavior creates an atmosphere of scandal and scorn toward the king.

In Daniel 4, the king once again experiences a troubling, frightening dream, which shatters his calm (Dan. 4.4-5). Again, he calls for his wise men instead of Daniel (Dan. 4.6) and again he does not learn. Fortunately, this time, he neither orders a deadly decree nor explodes in a rage when

his wise men cannot interpret the dream (Dan. 4.6-7). Eventually, Daniel is called (Dan. 4.9). After receiving the interpretation of judgment from Daniel (Dan. 4.20-27), the king seemingly forgets the counsel to repent and then engages in prideful daydreaming behavior upon the palace roof (Dan. 4.29-30). This results in the fulfillment of the animal transformation prediction (Dan. 4.31-33). He has the body of an ox, a coat as long as the great feathers of the eagle, and nails on his hoofs like bird claws. He is soaking wet from the dew and is chewing away on grass and his cud. The scandalous scene of a monarch munching vegetation on four appendages is one of the most ludicrous pictures in the stories of Daniel. When he is delivered from the humiliation of the animal state, and his reason (ומנדעי) returns to him, he reverts to ostensible praise of the Hebrew God (Dan. 4.34-37).

Nebuchadnezzar manifests inappropriate and self-destructive daydreaming, has weird, symbolic dreams and otherworldly visions. He cannot seem to incorporate his prior experience to learn and grow and exhibits eccentric behavior; boundless, explosive, murderous rage; and frequent switches of personality states. His public, highly inappropriate, limitless praise of the foreign deity is now a staple of kingly speech. He even descends to an animal state. Nebuchadnezzar is a volatile character whose emotional state and resultant actions are unstable and unexpected.[31] He exhibits a royal flush of the characteristics of unusual and abnormal moral and psychic states, eccentric behavior, inappropriate speech, and a plethora of scandalous behaviors unbefitting of a king as is found in the menippea.[32] These scenes are plainly designed to violate and denigrate royal etiquette. This is a tragic-comedic portrait of a regent who claims absolute power but whose actions repeatedly reveal his impotence and beg for his further humiliation.

The depiction of the character of the other kings in these narratives, Belshazzar and Darius, is equally condemnatory in nature. Banquets and parties are often the scene of dramatic incidents, and these festive occasions quite often create a liminal space where unexpected events and behavior are the norm.[33] Belshazzar appears to be a fearless king as he uses the sacred vessels of the Israelite temple as party utensils (Dan. 5.2), although the wine may have altered his mental state and given him a large dose of liquid courage. When the specter of a disembodied hand materializes, his boldness quickly fades away into weak-willed fecklessness (Dan.

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31. A very interesting study that captures much of the unpredictably of the character of Nebuchadnezzar is Gillian R. Overing, 'Nebuchadnezzar's Conversion in the Old English Daniel: A Psychological Portrait', *Papers on Language & Literature* 20 (1984), pp. 3-15.

32. On the humorous Jewish portraits of foreign kings, see Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism*, pp. 243-45.

33. Kenneth Craig applies Bakhtin's understanding of banquets, food and drink, and liminality to the book of Esther in *Reading Esther*, pp. 60-68.

5.5-6, 9). The royal fête deteriorates into a shocking denouement of shame and humiliation. This king experiences a meltdown both physically and psychologically. He is standing in his own excrement, but life goes on as though nothing has happened. He is simply not all there. Belshazzar does not, however, threaten to execute anyone in his fear, as did his father before him. Instead, he offers a fantastically inappropriate reward of all the trappings of authority (Dan. 5.7, 16). Having apparently inherited the trait of not being able to learn very well, Belshazzar summons all the wise men of his realm, and as usual, they fail in their task (Dan. 5.7-8, 15). It takes a woman to explain things to him, whereupon he summons Daniel (Dan. 5.10-13b). This public learning moment is yet another humiliation for the head patriarch of the realm, but this is not the end of such disgraces. Daniel publicly pronounces a sentence of judgment that will result in the king's death (Dan. 5.24-28, 30). His only response to the message of doom is strangely to reward Daniel as promised (Dan. 5.29). His physical degradation, odd behavior, and death dissolve the kingly image and destroy the status quo of imperial respectfulness, power, and longevity.

King Darius is apparently a sovereign who rules with an iron grip as he appoints 120 deputies to administer his interests (Dan. 6.2).[34] He is not quite as psychologically fragile as the kings before him, but he is naïve, unquestioning, easily duped, and somewhat inflexible. His counselors effortlessly manipulate him into issuing a strange, egocentric, irrevocable edict that he quickly regrets (Dan. 6.7-15). He has two opportunities to overturn his decree, but he does not (Dan. 6.13, 16). He continues to recognize the irrevocability of his decree because of its terms. It is as though the law is a force beyond him like the fates in a Greek tragedy. It is apparent from prior kings of Daniel 1–6, however, that kingly decrees can be revoked when they no longer serve a useful purpose. Darius' legal ineptitude and psychological rigidity have signed the death warrant of someone he respects. He, therefore, is reduced to insomnia and helplessness; the best he can do is fast (Dan. 6.15, 19). The next morning Darius rushes in a very nonroyal manner to the pit and cries out to Daniel (Dan. 6.20-21). His relief is so great that he sends his advisors and their families to the same grisly fate without compunction (Dan. 6.25). He then issues yet another decree, that all people should worship Daniel's God, following in the footsteps of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 3. Darius is not as stable as he first appears. While he does not become an animal or soil himself as prior rulers did, he is not terribly bright, sophisticated, or psychologically functional. He is a sovereign who is easily manipulated and acts both impulsively and compulsively to the great regret of his courtiers. This king has not escaped the sharp knife of the carnivalesque.

34. Information management is one of the most important royal tasks in order to stay in power. See Lasine, *Knowing Kings*, pp. 53, 175.

All these royal portraits seek to cut through our image of the stability of the kings' personalities and their world. They are figures that are deeply flawed, making them both tragic and comedic. The dreams, specters, and erratic behaviors precipitate crises that shatter their normal boundaries and cause the characters to rethink their current understandings of self and the supernatural world beyond. The individual can exit a stage of stagnation and grow. The glossy royal image is sheared off by the crises in which they find themselves. The human, imperfect, downright defective part of these kings comes to the fore. The breaking of the image and authority of these kings allows a breath of fresh air, a rebellious possibility, to enter into the usual confinement of slavery.

The weird psychic states and behavior of the characters is not, however, the only means through which the menippea confronts the status quo. A final means of the destruction of wholeness and the finalized quality of characters and their narrative world is the technique of doubling.[35] The book of Daniel is filled with numerous illustrations of scenes, events, characters, images, and emotions that occur two and sometimes three times in the course of these stories.[36] This pattern of doubling, in both its twinning and oppositional manifestations, furnishes another sense of transgressed boundaries and intensifies the parody and humorous atmosphere of these stories. The doubling of similar events and items often suggests an intensification of the symbolism of the reported occurrences. Oppositions offer contrasts that can be used to explore alternative realities.

There are several important instances of doubling in Daniel 1–6 delineated below, but many more could be fruitfully discussed.

The use of opposites particularly emphasizes the overall dichotomies of these stories and seeks to disrupt any impression that empire constitutes a cohesive, unalterable world. Daniel 1.1-2 immediately establishes the overarching conflict of these narratives between the God of the Hebrews and the gods of conquering kings. This conflict is revisited in each story, as the imperial gods are inferiorly compared to the sovereign God of the Hebrews

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35. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 117. Daniel F. Polish explores the prominence of doubleness in the book of Esther ('Aspects of Esther: A Phenomenological Exploration of the *Megillah* of Esther and the Origins of Purim', *JSOT* 85 [1999], pp. 85-106 [86-89]).

36. Jacob Licht, *Storytelling in the Bible* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1978), pp. 51-52, briefly examines the repetitions in Daniel 3 and notes that repeated words and events strongly influence the shape of the entire story. Tampering with the repetitions changes the entire character of the whole. Jerome T. Walsh, *Style and Structure in Biblical Hebrew Narratives* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2001), p. 145, notes that repetition is a flexible tool used by ancient authors for a variety of effects. Since Hebrew narrative is generally sparse, repetitiveness indicates the presence of an important detail.

(Dan. 2.11 vs. Dan. 2.17, 47; Dan. 3.12, 14 vs. Dan. 3.18, 28; Dan. 4.7 vs. Dan. 4.34, 37; Dan. 5.23; Dan. 6.6). The references in five chapters of Daniel to the deities of the kings and their advisors and the clash with the God of the captives reiterates the power of the Hebrew God and the limpid ineffectiveness of the royal religion. This opposition of Babylonian power with the power of the Hebrew God is also symbolized by the struggle over names. The four protagonists are given new Babylonian names in Dan. 1.7, but the narrator refuses to use the foreign appellatives in the rest of the chapter (Dan. 1.8, 9, 11, 17, 19, 21).

In the same way, the superiority of the wisdom and knowledge of Daniel and his friends is in direct contrast with the ineffectiveness and inability of the king and his advisors to administer successfully the kingdom in each of the stories. Daniel and friends are originally selected because they are wise and knowledgeable, but the king intends to educate them still further (Dan. 1.4), which is an additive doubling, or twinning, within Daniel 1. They are, however, far wiser and more insightful than the king ever imagined (Dan. 1.20) because God has imbued them with such traits (Dan. 1.17). Across the stories, they become increasingly powerful as their conquerors become parodies of themselves.

Three of the Daniel narratives (Daniel 2, 4 and 5) are often described as court contests because in each one the advisors of the king are unable to decipher the puzzling dream or apparition. The first story has an extended report of the courtiers' ineptitude (Dan. 2.4-11) while the subsequent accounts (Dan. 4.6-7; 5.7-8) are shorter descriptions. The advisors become less important characters in each succeeding story as their inability to help the king becomes increasingly evident. The twinning effect demonstrates their growing incompetence and lesser value. Daniel and his friends, on the other hand, become increasingly important in the kingdom through the series of rewards that they are given (Dan. 1.19; 2.46-49; 3.30; 5.29; 6.29). Daniel's wisdom is finally likened to that of the gods (Dan. 5.11), and he distinguishes himself above all other court administrators (Dan. 6.4).

The other vignettes of Daniel 3 and 6 are often described as court conflicts as opposed to court contests because the actions and connivance of the counselors place the heroes in jeopardy and trials of some kind take place (Dan. 3.8-27; 6.15-16). Daniel 3 and 6 illustrate the twinning technique because in both situations the conflict results from the religious devotion of the Judeans. They will not worship someone or something other than their own God. These conflicts and their ensuing trials are based on royal decrees, which are many in Daniel 1–6. The kings in Daniel 2, 3, 4, and 6 all announce decrees. Daniel 2.5 reports that Nebuchadnezzar issues a decree that punishes anyone for failing to interpret his dream with being torn limb from limb and having his house laid in ruins (ובתיכון נולי יתשמון הדמין תתעבדון) and rewards those who can with gifts, rewards, and honor

(מתנן ונבזבה ויקר שגיא). Daniel 3.10 reports that the king issues a decree demanding that any who do not bow in obeisance before this statue will die by the fiery furnace. In Dan. 3.29, Nebuchadnezzar returns again to his first punishment when he decrees that any who blaspheme against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego will be torn limb from limb and have his house laid in ruins (הדמין יתעבד וביתה נולי ישתוה). In Dan. 4.6, Nebuchadnezzar once again issues a decree, this time that his advisors are to interpret his second dream; however, no punishment is stated. In Dan. 6.8-16, Darius makes a decree that declares that all those who pray to any but him for 30 days must die in the lions' den. He announces another decree in Dan. 6.27 that all should worship Daniel's God, similar to Nebuchadnezzar's action in Dan. 3.29, although without the harsh punishment attached. The twinning and reversals that the decrees reflect is apparent. Conflict exists between whether the civil religion of Mesopotamia or the religion of the Hebrews ought to reign supreme and the narrative uses law to that end.

The decrees give rise to legal accusations, lawsuits, and punishments. In both Daniel 2 and 6, judgment is summary. The story of Daniel 2 indicates that Daniel and his friends are caught up in a net meant for incompetent imperial officials (Dan. 2.13). They have not been allowed to come before the court to demonstrate whether they can interpret the dream in spite of the fact that they are well known for their talents (Dan. 1.20). They are condemned men. On the chopping block, however, Daniel finds a way to display his talents and fend off execution through the intervention of his God. In Daniel 6, Daniel faces a kangaroo court. He is never summoned to hear the charges against him or to defend himself in this case. Once again, through the action of his God, he escapes his execution. Only in Daniel 3 is a real trial held where the officials bring formal charges and the defendants are summoned and are permitted to respond to the charges against them. In this case, however, Daniel's friends use their opportunity to testify as a forum of resistance. God again comes to the rescue. These lawsuits use twinning and opposition to challenge the lack of due process that imperial courts can tender.

Capital punishment is also under the looking glass in these stories. In Daniel 2, all of the wise are facing execution until Daniel is able to free them (Dan. 2.13, 18). In both Daniel 3 and 6, the capital punishment is initiated against the Hebrew detainees, but the reverse ensues and the captors are killed instead. In Daniel 3, the guards who bind the three comrades and throw them into the furnace are victimized, quite unintentionally, by this expression of royal rage while the trio are unsinged and unharmed (Dan. 3.22). After Daniel successfully navigates a night as viand for ravenous cats in Daniel 6, it is his accusers and their households who suffer that fate (Dan. 6.24). In this instance, the deaths of the calculating officers are not accidental. They suffer a false suit penalty that scoops up their families as well. Their more egregious behavior results in a stiffer

penalty that includes the destruction of their line. The danger and ruth-lessness of royal actions are highly evident, and service in the royal court becomes perilous for collaborating servants and extended family members of the conspirators. The one who is most deserving of death, though, is Belshazzar (Dan. 5.30). God executes him for his idolatry and pride. In each of these examples of opposites, the actions and faith of Daniel and his friends unmask the pretensions of royal privilege and abuse of royal power. Daniel 3 and 6 also manifest how court bureaucrats may function in such settings. The court bureaucrats in Daniel 3 play the role of royal pawns, as all of their actions and words are extensions of the wishes of King Nebuchadnezzar. The officials of Darius are portrayed in a more malevolent manner as they act independently and attempt to manipulate the king to do their bidding. The narrative thereby examines the issues of court integrity and loyalty, finding them sorely lacking.

Heavenly decrees are also doubled in these stories. In both Daniel 4 and 5, kings are subject to judgment and punishment. The holy watchers issue a decree against Nebuchadnezzar, condemning him to a beastly form in Dan. 4.17, which takes effect one year later (Dan. 4.29). God condemns Belshaz-zar to death by a written verdict on the plaster that covers his stony palace wall in Dan. 5.24-28. His sentence is carried out immediately (Dan. 5.30). The decrees of kings to execute others become decrees ordering their own humiliation and death under God's justice, demonstrating that God's justice stands over all kings and rights all wrongs.

Stones are important to the text and are used in opposition. The stone cut without human hands from Nebuchadnezzar's first dream crushes royal power and fills the whole world with God (Dan. 2.34, 37, 45). Belshazzar worships idols of stone (Dan. 5.4, 23, 30), but he pays with his life. God's hand of judgment, which writes on the plaster of the palace's walls, is script painted on stone (Dan. 5.5). A stone seals Daniel's fate in the lions' den (Dan. 6.18), but God delivers him from destruction.

The two symbolic dream stories of Daniel 2 and 4 both contain larger than life images. The first dream is vivid and arresting with its huge, fright-ening statue of many metals, presumably made by human hands. The seg-mented statue of various materials (Dan. 2.32-33) is an imposing image that represents the power of the king. Nevertheless, an obviously large stone like a boulder cut by something other than human hands brings about the downfall of the statue (Dan. 2.34). The second dream of Chapter 4 intensi-fies the idea of judgment with the inclusion of two fantastic images: the demise of the great tree, announced by a supernatural being (Dan. 4.13-14), and the predicted transformation of the king into an animal (Dan. 4.15-16). The joining of the two disparate yet equally powerful images in Chapter 4 reinforces and strengthens the sense of overwhelming judgment against the earthly sovereignty of Nebuchadnezzar.

The two animal stories of Daniel indicate that divine control extends beyond the human realm of kings and kingdoms to include the animal kingdom as well. Chapter 4 records the humiliation of the king through his transformation into an animal-like creature (Dan. 4.33). The account in Chapter 6 extends this image of dominance to include power over a pit of lions (Dan. 6.22). Both of these accounts are additional evidence of the superiority of divine power over royal human power.

It is not just stories that are doubled. Characters are as well. The fact that four kings appear in the stories, three of whom are significant characters, instills the idea that the Hebrew deity outlasts them all. The friends are a doubling of Daniel, which is made most apparent by the similarities of what they suffer and escape in Daniel 3 and 6. If Daniel appeared alone, he could be dismissed as nonrepresentative. Together, however, the Hebrew characters represent a whole people. The king's advisors are also doubled. As discussed above, the wise appear repeatedly. Both the palace master in Daniel 1, Ashpenaz, and the executioner, Arioch, of Daniel 2 assist Daniel. Two lists of characters symbolize the desire and extent of royal power and control. The reader is introduced to the lists of officials in Dan. 3.2, 3, 27. These lists create the impression of extensive control and oversight. This effect is reinforced by the images of Dan. 6.2 where 120 governors are appointed over the kingdom so that the king might not suffer any losses (Dan. 3.3). In spite of the ever-growing fixation for, even paranoia about, control, the king is continually thwarted in his attempts to exercise hegemony.

Images are also doubled in Daniel 1–6, not just events and characters. Two of the Daniel stories contain accounts of statues. The first is the dream version related in Daniel 2. The statue represents the succession of earthly kingdoms and the ultimate demise of earthly sovereignty as the boulder of God destroys the statue. Ironically, this story is immediately followed by an account of the gigantic image erected by King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 3. In spite of the previous dream and the demise of the statue image, the king proceeds to build a similar image and demand total obeisance. The second statue represents the royal resolve to extend hegemony in spite of the warnings of judgment and destruction and due to the king's emotional instability.

Metals are not insignificant in these stories. The list of metals that comprise the dream statue of Dan. 2.32-35; 38-45 is modified only slightly in the list of materials for the gods of Belshazzar in Dan. 5.4; 23. The gold of Nebuchadnezzar's statue in Daniel 3 (Dan. 3.1, 5, 7, 10, 12, 14, 18) is mirrored and enhanced in the gold and silver of the temple implements violated by Belshazzar at his feast (Dan. 5.2, 3). Imperial power and civil religion will never shine so bright as the God of Daniel and his friends. The gold chain Belshazzar gives to Daniel after Daniel declares his judgment is symbolic of who holds the real power in these circumstances. God actually

rewards Daniel with such trappings of authority, not a king who already has one foot in the grave. As noted above, the references to the vessels of the Jerusalem temple are also contained in two chapters (Dan. 1.2; 5.2-4). The vessels are taken back to Babylon in Daniel 1 and represent the victory of Nebuchadnezzar over his foes. King Nebuchadnezzar stores them in the treasury of his gods, treating them as the treasure they represent. Belshazzar uses them as party implements and desecrates them. Consequently, they become icons of evidence against Belshazzar in Daniel 5, mocking the pretensions of human power.

Other instances of opposites occur within the various stories. The two clothing scenes of Daniel 3 and 5 are indications of the transience of royal control. When the three friends are thrown into the fire, the narrator gives a long list of their garments (Dan. 3.21). They are miraculously delivered from the oven and one of the indications of their salvation is that their clothing is intact and free of odor (Dan. 3.27).[37] The imperviousness of their simple clothing to the power of the fire symbolizes the superiority of God's power. Conversely, Daniel is rewarded for his mantic abilities with purple clothing and a gold medallion necklace, symbols of royal privilege (Dan. 5.29). Belshazzar is attempting to compensate Daniel for his service to the kingdom with symbols of power even as his reign is destined to end that very evening (Dan. 5.30). The servant's clothing embodies true power and influence while the king's raiment, although impressive, is finally an ersatz representation of authority. It is really God who rewards.

Two allusions to food and drink exist within these stories. Daniel 1.12-16 tells of the king's attempt to exercise control over the captives through their diet, but they subvert his attempt at control. Daniel 5.1-4 portrays an excess of royal supremacy and the celebration of kingly dominance that unexpectedly degenerates into a scene of judgment. Both the attempt to control the diet of subjects and the intemperance of royal appetites is subverted by actions of the Hebrew servants and their God.

Even kingly emotions are repeated throughout the Daniel stories. Royal rage appears three times (Dan 2.12, 3.13, 19). Royal anxiety, fear, and terror appear in Dan. 2.31; 4.4, 5, 19; 5.6, 9, 10; and 6.21. Kings suffer disturbances in Dan. 2.1, 3; and 6.19. This is to be contrasted with the fear and trembling before the king in Dan. 5.19 and the Hebrew God in Dan. 6.27. This material emphasizes the emotional instability of these men and their demand for worship. Thus it is in the end only the God of Daniel who is worthy of worship.

In spite of the fact that this is a representative sampling of the doubling in Daniel, one can see just how salient the doubling aspect is to these stories.

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37. The inspection of the friends' clothing is also doubled in the inspection of Daniel in Dan. 6.24. In neither case do their inspectors find evidence of harm on them.

The technique allows repeated challenges to empire. The Hebrew God breaks into the monologic speech and hegemonic power of imperial rule and offers a new conversation and a new way of being in the world. God promises a new kingdom that will stand forever (Dan. 2.45).

4. *The Lofty and the Lowly*

Because the menippea is concerned with the liminal and the carnivalesque, it does a great deal of comparing and contrasting. It sets up oppositions. One form of this is the doubling phenomenon. Another aspect of this dynamic is that the menippea displays some combination of both lofty and crude settings, imagery and themes. With regard to its lofty side, religious and heavenly elements are often present. Free and far-ranging fantasy is at work in the text. The attributes and aspirations of the upper classes are asserted. On the other hand, base settings, imagery, and themes, what Bakhtin calls slum or underworld naturalism, are also present. Such naturalism has a pre-occupation with bodily functions, sexuality, the grotesque, the evil, and the blasphemous. The boundaries of the body are explored and sometimes even breached.

The lofty and the crude, the high and the low, do not, however, stand apart. The menippea unifies these diverse settings, images, and themes in two primary ways. First, the menippea contains carnivalistic parodies on sacred texts and sayings, and the literary sacrificial dismemberment of the body. Second, the menippea deploys leveling strategies, reducing the high to low, spirit to body, while withholding its judgment from either the lofty or the base. This spirit of tolerance of which Bakhtin speaks creates the liminality of the text. It is what makes space for a new order, a new world. The narratives of Daniel combine lofty and crude settings, imagery, and themes without direct critique. The narrator and characters rarely make fun of or judge each other for what is happening within the text. Judgment within the text is generally reserved for God. The primary critique is set up indirectly and stands outside the text in the reader.

The stories of Daniel portray fantastic, symbolic, and religious elements in a variety of settings that indicate that the Menippean search of truth knows few physical boundaries and occurs in places often characterized by extreme conditions.[38] Although many of the scenes in these narratives transpire in the imperial court or in areas under royal control, much of the important, subversive action occurs 'off camera', as it were.[39] The palace

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38. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 115.

39. For the significance of changes in settings, see Jerome T. Walsh, *Biblical Hebrew Narrative*, pp. 132-35. Yairah Amit discusses the importance of place in the service of ideology in *Reading Biblical Narratives: Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), pp. 121-22.

master Ashpenaz presents the captives to the king in the royal court in Daniel 1 both before and after their training (Dan. 1.3-7; 18-21). Their resistance to the king's food and their collusion with the guard occur, however, elsewhere, perhaps prison or in the servant quarters, spaces that are places of both bondage and freedom.[40] Nebuchadnezzar experiences a troubling dream in Daniel 2 and summons his advisors to his court to both discern and interpret the images (Dan. 2.1-11). Daniel comes before the king and asks for time to tell the interpretation (Dan. 2.16). With the king's stay of execution, the scene shifts to Daniel's home where he and his friends pray and Daniel receives a revelation in a night vision (Dan. 2.19). Divine revelation happens not in the court but in a seemingly inconspicuous place. The tumultuous scene in the king's court contrasts with the pious certainty portrayed in the heroes' quarters (Dan. 2.17-23).

The Plain of Dura in Daniel 3 is the venue for a royal building project and ceremonies of pageantry reminiscent of the atmosphere of Nazi Nuremberg (Dan. 3.1-17). It is the furnace, the instrument of capital punishment and the ultimate state expression of the power over life and death, however, that is the site of the demonstration of true power and sovereignty instead of the royal statue (Dan. 3.19-27). Although both the dream of the great tree and human transformation and Daniel's interpretation in Daniel 4 take place in the king's domain (Dan. 4.1-27), the fulfillment comes about on the precipice of the royal palace, the roof, that space between earth and heaven, adding a spatial dimension to the humbling of the king (Dan. 4.28-33).[41]

The banquet setting of Daniel 5 is common to royalty. It represents the power and largesse of the kingdom. Imperial party management is, however, disrupted by the intrusion of an unwanted cryptic wall-script (Dan. 5.1-4) that transforms the banquet hall into a divine courtroom (Dan. 5.24-28). In Daniel 6, the court scene of the issuance of inviolable royal decrees and edicts (Dan. 6.1-9) is co-opted by upper room devotion (Dan. 6.10) and a pit where felines with discriminatory palates dine only on impious villains and their unfortunate partners and progeny (Dan. 6.24). Each location of royal control and every assertion of imperial power in the Daniel stories are cleverly subverted by the actions of the Hebrew heroes and/or God, all of which happen outside the primary domain of the king—the throne room, the banquet hall, the bedchamber, and the great plain where great battles are fought, wars are won and power consolidated. The authority of the king and the symbol of the royal court are subverted through the change in venue in these stories.[42]

40. Scott maintains that expression of the hidden transcripts of resistance often occur in unauthorized and unmonitored settings (*Hidden Transcripts*, p. 121).

41. Tim Meadowcroft, 'Point of View in Storytelling: An Experiment in Narrative Criticism in Daniel 4', *Didaskalia* 8 (1997), pp. 30-42.

42. Shimon Bar-Efrat states: 'places in the narratives are not merely geographical

Religious and heavenly themes run throughout the various stories.[43] Of course, the behind-the-scenes presence of God throughout the narrative is the most significant indicator of the book's religious theme. The various Hebrew and Aramaic words for God (אדני ,האלהים), Most High (עליא), Most High God (אלהא עליא), and God of heaven (אלה שמיא) appear over 40 times in reference to the Hebrew God. God imbues Daniel with the spirit of the holy gods (רוח אלהין קדישין) (Dan. 4: 8, 9, 18; 5.11), a spirit of the gods (רוח אלהין) (Dan. 5.13), or an excellent spirit (רוח יתירא) (Dan. 5.12; 6.4). God is the real actor behind Daniel. Daniel is only his instrument (Dan. 1.17; 2.19; 5.11-12, 14; cf. 2.45).

Kings demand exclusive devotion and religious fealty from all of their subjects (Dan. 3.5; 6.7). Yet, Daniel and his God become objects of worship by mortified and chagrined monarchs who are portrayed as pious believers in spite of their continuing irreverent behaviors (Dan. 2.46; 3.28; 4.34; 6.25). Nebuchadnezzar offers grain and incense offerings in Dan. 2.24. Darius fasts when he is anxious (Dan. 6.19). The many prayers, blessings, doxologies, and proclamations said to or about God from both kings and Judeans are a salient feature of the text (Dan. 2.17-23, 47; 3.28; 4.3, 34-35, 37; 6.11-12, 27-28). The king decrees in one of his proclamations that it is a capital offense to blaspheme against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Dan. 3.29). The hymns themselves are songs to God's power to shift time and reverse the established order of things. For example in Dan. 2.21, Daniel sings:

> He changes times and seasons,
>> He deposes kings and sets up kings…

King Nebuchadnezzar sings in Dan. 4.37b:

> For all his works are truth,
>> and his ways are justice;
>> and he is able to bring low
>> those who walk in pride.

Such blessings, songs, and proclamations in the mouths of conquering kings lend themselves, however, to the view that this text is parodying the psalms and blessings of the Hebrew Bible.

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facts, but are to be regarded as literary elements in which fundamental significance is embodied' (*Narrative Art in the Bible* [JSOTSup, 70; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997], p. 194).

43. This emphasis is to be expected given the intermingling of divine and human components of the royal role in the ancient Near East and the Hebrew Bible. See Bernard M. Levinson, 'The Reconceptualization of Kingship in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History's Transformation of Torah', *VT* 51 (2001), pp. 511-34 (512-17).

The several dreams, night visions, and apparitions of Daniel 2, 4, and 5 are experiences of the divine reality. The manifestations of angels and the dreams about holy watchers in Daniel 3, 4 and 6 are yet more heavenly signs. These experiences and divine manifestations bring judgment upon kings and/or deliver the innocent. Here too God's power of reversal is made clear:

> The sentence is rendered by decree of the watchers,
>   the decision is given by order of the holy ones,
> in order that all who live may know
>   that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdom of mortals;
> he gives it to whom he will
>   and sets it over the lowliest of human beings (Dan. 4.17).

Kings pay for their idol worship. Nebuchadnezzar pays a great price for attempting to establish civil religion and he is turned into an animal in Daniel 4. Belshazzar dies for drinking wine out of the temple vessels in praise of his gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone (Dan. 5.4, 23, 30). In times of stress and need, Daniel and his friends call upon their God both in public places and in the privacy of their quarters (Dan. 2.17; 3.17; 6.10). He responds to their need with insight and deliverance. It is right and good to worship the Hebrew God alone.

Other religious images play a role in the story line. For example, the temple vessels taken from Jerusalem (Dan. 1.2 and 5.2) symbolize both the seriousness of the sentence of exile by God against the Hebrew people and the divine displeasure with those who serve as instruments of judgment but presume their own righteousness and superiority. Daniel's food request, vegetables and water, satisfies the requirements of the Hebrew law and stands in opposition to the food the king wishes to serve him (Dan. 1.12).

This focus on the lofty ideas provides a contrast to the crude scenes found in this book, which is an especially common feature of Menippean satirical creations. Several scenes in Daniel focus on the boundaries of physical bodies and the borders of the base, vulgar, obscene, grotesque, and evil. Possible sacrificial dismemberment of the body is also represented. Blasphemy is common. For example, the use and abuse of food and drink is often a site of contention. The royal desire to regulate even the captive's food and drink (Dan. 1.5) is a symbol of the desire for total control.[44] This is in sharp contrast with the banquet scene in Chapter 5 where overindulgence and

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44. Smith-Christopher identifies the connections between food and power ('Daniel', pp. 17-152 [40-42]). Diane M. Sharon explores how this scene of coercion demonstrates that the divine will demands resistance (*Patterns of Destiny: Narrative Structures of Foundation and Doom in the Hebrew Bible* [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2002], p. 92).

drunkenness set the scene for the description of a king who has no control over his bodily functions.[45] Imperial anxieties are often manifested through sleeplessness (Dan. 2.1; 4.5; 6.18), expressions of great anger (Dan. 2.12; 3.19; 6.24), and fear or astonishment (Dan. 2.3; 3.24; 6.14, 20).[46] Physical bodies are exposed to threats of dismemberment and destruction (Dan. 2.5, 12; 3.6, 15; 6.7, 24). The three servants are meticulously examined by the whole list of advisors after they survive the fiery furnace (Dan. 3.27). Daniel may be scrutinized as well after his encounter with the lions (Dan. 6.24). The king experiences extreme incontinence and embarrassment upon viewing the disembodied divine hand (Dan. 5.5-6). The text also contains oblique references to sexuality, first in Daniel 1, where it is certainly possible that Daniel and his friends become eunuchs as part of regular royal procedure,[47] and then in Daniel 5, where the presence of wives and concubines (Dan. 5.2) combines with the image of incontinence that also affects the king's sexual prowess.[48] The kings' devotion to the Hebrew God is blasphemy against their own gods. The stories of Daniel 1–6 do not ignore the uglier side of life and use it in furtherance of its satirical goals.

The stories are also replete with free fantastic imagery that inspire and delight the imagination while at the same time symbolizing important themes of satire and judgment.[49] Enormous statues and trees, both visionary (Dan. 2.31; 4.10) and real (Dan. 3.1), arouse reactions of awe and fear until divine and human action and resistance delegitimize them. Dreams, visions and apparitions (Dan. 2.1; 4.4; 5.5) become the vehicles of the divine disruption of human aspirations of grandeur and greatness. Terrifying natural vehicles of imperial judgment and punishment such as a fire that is seven

45. Sharon recognizes that eating and drinking are constants within what she categorizes as the 'condemnation/doom genre' and identifies the scene in Daniel 5 as the paradigmatic example of this construction (*Patterns of Destiny*, pp. 153-54).

46. Lasine describes how 'sleeping with eyes open' is a necessary trait for kings to ensure a long reign (*Knowing Kings*, pp. 1-4). See also Thomas H. McAlpine, *Sleep, Divine and Human, in the Old Testament* (JSOTSup, 38; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), pp. 21-22. Lasine also observes that abusers cultivate capriciousness as a tool to impose domination. Expressions of extreme anger and rage can result from calculation or lack of self-control (*Knowing Kings*, p. 222).

47. Janet Everhart, 'The Hidden Eunuchs of the Hebrew Bible: Uncovering an Alternative Gender' (PhD dissertation, Iliff School of Theology and University of Denver [Colorado Seminary], 2003), pp. 152-53.

48. Brenner, 'Who's Afraid of Feminist Criticism?', pp. 38-55 (51).

49. According to George W. Young, the tone of fantastical narratives is invariably deviant, subversive, and rebellious (*Subversive Symmetry: Exploring the Fantastic in Mark 6.45-56* [BIS, 41; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1999], pp. 105-106). Peter Miscall suggests that fantastic literature uses literary innovations to question what is normal and expected ('Biblical Narrative and Categories of the Fantastic', *Semeia*, 60 [1992], pp. 39-51 [41]).

times hotter than usual (Dan. 3.20) and an abyss of cruel carnivorous cats (Dan. 6.19) are transformed into loci of divine protection. Above all, fantastic symbolism is used to depict the struggle for power, sovereignty and control that are the constant theme of the various Daniel stories, and indeed of the entire book.[50]

Even though the book reeks of satire and judgment, only God among the book's players may pass judgment directly. Kings attempt to do so repeatedly through decrees and execution orders, but God consistently thwarts their plans. Only in the case of a false accusation, the one legitimate human legal claim within the book from God's point of view, does a king bring anyone to judgment. None among the kings' family, subjects, or servants challenges the kings' worship of the Hebrew God or their singing of God's praises in Daniel 2, 3, 4 and 6. There is no crisis when Nebuchadnezzar becomes an animal in Daniel 4, and he easily regains his throne (Dan. 4.36). The lords, queens, and concubines hold their tongues before the soiled Belshazzar in Daniel 5, showing only perplexity (Dan. 5.9); only the Queen Mother dares to deal with the situation. The best example of just how circumspect most within the book are occurs in the scene where Daniel says to the king as he begins his interpretation: 'My lord, may the dream be for those who hate you, and its interpretation for your enemies!' (Dan. 4.19). He ends equally as respectfully, 'Therefore, O king, may my counsel be acceptable to you…' (Dan. 4.27a). Daniel is not quite as respectful when he interprets Belshazzar's apparition in Daniel 5, turning down gifts and rewards; still, he offers the interpretation (Dan. 5.17) and takes the goods (Dan. 5.29). Daniel's displays of esteem are not so much signs of Daniel's true respect for his conqueror as they are signs that the true hero of the story is God and that the menippea is in full operation.

In summary, the juxtaposition of crude and lofty settings, themes, and imagery and the care taken with judgment within the text itself generate an essential characteristic of Menippean satire. The book of Daniel does not disappoint in its manifesting of these aspects of the menippea. The combination of high and low settings, images, and themes throughout, and the many reversals in the stories coalesce to create an atmosphere that permits the testing of boundaries, whether they be physical, religious, class-driven, or political. The trickster elements of the text shock the reader and invite disruption of the status quo so that the normal and usual might give way to a better world. Daniel yet again demonstrates its connection to the Menippean satirical form.

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50. Jack Zipes, 'Messianic Power of Fantasy in the Bible', *Semeia* 60 (1992), pp. 7-21 (7), declares that the Bible is the seminal work of all fantastic literature. It undermines current realities, creates dissatisfaction with the status quo and provides hope for a very different future ('Messianic Power of Fantasy', pp. 7-21 [7]).

5. *The Shrewd Slave and Other Oxymorons*

The oppositional dynamic of the menippea, which we have already seen twice before, reveals itself a third way. Sharp contrasts and oxymoronic combinations aside from the lofty and the lowly also suggest a breaking down of usual boundaries. The menippea contains numerous transitions and shifts, ups and downs, risings and fallings, complex ironies, the unexpected joinings together of distant and disunited things, and the imagery of death and renewal. It will often also address the emotional effects of such combinations and shifts. The presence of the multiplicity of dichotomous features in these stories serves the purpose of creating a carnivalistic atmosphere. The crowning and decrowning of a king is the primary act of carnival. During the carnival, the primary site of resistance was the marketplace where the king was decrowned. The menippea should also then display its own sites of royal resistance. One should expect therefore to see much kingly imagery, such as palaces, banquets, official gestures, clothing, symbols of authority, and other trappings of royalty, as well as its opposite, those things that undermine the kingly imagery in the menippea. The menippea critiques accepted norms and constructions of power and control. It challenges and subverts orthodoxy from below.

The carnival brings together opposites such as the sacred and profane, high and low, great and insignificant, official and popular, wise and stupid, in order to destroy epic distance and hierarchical relationships. Hierarchical structures and attitudes are suspended in this environment, including the terror, reverence, piety, and etiquette connected with the royal construct and mindset.[51] Carnivalistic leveling is apparent in what Bakhtin describes as carnivalistic misalliances, such as servants who become the king's most trusted advisors with the requisite rewards.[52] A freedom exists when the servant becomes wise, the emperor becomes a slave, and highly placed characters experience moral downfalls and purifications.[53] Hierarchy and the normal distance between people may be rearranged. Even the normal rules of life often seem suspended. In these texts, eccentric and unexpected behaviors and weird events narrow the distance between rulers and ruled. A new type of relationship is worked out between the king and his subject, the captive and the captor.

The literary goal of carnivalistic folk humor is to oppose the serious tone of the epic and to open literature to the laughter that lampoons authority. Paired images, reversals, and eccentricity are common characteristics of

51. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 123.
52. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 125.
53. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 118.

carnival literature, and the result is a laughter that fuses humor and ridicule.[54] Freedom and license are an important hallmark of these stories and result in an attitude of parody toward the royal ruling apparatus of king and kingdom.[55] In reading this long list of features characteristic to this element of the menippea, it recalls many aspects of the Daniel text analyzed earlier in this chapter and the one before it. The details of this investigation to this point coalesce here in the carnivalesque. The royal imagery, the undermining work of God and his servants, the wild emotions and eccentric behavior of the kings, a king's fall into the animal kingdom, the repeated imagery of death and deliverance, the locales or sites of resistance outside the main domains of the king, the complex ironies, the reversals, the conflicts between the God and king, high and low, heavenly and crass, official and irregular, wise and naïve or stupid all contribute to the carnivalesque nature of Daniel 1–6.

The reversals of Daniel are especially important to the Daniel carnivalistic view. The Daniel stories begin with the defeat of Jerusalem and the deportation of captives to Babylon. The expected outcome of this scenario is the continued humiliation of the deportees and celebration of the power of the king. The exact opposite occurs repeatedly throughout these stories. Daniel and friends are successful and faithful, rewarded numerous times for their services to the king that ironically highlight the king's ineptitude and lack of power. The four gain more and more power and prestige at the expense of the king. The king's own advisors are never successful in carrying out their appointed tasks, and at times are even willing accomplices with the detainees against the wishes of the king. Their ineffectiveness creates a sharp contrast with the godly wisdom of their prisoners. The once conquered slave becomes the king's most trusted advisor, his best friend. In the end, kings and exiles trade places as Daniel and friends experience numerous successes and rewards while the kings are reduced to dependence on their captives. Numerous ironies abound in these stories. Kings are never in control. Advisors are incompetent. Deportees resist identity obliteration. Dreams, visions and apparitions are interpreted with the power of the Hebrew deity, not through the machinations of the mantic arts specialists. Royal decrees are unheeded and ineffective. Mighty statues and trees fall before the power of the deportees' God. Banquets of celebration become a spectacle of judgment. The queen mother is the voice of reason in the court. Convicted slaves sentenced to death not only are saved but their executors are themselves put to death. The royal court, the seat of authority, is usurped by the actions of those taken in battle. The animal realm takes precedence over the human realm.

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54. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, pp. 126-27.
55. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 127.

One of the most important of all the abrupt transitions and shifts in the story line is reflected in the forms of the narrative itself. It is comprised of six seemingly separate stories. Forms of transition seem to exist only between Daniel 3 and 4 and Daniel 5 and 6, which in each case has caused disputes over versification. Each chapter can be read as a stand-alone narrative and that characteristic is often the basis for form-critical judgments that these stories likely originated as independent tales that at some point were arranged together into the present structure.[56] The prehistory of these texts may indeed comprise such a scenario. Nevertheless, this study demonstrates, especially in the section on doubling, that the configuration found in the MT creates a fresh and dynamic reading of each of these narratives. The stories share many traits and the gathering together of these seemingly disparate tales accentuates these common characteristics. It highlights how the Menippean structure of these stories is an intentional construct. Whatever abruptness appears in the movement from one story to the next could have been left intentionally as part of the playfulness with boundaries that is characteristic of the menippea.

6. *Conclusion*

These stories are humorous, ultimate expressions of the crowning and decrowning of authority that is so characteristic of the carnival and the menippea. The stories of Daniel 1–6 reinforce again and again the critique of the accepted norm of relationship between the powerful and the powerless, representing the realities of the true authority that comes not from earthly power but by divine fiat. The sharp contrasts of carnivalization help destroy the false pretensions of royal power and envision the possibility of a radical new world.[57] It is this spirit that provides an organic connection between the stories of Daniel 1–6 and the apocalyptic visions of Daniel 7–12.

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56. A few seams also appear to exist within some of the stories, which give rise to further form-critical assessments.

57. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 134.

Chapter 5

SOCIAL REALITIES AND DANIEL 1–6
AS THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH

When the great lord passes the wise peasant bows deeply and silently farts.[1]

Ethiopian Proverb

1. *Introduction*

The previous two chapters of this study scrutinize the particular features of each of the Daniel stories and establish the ubiquitous presence of comic and fantastic elements throughout these narratives. Many of the fantastic elements of Daniel 1–6 expand, breach, or shatter entirely personal and worldly boundaries so that a new world might be born. The desire to create a new world does not, however, appear in a vacuum. Social conditions give rise to such a desire. Bakhtin argues that *all* literature has a profoundly social character. Genre is a construct arising out of social conditions. Menippean satire is no different. It examines and responds to current social conditions.

Bakhtin maintains that the menippea has five features related to its social situation. First, it has a journalistic quality in that it deals with current and topical issues of present concern. It reports on conditions relevant to the day. However, it is interesting to note that Bakhtin maintains that the menippea is fully liberated from the limitations of history and, therefore, not constrained by such limitations even though the menippea's focus is entirely social. This means that the story may not necessarily have a contemporary setting. Nonetheless, whatever setting the author has chosen, it conveys current conditions. Second, because the menippea is liberated from the limits of history, the menippea is characterized by a freedom of plot and philosophical invention. Anything goes in the menippea. The story need not be entirely realistic and its plot line need not be entirely linear. There is, however, a method to its madness. The point of the fantastic is to search for and test the truth, which is the menippea's third social characteristic. Such humorous, creative writings are not just clever and entertaining stories, but

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1. Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, p. v.

are the vehicles by which to assess ideas and persons.[2] The menippea evaluates the current situation, not merely reports on it. Hence, what lies underneath the surface rejection of reality is the exact opposite. It is a dedicated and vigilant quest for it. The menippea is, therefore, deeply concerned with ultimate questions, and this constitutes its fourth social element. Finally, this search for truth and concern for ultimate questions leads to a search for a social utopia. The menippea deconstructs present limiting realities of life and suggests how life *ought* to be constructed. These five elements of Menippean satire help us to understand why an investigation of the social realities of these writings is of critical importance. The social setting drives the genre. Understanding an exemplar of menippea requires understanding the story's social setting. This chapter seeks to demonstrate that Daniel 1–6 has these five social characteristics of the menippea and that the social setting of the book of Daniel, the cruel, imperial rule of Antiochus Epiphanies over Judea, is steering the genre Daniel 1–6.

2. *Exodus from the Epic: The Current Condition in Fun and Fantasy*

Bakhtin points out that the menippea seeks a freedom from the past and engages public, contemporary issues. The text has a journalistic feel. In these features, its chronotope is thoroughly in the present. Nonetheless, because the author of the menippea seeks to disrupt the monologic speech of the epic in favor of the dialogic, the text is highly critical of epic traditions and may use them in advancing its satiric ends. Playing with the epic genre and mythic history is characteristic of the carnivalesque and the menippea. The story's characters may be legendary or historical figures, and the setting may be historical or ahistorical. Time distinctions may dissolve in favor of the supratemporal. In other words, the story may begin in a time long-gone and cross many historical periods. The protagonist may live an impossibly long life yet neither age nor mature. In this manner, epic traditions and the present situation are in direct contact within the menippea. This is not done, however, in a way that favors pious mythology. Rather, a culture's mythology is often under satiric attack. The menippea rejects it in favor of dealing with the complex situation of the present.

All these factors are present in the stories of Daniel 1–6. Daniel is a legendary figure. Three of the kings mentioned, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Cyrus, are historical figures. Furthermore, the book of Daniel is situated on one of the fault lines of biblical studies because, despite the many references to historical kings in the book, a number of discrepancies exist between dates and names as presented in Daniel and accepted historical fact. The text has an historical setting and the tone of historical narrative

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2.   Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, pp. 111-12.

yet it does not appear to be history. Additionally, Daniel lives an unusually long life over the reign of many kings. Nonetheless, while his career advances, he does not seem to age appreciably or mature in other ways. Finally, the subtext seems to deal more with current conditions rather than the epic past.

One indication of the menippea is the use of a legendary figure as the chief protagonist of these stories. Daniel and his friends are mentioned in various places in the Hebrew Bible.[3] The most important references to Daniel are found in Ezek. 14.14 (Noah, Daniel, and Job are paragons of righteousness) and Ezek. 28.3 (Daniel the wise).[4] There is also an allusion to a righteous personage named *dn'il* in the Ugaritic tale of Aqhat.[5] The name of this wise and righteous figure appears to be transported from earlier traditions into the Daniel stories and cast in a similar role. No direct correlation exists between the legendary Daniel and the hero of the narratives, but the use of such an appellation creates a connection that allows the character of Daniel 1–6 to draw upon various traditions in antiquity for support. Daniel is a character that is constructed in part from the past, so that this character transcends time. He is a hero from the past who represents the values of the author and of the present. It is through this character that the epic past is deconstructed and brought into contact with the evaluative concerns of the present.[6]

Another indication of the menippea is its playfulness with the time and events of history. Daniel 1 appears to be a rather innocuous straightforward account of how Daniel and his friends become part of the royal court. The story provides, however, the setting for a conflict, a test of truth, which sets the agenda for the remaining stories. In fact, throughout these stories the conflict between human and divine authority and the expectation of divine intervention are defining features of the plot, a point discussed in much more length below.[7] The opening chapter of Daniel establishes an attitude toward time and historical verisimilitude that operates throughout the stories. A date formula opens the book (Dan. 1.1) and describes a seemingly factual account

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3.   For a listing of such references, see Collins, *Daniel*, p. 1.

4.   Studies that explore the connections of these legendary figures to Hebrew Bible and ancient Near Eastern traditions include Katheryn Pfisterer Darr, 'The Book of Ezekiel' (NIB VI; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), pp. 1073-1607 (1213); John Day, 'The Daniel of Ugarit and Ezekiel and the Hero of the Book of Daniel', *VT* 30 (1980), pp. 174-84; and Martin Noth, 'Noah, Daniel und Hiob in Ez. 14', *VT* 1 (1951), pp. 251-60.

5.   Versions and commentaries on Aqhat include Michael D. Coogan, *Stories from Ancient Canaan* (Louisville, KY: Westminster, 1978), pp. 27-47; Simon B. Parker, 'Aqhat', in *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry* (ed. Simon B. Parker; Writings from the Ancient World, 9, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), pp. 49-80; and N. Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2nd edn, 2002), pp. 246-312.

6.   Vines, *Markan Genre*, p. 111.

7.   Vines, *Markan Genre*, pp. 147-49.

of Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Jerusalem in the third year of the reign of King Jehoiakim (606 BCE). The problem is that Nebuchadnezzar did not actually become the regent of Babylon until the following year, nor does he launch a campaign against Jerusalem until 597 BCE.[8] Scholars have offered a number of attempts to reconcile the historical problems, suggesting either that a minor undocumented siege occurred in 605 BCE[9] or that the reference is for the third year of Jehoiakim's rebellion, not his reign.[10] Similar instances of historical inconsistencies are present throughout the tales of Daniel 1–6, and there are comparable solutions proposed for each case. For example, Daniel 2.1 indicates that this story begins in the second year of the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar. Because Daniel and his three friends appear in this chapter, there is an apparent chronological problem. The training of the Hebrew captives takes three years according to Daniel 1. Thus, the events recounted in Daniel 2 seem to be a flashback within the narrative story line of the book. Various solutions have been proposed by ancient and modern commentators, including an emendation of the text to read twelve years instead of two or the recognition that this discrepancy is evidence of a redactional seam caused by the compilation of these stories into their present collection.[11] It appears that either the author of Daniel was a poor historian[12] or these stories were composed for other purposes than strict historical accuracy.[13] Ancient storytelling often mixes various motifs of history and fiction in a compelling fashion in order to create an atmosphere of verisimilitude, not historicity in the modern sense of that term.[14] This feature is further enhanced in the menippea. As a result, this genre has what can be described as a journalistic feeling, for it describes fictive situations from the past as if they really happened. In this, it is deceiving, and the genre lures the reader into an illusory world while asserting its authenticity.

Bakhtin notes that in ancient literature it is *memory*, not knowledge that is the source and power of creative impulse. It is impossible to change what went before, as the tradition of the past is sacred.[15] The epic is a genre of a

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8. For a concise but comprehensive survey of the historical issues in Daniel 1, see Collins, *Daniel*, pp. 130-33.

9. Mark K. Mercer, 'Daniel 1.1 and Jehoiakim's Three Years of Servitude', *AUSS* 27 (1989), pp. 179-92.

10. Gowan notes that rabbinic scholars proposed this solution (*Daniel*, p. 44).

11. Collins surveys various proposed solutions (*Daniel*, pp. 154-55).

12. So Porphyry in the 3rd Century CE, see Seow, *Daniel*, p. 21.

13. Collins briefly surveys the major historical issues in Daniel and notes that the tales operate more in the manner of folklore than history (*Daniel*, pp. 29-33).

14. Adele Berlin, 'The Book of Esther and Ancient Storytelling', *JBL* 120 (2001), pp. 3-14 (4).

15. Bakhtin, 'Epic and Novel', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 3-40 (15).

national heroic past that celebrates national beginnings and peak times.[16] Daniel 1 begins by using an epic format and raises expectations that what follows is not only accurate factually but also a recounting of important moments that establish socio-ideological values and norms for the present.[17] The primary purpose of these opening lines is a mood of siege and military defeat by an overwhelming imperial power, not complete historical accuracy. Further, instead of being a straightforward account of the king's epic accomplishments and a celebration of imperial might, vv. 1 and 2 begin to deconstruct the epic past in two ways. First, the date formula is Judean, not Babylonian, as one would expect with an accounting of deeds of a Babylonian monarch.[18] Second, the introduction of the involvement of the Hebrew deity (Dan. 1.2) radically changes the orientation of events. It is not the earthly sovereign who is in charge but the God of the conquered people. The portrait of Nebuchadnezzar, the mighty and feared king, begins to crumble from the start, and it is this demolishing of the epic past that is the first indication of the novelistic spirit of the serio-comical genre of the menippea.

One recent proposal concerning the chronological problem within Daniel 2 suggests that a humorous reading of this dating is the most appropriate. It argues that Daniel's success in dream interpretation is not a result of his Chaldean education because it occurs *before* that training is complete.[19] The following observation captures well the overall atmosphere of the purpose of this episode and alerts readers to the satire that will characterize each of the stories of Daniel 1–6:

> Yet, one may make sense of this chronological notice in its present literary-canonical context. That Daniel had not completed the program that the Babylonians had designed is true, but that fact makes his successful interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream all the more remarkable. His success cannot be attributed to Babylonian education and cannot be explained in terms of his education at all. The chronological notice highlights a *comic irony* in the narrative: a mere trainee in the Babylonian academy will outperform all the full-fledged experts; a lowly exile will enlighten his mighty captor.[20]

16. Bakhtin, 'Epic and Novel', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 3-40 (13).

17. Vines contends that the world of the present flows from the epic past, and thus it is not only a temporal designation but also has an assessment orientation (*Markan Genre*, p. 71).

18. Arnold, 'Aramaic in the Hebrew Bible', pp. 1-16 (1-10).

19. C.L. Seow maintains that the canonical-literary context suggests that the wisdom and power of God, not skillfulness, is the reason for Daniel's success ('From Mountain to Mountain: The Reign of God in Daniel 2', in Brent A. Strawn and Nancy R. Bowen (eds.), *A God So Near: Essays on Old Testament Theology in Honor of Patrick D. Miller* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003), pp. 355-74 (358-59).

20. Emphasis mine, Seow, *Daniel*, p. 37.

Such a scenario pokes fun at the empire's sense of intellectual superiority and self-importance.

If story rather than chronological history is the main concern of the book, other important observations are possible. For example, military glory and imperial confidence are fleeting rewards of campaigns of conquest. Even though Jerusalem has been successfully subjugated in the first year, the king is already having troubling dreams marked with fear and insecurity.[21] The deconstruction of royal privilege and power, already hinted at in Daniel 1 by the king's lack of awareness of the actions of his trusted advisors who collude with the Hebrew captives, becomes personally apparent to the king with the initiation of disturbed sleep patterns. Such deconstructive elements find reinforcement in the many comic and fantastic scenes throughout these tales, creating a spirit of laughter that destroys fear and piety toward previously imposing persons and institutions. The continual diminishing of the king and his power is a carnivalistic uncrowning, the removal of an object from a distant and respectful pedestal. This uncrowning finally destroys the sense and power of both epic and imperial monologues.

Daniel 5 is often another focus of discussion concerning the historicity of the book because of the reference to King Belshazzar as the son of Nebuchadnezzar. In fact, Belshazzar was the son of the last monarch of the Neo-Babylonian period, Nabonidus.[22] Once again, we are confronted with the inventive and free nature of all of the Daniel stories.[23] Paul M. Lederach adds a perceptive comment concerning Daniel 5 that underlines the thesis of this study quite well:

> The question about whether the account in this chapter is historically factual perhaps cannot be answered satisfactorily. That the story has a relationship to history is certain. But what is the relationship? One might want to entertain the possibility, as suggested by Millard Lind in private correspondence, that these stories relate to history in ways that a political cartoon relates to an event. The political cartoon speaks to specific situations, oftentimes in a way that cannot be understood by those who do not know the history. Not infrequently the cartoonist exaggerates features of the history. The cartoonist does not intend to set forth history as would a historian. But the cartoonist, to be credible, cannot be unfaithful to history… In one's eagerness to

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21. Fewell, *Circle of Sovereignty: Plotting Politics*, p. 23.

22. Both Lucas and Collins explore these issues and proposed solutions in detail (Lucas, *Daniel*, pp. 126-29 and Collins, *Daniel*, pp. 32-33). Fewell deals with the story line as presented in the chapter (*Circle of Sovereignty: Plotting Politics*, p. 81). See also, Lester L. Grabbe, 'The Belshazzar of Daniel and the Belshazzar of History', *AUSS* 26 (1988), pp. 59-66.

23. Towner notes that this chapter is 'the stuff of brilliant, colorful storytelling' and that folklore, not history, is the main concern of this chapter (*Daniel*, pp. 70-71).

document details, one can easily miss the overriding message of this inci-
dent: to unmask sacrilege and political arrogance and show divine punish-
ment on those responsible. [24]

A Bakhtinian reading with an emphasis on the freedom of plot recognizes
that conceptions of time are often fluid and help shape the Menippean-like
satirical structure that serve to undo both imperial forces and the traditions
that prop them up.

   The same phenomenon is in evidence in Daniel 6. Verses 1-2 introduce
the character of Darius the Mede. The reader knows from Dan. 5.28 that the
reign of King Belshazzar ends when the kingdom falls to the Medes and the
Persians. Thus in the context of the book, the identification of Darius as a
Mede makes narrative sense. But, as with other parts of Daniel, there are
historical questions concerning the exact identification. Darius is the name
of several later Persian monarchs. There is no evidence of a *Median* ruler by
that name.[25] There are two likely explanations. The figure of Darius serves
as a cipher, a symbolic character that represents kingship. The reign of the
Persian King Darius I could serve as the model for the Darius of Daniel.[26]
Darius I of Persia was a significant and important ruler, and the use of his
name would strike immediate resonance with readers similar to reactions to
the names of Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus. Alternatively, 'Darius the Mede'
could be a *composite* figure based on general knowledge.[27] Either interpre-

24. Paul M. Lederach, *Daniel* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1994), pp. 111-12.
    25. For a summary of proposed historical solutions, see Lucas, *Daniel*, pp. 134-37.
Many recognize, however, that this figure most likely is a literary construct and that
these proposed historical solutions seem forced and are perhaps unnecessary given the
nature of the Daniel material. Collins summarizes the various historical solutions and
suggests that the structure of the entire book of Daniel sets forth a schema of successive
kingdoms that includes the Babylonian, Mede, Persian and Greek empires (*Daniel*, pp.
30-32). This structure within the book itself has been important in identifying the four
empires of the dream narrative of Daniel 2, even though the four kingdoms of that
chapter are never specifically identified.
    26. According to Smith-Christopher: 'It is typically thought, then, that the Median
association is influenced more by the desire to have a Median presence before Persia,
in order that earlier biblical prophecy be seen to unfold correctly. But the historical
figure alluded to in Daniel 6 must be Darius I, the usurper of the Persian throne after
the death of Cambyses. Once again, however, it is undoubtedly fruitless to try to force
the folklore of Daniel to fit what we know of the actual circumstances of Persian
history' ('Daniel', pp. 17-152 [88]).
    27. Lester L. Grabbe states: 'While some of the characteristics of Darius the Mede
can be related to Darius I, none of these is unique to Darius I or particularly striking;
on the other hand, other features of Darius the Mede do not fit Darius I. The important
thing is that all the characteristics of Darius the Mede are either important for the
schematic representation required by the book of Daniel or those which are only the
inherited clichés of folk-tradition about the Persians. Darius the Mede could have been

tation serves the purpose of creating another royal figure that is mocked and satirized in the context of the tales of Daniel 1–6.

Other historical difficulties are present in Daniel 6. For example, Collins notes that the proposed decree of the king's officials is nonsensical: 'Their proposal that requests be made of no one but the king for thirty days also shows scant regard for historical verisimilitude. Plausibility is not a major consideration in a story of this sort'.[28]

The unalterable, irrevocable character of the decree and the king's inability to pardon Daniel is also non-historical. The lions' den is another cause for debate over historicity. Some have explored the historical references to collections of lions in antiquity in order to buttress the veracity of this account.[29] Collins notes that the search for a historical core for a legend of this sort is a dubious undertaking.[30] Van der Toorn suggests that the devouring lion motif comes from a Babylonian tradition of depicting in-fighting among court counselors as such a graphic encounter. The writer of Daniel either purposefully or mistakenly transforms this metaphor into a literal description of an actual lions' den.[31]

The stories of Daniel 1–6 are consistent throughout in that they include 'historical' references. However, they serve the overall purpose of the literary strategies of the narrative more than real history. The menippea is unconcerned with conventional distinctions of time in its examination and appraisal of epic values. This reinforces the serio-comic chronotope that is concerned more with the present testing of truth than a mere accounting of facts.[32]

The menippea's exploration of current and topical issues via venues and locations that are not set in current time is an important aspect of its chronotope.[33] This conception of time and space expresses 'the intrinsic connect-

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created by a person with only commonplace and trivial knowledge of things Persian plus an acquaintance with the OT prophetic literature' ('Another Look at the Gestalt of "Darius the Mede" ', *CBQ* 50 [1988], p. 213).

28. Collins, *Daniel*, p. 266.

29. Hartmann and Di Lella, *Daniel*, p. 198.

30. Collins, *Daniel*, p. 271.

31. Karel van der Toorn suggests that the introduction of the lion's den motif may reflect a Mesopotamian tradition that compares the in-fighting among court counselors to a pit of lions. The writer of Daniel, knowingly or unknowingly, turns the metaphor into a literal description ('In The Lion's Den: The Babylonian Background of a Biblical Motif', *CBQ* 60 [1998], pp. 626-40).

32. Vines, *Markan Genre*, pp. 112-13.

33. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, pp. 118-19. Marvin A. Sweeney, 'The End of Eschatology in Daniel? Theological and Socio-Political Ramifications of the Changing Contexts of Interpretation', *BibInt* 9 (2001), pp. 123-40 (124), states: '…it is quite clear that the book of Daniel has a blatantly political and nationalistic agenda which it conveys with religious language concerning divine action on behalf of the righteous at the end of time' ('The End of Eschatology in Daniel?' pp. 123-40 [124]).

edness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature'.[34] The importance of a literary creation reflects its capacity to live beyond its own era. Bakhtin describes the interaction of past, present, and future in literature as a fullness of time.[35] This interanimation of time in literature creates a folkloric realism that is boundless source of inspiration.[36] The construction of the spatial dimension of the chronotope is also critically important. Bakhtin notes the significance of major spatial chronotopes such as roads, castles, and salons or parlors, for shaping the meaning of a narrative.[37] Time, characters and events materialize in these spaces, become palpable and visible and allow the imaging work of art to come forward.[38] He notes that an unlimited number of chronotopes exist.[39] The interrelationship of time and space brings to mind Einstein's mathematical theories, and the chronotope becomes a literary metaphor for their inseparability.[40] The chronotope can operate on three levels: (1) how a text represents history; (2) how images of time and space are related; and 3) how the formal properties of the text itself such as plot and narratorial characteristics are structured.[41] This study has already examined at length the means by which the text represents and uses history in furtherance of its literary ends. There are, however, several other interesting uses of time and space in these narratives.

First, consider the character Daniel. As stated previously, he has interesting temporal features as he embodies heroic characteristics from both biblical and Ugaritic traditions. He appears to materialize out of the distant past, and his representation in the story is as a character that seemingly does not age or mature. His actions and character are consistent over the reigns of four kings (Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius and Cyrus). He thus

34. Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and Chronotope', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 84-258 (84).

35. Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and Chronotope', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 84-258 (146).

36. Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and Chronotope', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 84-258 (150-51).

37. Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and Chronotope', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 84-258 (243-48). For example, the road is associated with random encounters, a place where people of various classes, religions, ages . . . can accidentally meet and fates may collide and weave together. The castle can represent times past and a place where valor and perfidy occur. Salons and parlors create a space for dialogue, passion, and intrigue.

38. Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and Chronotope', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 84-258 (250).

39. Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and Chronotope', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 84-258 (252).

40. Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and Chronotope', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 84-258 (84).

41. Vice, *Introducing Bakhtin*, pp. 201-202.

embodies respected and important values from the past that are still highly esteemed in the present. Second, although the settings of the tales of Daniel are the courts of various ancient Near Eastern monarchs, the topics developed in the narratives are ideological issues involving the Hellenistic rule of Israel under Antiochus Epiphanes. The stories in Daniel in their present form support Jewish struggles to resist the idolatry and power of the Seleucid hegemony, whatever their provenance. According to Sweeney, 'There are various indications that the present form of the court tales in Daniel 1–6 have been redactionally reworked and reread for placement within the present context in order to support Jewish efforts to oppose the anti-Jewish policies of Antiochus IV and to overthrow the Seleucid monarchy'.[42] The seizure of the vessels from the Jerusalem temple by Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 1 and the humiliating use of those same vessels by Belshazzar in Daniel 5 emphasize the issue of profanation of the sacred. The changing of names, the training in Babylonian language, arts, and culture, and the introduction of a new diet symbolize the goal of identity obliteration in Daniel 1 that is associated with the idolatrous actions of Antiochus.[43] The statue scenes in Daniel 2 and 3 emphasize imperial concerns for the establishment and continuation of power and fealty. The emphasis on the role of the Hebrew God in setting up and toppling kings is appropriate for the concerns of the Maccabbean period, as is the concern for erecting alternative idols for religious worship.[44] The madness of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4 may have associations with Antiochus and his reputation for madness and erratic behavior.[45] The proscription against prayer to anyone but the king in Daniel 6 has parallels with the Antiochus' demand for worship of the king as a god.[46] The Daniel stories creatively use the Babylonian time period as a setting to explore issues that are currently under negotiation.

The chronotope space of the royal court is the most important constitutive element of the Daniel stories. The court and other royal settings become the testing place of ideas. They are the places where power is negotiated and lives are in the balance, and where the comedy of subversion either occurs or towards which it is directed. Each story subverts the power of the court directly or indirectly. Nebuchadnezzar controls religion, diet, education and identity in Daniel 1, yet the power of the court is undermined by the

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42. 'The End of Eschatology in Daniel?', pp. 123-40 (128).

43. Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and Chronotope', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 84-258 (129).

44. Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and Chronotope', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 84-258 (130-31).

45. Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and Chronotope', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 84-258 (131).

46. Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and Chronotope', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 84-258 (132).

interaction with the prison guard to negotiate an alternative diet in the living and training space of the prisoners (vv. 8-17).[47] In Chapter 2 the private dream life of the king and his subsequent fury expressed in the court against his inept advisors is destabilized through a prayer meeting in Daniel's quarters (vv. 13-23) and a dream interpretation that establishes the heavenly provenance of the boulder that destroys earthly kingdoms (vv. 44-45). The statue on the plain in Daniel 3 represents unchallengeable royal hegemony, yet the three friends refuse to bow before the image, and the furnace becomes site of deliverance and deconstruction of regal control (vv. 24-27). The king boasts of his greatness on the pinnacle of the palace in Daniel 4, but is immediately cast out and transformed into an animal-like creature in fulfillment of another disempowering dream (vv. 28-33). The scene of the festival of royal supremacy in Chapter 5 is transformed into a courtroom scene where the king is weighed, measured and judged (vv. 24-28). The guardians of the lions' pit masticate the legal superiority of royal procedure in Daniel 6 (vv. 23-24). The power of kings and empires is constantly and consistently subverted by the dislocation of authority from royal spaces and its reemergence in alternative chronotopes of reality.

The final result of the topics of the stories of Daniel is a devastating assault upon the mythology that earthly kings and kingdoms are the holders of everlasting power. A quick review of the multiple ways that royal power is overturned by these stories leaves little question concerning the social purposes of these narratives. The king's attempt to shape the captive's identities, patterns of eating, and education are thwarted by the power of the Hebrew God and the connivance of Daniel and the king's advisors. Kings have little or no control over their own bodies. This is expressed in sleeplessness, unbidden dreams, fits of rage, and uncontrollable bowels. Fear is a constant companion of these kings as their ability to control their lives and kingdoms is truncated time and again. Advisors are at best inept and at worst collaborators with the king's prisoners. They often manipulate the king to do their bidding. These conniving advisors and other intermediary figures, such as the queen mother, often have a stronger hold on power than the king. The various prayers of praise and conversion by the kings are little more than indications of their true faithlessness and powerlessness. Images of statues and trees, representations of royal power, are either resisted or destroyed. Dreams and apparitions become vehicles for divine judgment. Sentences of capital punishment boomerang on the officials who attempt

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47. Vines notes that the stories of Daniel 1-6 are characterized by two Bakhtinian chronotopes. First, conflicts arise because the characters find themselves in the alien space of a foreign land with exotic foods and harsh legislation that challenges their devotion to God. Second, the expectation of divine deliverance exists in the present in the face of overwhelming odds from hostile forces (*Markan Genre*, pp. 147-49).

to carry out these sentences. The rewards for Daniel and his friends are wildly extravagant and parody the royal policy of spoils for the wise and victorious. The demystification and deconstruction of the kingly image in the stories of Daniel 1–6 create an atmosphere of derision and judgment that complements the similar message one finds in the apocalyptic vision section of Daniel 7–12. Undermining the reign of Antiochus IV is the point of these stories.

3. *Truth Testing*

Testing for truth is one of the defining characteristics of the menippea. Menippea tests ideas through heroic adventures. The hero's characteristics and his or her adventure, however, are both subsidiary to the adventure's reason: to expose ideas and truth to the close scrutiny of parody and humor.[48] Each character is not a traditional character so much as an ideologue that bears a concept.[49] The adventure's fantastic events explore new ideas critical of both the status quo and the past that supports it. Daniel, his friends, and their adventures fit the bill. The stories of Daniel 1–6 devote a great deal of time to the characterization of kings. In Daniel 1 kings besiege cities, take people and religious wares as booty, control every aspect of their slaves' lives, reward for compliance, and appoint personnel. Daniel 2 additionally teaches us that kings may summon advisors at will, issue decrees and stay their execution, try and condemn advisors to death, and destroy their property. Daniel 3 contributes still more to the characterization of kings. Here, we discover that they may undertake massive, expensive construction projects, summon not only their advisors but also their people at will, demand total obedience and obeisance from all, and try and execute people of the realm. Daniel 4 instructs that kings are at ease, prosperous, proud, splendid, majestic, great, and build magnificent and mighty cities. Daniel 5 relates both the hospitality of kings in the great banquets that they throw for their nobles, queens, and slaves and the depth of humiliation to which they can subject conquered peoples and gods. It also informs us that kings are glorious, cause fear and trembling, decide who will live and who will die, and who will be honored and who will be degraded. Daniel 6 enlarges our understanding of kings when the king likewise orders the families of his corrupt advisors to be tossed to the lions. The king symbolizes the terrific and terrifying authority and power of empire and is the undisputed ruler.

In spite of the symbolic characterization of the king as one with such authority and power, the text subverts and deconstructs repeatedly the superiority of kings and, with it, kingdoms. The representation of great and

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48. Vines, *Markan Genre*, p. 110.
49. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 111.

mighty empire is foiled continually by the many situations that diminish royal prestige and stature. Kings are also drunken, dependent, anxious, frightened, panicky, impetuous, fickle, grandiose, quick to anger, slow to learn, in need of counsel, at times impotent, easily deceived, easily subverted, easily swayed, and easily manipulated. Courtiers, if they are loyal, are incompetent and unable to fulfill their roles as wise and learned advisors. Sometimes they are untrustworthy and undermine the king's wishes by their connivance with the exiles. Empire can be destabilized.

While the prestige and reputation of the royal court falls, Daniel and his friends rise to positions of power and reward as a result of their superior wisdom, cunning, unshakeable faith, and absolute devotion to their God. They symbolize simple but critically important Hebrew ideals. The overall message is that truth resides not in human power and abilities, but in the unseen authority of the Hebrew deity. Submission to God, not empire, is the best way to live one's life.

Another important clue to the precedence that the search for truth takes in these stories is the absence of Daniel from the blazing furnace story in Daniel 3. Source critical explanations that place each story in an independent tradition are the usual means employed to account for this fact.[50] Diachronic theories are certainly plausible. They neglect, however, that the figures of Daniel and his friends represent one of the doublings or twinnings of the book. They are interchangeable in the stories. Their adventures are part of the stories' search for truth, and Daniel and his friends serve equally in that quest, even if Daniel is more often the lone protagonist. It is striking that Daniel 3 is primarily a story about King Nebuchadnezzar, his decrees, and his reactions to the challenges of the three Hebrew patriots before, during, and after the fiery furnace scene. The king is central to the operation of perspective in this chapter as every scene either observes him or is observed by him.[51] This lends support to the argument that this story is designed primarily to tell readers something about the *king*, and that the adventures of the three heroes, while a crucial element of the story, is *not* the central focus. The reader learns much more about Nebuchadnezzar from this story than about the three Hebrews. The three share only one dialogue, and are always referred to collectively, while the king is involved in every scene from start to finish. Empire is destabilized—by ideals and ideas more than by heroes.

The stories contain a series of situations of contested power that create scenarios for the exploration of ideas that critique present cultural realities. The characters' situations and adventures give helpful clues concerning the social world behind these stories. The heroes' oftentimes subtle resistance to the king during these episodes indicates that the narratives constitute

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50. Collins, *Daniel*, p. 179.
51. Meadowcroft, *Aramaic Daniel*, pp. 134-35.

resistance literature against imperial rule. This fact, however, has often been ignored. The first chapter of this study examined the general consensus that Daniel 1–6 are court tales that describe a relatively benign, even positive portrait of the relationship between the conquered, deported Hebrew subjects and their Babylonian overlords. This interpretation, described variously as Success In The Court, Lifestyle For The Diaspora, or a Training Manual or Handbook for successful bureaucratic service in the King's Court,[52] has enjoyed, at best, an uncomfortable connection with the remainder of the book, which consists of apocalyptic visions of judgment and destruction of these same ruling elites. Nevertheless, form critical and historical critical analyses, pointing to the existence of similar types of literature extant in other ancient Near Eastern cultures, such as the legend of Ahikar, support the idea that the stories of Daniel 1–6 are a type of wish fulfillment wisdom literature, describing the aspirations of upper class Hebrew elites, probably trained as scribes, to serve successfully in the court of the King while continuing to live faithful lives of religious conviction.[53] While this understanding of these narratives leads to wonderful hero-story readings and inspiring devotional interpretations of the rewards of faithful obedience, the power of these stories as accounts of resistance to imperial domination is truncated and muted. The result is an unfortunate thematic bifurcation of the message of the book of Daniel that has mirrored the structural and linguistic division of this material.

Recent work on the stories of Daniel has realized interpretive gains by reading these narratives as tales of resistance. Smith-Christopher, Goldingay, Henze, Sweeney, and Brueggemann have all offered readings that take resistance seriously.[54] These readings embrace the idea that social conditions shape literature. They reveal the compelling power of these stories in opposing the blandishments of empire and refusing to accept assimilation into a dominant foreign culture.

52. For the first two designations, see e.g., Humphreys, 'Life-Style for Diaspora', pp. 211-23 (211). For the third, see e.g., Henze 'Narrative Frame', pp. 5-24 (17).

53. See e.g., Jon L. Berquist, *Judaism in Persia's Shadow* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), pp. 226-27.

54. Smith-Christopher, 'Daniel', p. 20. Also see his earlier work, where he describes the Daniel stories as a folklore of hope that recounts the exploits of a hero whose superior cleverness succeeds over symbols of domination, including kings, evil courtiers, imprisonment, servitude and the lion's pit (Daniel H. Smith, *The Religion of the Landless* [Bloomington: Meyer-Stone Books, 1989], pp. 163-64). John Goldingay understands these stories as unmasking the pretensions of human power ('The Stories in Daniel: A Narrative Politics', *JSOT* 37 [1987], pp. 99-116 [116]). Other studies that recognize the primary importance of the resistance themes in Daniel include Walter Brueggemann, 'The Call to Resistance', *The Other Side* 26.6 (1990), pp. 44-46; Henze, 'Narrative Frame', pp. 5-24 (20); and Sweeney, 'End of Eschatology in Daniel?', pp. 123-40 (132-33).

The work of James C. Scott lends additional support to reading these materials as resistance literature. His social-scientific analysis gives further evidence that the stories of Daniel 1–6 are indeed stories of contested power and resistance, not stories of collusion and political ambition, and that the resistance themes of Daniel 1–6 are a perfect complement to the judgmental visions of Daniel 7–12. Scott's analysis "attempts to suggest how we might more successfully read, interpret and understand the often fugitive political conduct of subordinate groups."[55] He maintains the literature of such groups contains two levels of meanings or messages. The public transcript is his shorthand way of describing the open interaction between subordinates and those who dominate. This interaction is normally in close conformity with how the dominant group wishes things to appear, and thus any analysis of this relationship based upon the public transcript is likely to conclude that subordinate groups endorse the terms of their subordination and are willing, even enthusiastic, partners in that subjugation.[56] The hidden transcript is the discourse that takes place beyond the direct observation of those in power. This hidden transcript is produced for a different audience and under different constraints of power than the public transcript and thus may give a different and more accurate reflection of the relationship between the two groups.[57] On the epigraph page of his book, Scott relates the Ethiopian proverb that opens this chapter. It is this simple yet wonderfully descriptive observation that alerts us to the fact that the surface appearance of social reality does not necessarily reflect deeper realities.[58] Tactical prudence ensures that subordinate groups rarely announce their hidden transcript of resistance and contempt directly. Instead, it is through the use of anonymity in relatively safe situations (such as large crowds), dissembling language, or ambiguous actions that the subordinate's true feelings are communicated.[59] Occasionally the hidden transcript does break out into public discourse and open resistance, and such occurrences can erupt into dramatic scenes of confrontation that may result in further repression or a degree of liberation.[60] In Daniel 1–6, examples exist of both resistance out of the gaze of the imperial eye, and acts and proclamations of resistance that burst into the open and are in conflict with the official public transcript. A brief overview of the Daniel tales using this analytical construct helps establish the sociological analysis that these stories are tales of resistance against king and

55. Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, p. xii.
56. Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, pp. 2-4.
57. Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, pp. 4-5.
58. Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, pp. 1-16. In chapter 1 entitled, 'Behind the Official Story', Scott gives numerous examples of this phenomenon such as the Negro spirituals and American slavery.
59. Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, p. 15.
60. Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, p. 202.

empire and provides the main context for this Bakhtinian analysis that the goals of the Daniel tales are a critical response to the social situation of the time and a search for truth within it.

The public transcript of power and domination is present in a number of scenes in the narratives of Daniel. These public transcripts are in fact the main reason that interpreters have determined that these stories are generally positive in tone toward the ruling foreign powers. The fact that each of the chapters of Daniel 1–6 ends with some kind of positive statement about the king, praise for the Hebrew deity, and/or a promotion or commendation of Daniel and his three friends, has led most commentators to assert that there is a tolerant, even positive viewpoint being expressed here toward the foreign king. These readings embrace the positive, solicitous material that is clearly present in the text. It is the hidden transcript in each chapter, however, that alerts the observant reader that resistance rather than collusion is the dominant theme of these stories.

Daniel 1 portrays King Nebuchadnezzar as a conqueror of both the political and cultic power centers of Judah as he defeats King Jehoiakim and plunders the sacred articles of the temple. Then the finest of the deportees are chosen for special education and training for imperial service. The public transcript indicates that the king's desires are completely fulfilled, for indeed the conscripts are trained and in the end presented to the king for royal approval. The reader also learns, however, that Daniel and his three friends negotiate with the king's servants to change the terms of their subjugation. While many posit that the Hebrew heroes' concerns stem from piety and a desire to remain kosher, which is a possible motivation, it is also true that their actions have the political consequence of setting themselves apart from the king's agenda and the Babylonian training table.[61] Their resistance takes the form of the trickster hero, one that makes his way through a treacherous environment of enemies not by strength but by wit and cunning.[62] This resistance is covert and invisible to the king, and yet is powerfully subversive and indicative of the true relationship between the king and his captives. The delicious denouement of this story is that the king knows nothing of this subterfuge and deems the four Hebrews to be better servants than even his most trusted countrymen (Dan. 1.20-21). This commendation by the king adds to the irony of this chapter because the heroes are rewarded for their subversive behavior. The public transcript affirms the king's sovereignty while the hidden transcript reveals that his conquered subjects resist surrendering their identity.

61. On this point, see W. Sibley Towner, 'Daniel 1 in the Context of the Canon', in Gene Tucker *et al.*, *Canon, Theology and Old Testament Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), pp. 285-98; and Chia, 'Postcolonial Reading of Daniel', pp. 17-36.

62. Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, pp. 162-66.

Daniel 2 is the account of the dream that no one in the king's court is able to interpret. Dreams often represent the presence of an alternative reality, and the interpretation that Daniel gives to Nebuchadnezzar indicates that one day his kingdom will fall, as all kingdoms must.[63] The public transcript indicates once again that Daniel is serving a humble and faithful role as an advisor to the king and Daniel and his friends are amply rewarded for their loyalty and Daniel's ability to provide an interpretation (Dan. 2.48-49). The hidden transcript of this chapter is twofold. First, Daniel and his friends appeal to an alternative authority through prayer (Dan. 2.17-23). The social sites of the hidden transcript are places where the control, surveillance, and repression of the dominant are least able to reach, and where this sequestered social milieu is composed entirely of close confidants who share similar experiences of domination.[64] God is revealed in the hiddenness. God brings the hidden to light in its rightful time. In Daniel's hymn of thanksgiving and praise itself, he sings of God's power to reveal what is hidden, to bring truth to the fore:

> He reveals deep and hidden things;
> > he knows what is in the darkness,
> > and light dwells within him (Dan. 2.22).

Secondly, it is through the vehicle of dream interpretation that Daniel gives voice to the symbolic inversion that the images of the dream represent.[65] The king's curious acceptance of his own future demise indicates that the hidden transcript is a dynamic concept that sometimes breaks out of hiding into the consciousness of the dominant society. This chapter therefore is not an example of loyal acquiescence to the king's power but rather a picture of contested sovereignty.

Daniel 3 contains the first clear example of an open public conflict between the public and hidden transcripts. This chapter recounts the very public celebration of the king's power symbolized in the erection of the enormous stele. The repetitive ritualistic nature of this scene of political allegiance is a perfect example of what Scott calls the Public Transcript as a Respectable Performance.[66] Above all else, unanimity is the goal and any public display of insubordination by fellow dominant elites or subordinates is to be avoided at all costs.[67] The three heroes choose this moment to respond with a public declaration of their previously hidden transcript and refuse to bow down to the image. This public insubordination breaks

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63. On the significance of dreams and power, see Smith-Christopher, 'Daniel', pp. 17-152 (56-58). See also Gnuse, 'Jewish Dream Interpreter', pp. 29-53.

64. Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, pp. 120-28.

65. Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, p. 166.

66. Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, pp. 45-69.

67. Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, p. 56.

the silence of the oppressed, and because it is an open direct challenge it is met with brutal reprisals. This act is a particularly powerful moment that opens the possibility for a change in the status quo.[68] The three heroes experience a divine intervention, and they are saved from the fiery furnace, which in effect breaks the stranglehold on power that the king attempts to proclaim with the elaborate ceremony of the plains of Dura earlier in the chapter. The clothes of the three heroes, not singed and undefiled by the fire, unmask this emperor's true nakedness, like the boy in 'The Emperor Who Had No Clothes'. Again, at the end of this chapter the king attempts to reestablish his power and the public transcript by commanding the worship of the Hebrew God and by promoting the three heroes to posts of greater power (Dan. 3.28-30). Once again, these royal acts of rewards for subversive actions ring hollow and illustrate the crumbling nature of royal power.

In Daniel 4, there is a second instance of dream elucidation where Daniel's interpretation is a sobering indictment of the status quo. Before he offers it, however, he declares solicitously, 'My lord, may the dream be for those who hate you, and its interpretation for your enemies' (Dan. 4.20). After the interpretation, he begs, 'Therefore, O king, may my counsel be acceptable to you…so that your prosperity may be prolonged' (Dan. 4.27). The public transcript is attentive to, concerned for, and careful in the presence of the king. The hidden transcript, however, offers another example of the symbolic inversion that is present in Daniel 2. Once again, the account of the king's supposed conversion contains more irony than plausibility (Dan. 4.34-37). It does, however, serve critical ideological and truth-seeking functions in the narrative for the king declares of the King of heaven:

> for all his works are truth,
>   and his ways are justice;
> and he is able to bring low
>   those who walk in pride (Dan. 4.37).

Daniel 5 records a second instance of the Public Transcript as a Respectable Performance that shares similarities with Daniel 3. This time the setting is a great feast celebrating the power and might of the king. The audience for such a public performance is often fellow members of the dominant elite, and these events serve the purpose of bolstering the grasp upon power.[69] The fact that a thousand of his nobles are in attendance (Dan. 5.1) indicates that this is no ordinary dinner party. The appearance of the writing on the

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68. Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, pp. 202-27. The razing of the Berlin Wall and Tiananmen Square are two contemporary examples of this type of confrontation.

69. Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, pp. 66-69.

wall and the king's subsequent incontinence portend a disastrous ending to this banquet. It is the Queen Mother, a relatively powerless female character, who takes control and calls in Daniel, once again to make sense out of the incomprehensible. This carnivalesque scene allows Daniel to speak out publicly the words of judgment that have been present in the hidden transcript.[70] Again, ironically, it is Daniel who experiences a promotion at the expense of the king who meets his doom that very night. Moreover, this reward came in spite Daniel's rejection of it in Dan. 5.17, 'Let your gifts be for yourself or give your rewards to someone else! Nevertheless, I will read the writing to the king and let him know the interpretation'. It is unclear here whether Daniel is an expert at the protocol of the public transcript or is allowing the hidden transcript to break free even before he interprets the apparition. In either case, the rewards are still his.

Daniel 6 is the second example of an overt conflict between the public and hidden transcripts. Daniel's public performance of the usually hidden transcript precipitates a crisis. The reader knows that the king's advisors are plotting against Daniel, and Daniel's response to the king's decree to pray only to the king opens the window on Daniel's hidden transcript to pray to the Hebrew God (Dan. 6.11). This act of courageous piety reveals the hidden transcript, and as a result the hero experiences the wrath of the royal bureaucracy. Daniel is thrown into the lions' den, but once again through divine intervention Daniel emerges victorious. This time the royal bureaucracy receives a mortal blow as Daniel's accusers and their wives and their children meet the grisly (and gristly!) fate intended for Daniel. It is not surprising then to see that Daniel and his God once again receive unqualified praise and honor from the king.

It is apparent from this analysis that the stories of Daniel 1–6 can be read on various levels. They are wonderful stories of bravery and piety where the heroes are characters with qualities that educational, religious, and parental figures hope their charges emulate. It is also apparent that these stories are filled with political intrigue and lessons, and this analysis helps recover this process. On the surface, the public transcript of the power and authority of the king appears to be reinstated each time the king converts, prays to the Hebrew God, or rewards the heroes. In actuality, these scenes are ironic devices that repeatedly remind the reader of the actual powerlessness and impermanence of royal authority. The hidden transcripts of these stories help readers understand that true power resides not in the empires of the world but in those persons who choose to follow God and remain faithful no matter what happens. These stories express resistance to the empire, and this orientation helps in the analysis of these stories as a search for truth.

70. Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, pp. 172-82.

4. *Ultimate Questions and Utopia Questing*

The menippea reflects its involvement with ultimate questions through an ethical bias. Yet, the exploration is not done in an abstract philosophical or religiously dogmatic way. Instead, the author corrals sensual, carnivalistic images and acts to investigate ethical standards. A spirit of provocation and paradox exists in order to further its exploration of ultimate answers. The point of such is to display rhetorical ingenuity, challenge how one expects things to be, critique false understandings and foolish certainties, provoke and advance unorthodox thinking and opinions, and to introduce the possibility of a new reality. It explores social utopia through dreams or journeys to unknown lands. The goal is the creation of a better world.

Throughout the prior discussion in Chapters 3, 4 and now in this chapter, we have addressed at length how the author/s or final redactor/s of Daniel brought base, sensual, mystical, and carnivalistic images and acts together to investigate truth. The rhetorical ingenuity, the challenges to the expected, the critique of the false and foolish, and the provocation and advancement of unorthodox thinking in Daniel 1–6 is clear. Daniel and his friends' ethical standards are patent. They keep kosher, pray to the Hebrew God alone, praise God, follow God's will, resist empire, and offer up their very lives to these values. These are in direct opposition to the unethical, maniacal actions of kings who are willing to abuse power and kill the innocent in furtherance of unimportant and/or pretentious aims. Consequently, the final focus is the issue of social utopia, the construction of a new world, in the Daniel stories.

In some important ways, the outcome of every one of the Daniel stories reflects optimistic, utopian thinking. Rebellion, whether overt or covert, works. Kings are converted. Rewards come to those who follow God's will. Nonetheless, the most intense concentration of perhaps utopian ideals and language is suggested in the dreams and doxologies of Daniel 1–6. They best articulate the hope for and vision of a new tomorrow, a socio-religious utopia brought about by God.

Dreams and journeys are important vehicles in the menippea in the search for truth, the exploration of ultimate questions, and the creation of a new reality. Dreams function in Daniel as a medium to deconstruct royal power and versions of truth. These alternative realities disrupt the real world of empire and create a space for a different and better social and political order. The dreams of the disenfranchised can be dangerous for those who hold power, because they cannot be controlled and are often an expression of a subversive alternative reality.[71] In Daniel, however, it is not the dreams of

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71. For a discussion of the power of dreams for those in desperate situations, see Smith-Christopher, 'Daniel', pp. 17-152 (56-58).

the slaves but the interpretation of the dreams of the vanquisher by the vanquished that reveals these reveries as messages from God, and thus indicative of a greater power than earthly empires.[72] The royal dreams of Daniel 2 and 4 and the apparition of Daniel 5 are clear messages of the supremacy of the power of God versus the 'real' world of Nebuchadnezzar.[73] The vision of a divinely constructed utopia is expressed in the language of these interpretations. In Daniel 2, Daniel reads the dream to mean that in the days of the divided kingdom, 'the God of heaven will establish a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall this kingdom be left to other people. It will crush all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it will stand forever…' (Dan. 2.44). In Daniel 4, the king will suffer being turned into an animal until he grasps that 'the Most High has sovereignty over the kingdom of mortals and gives to whom he will' (Dan. 4.25b; cf. 4.32b; 5.21b). Daniel 5 witnesses the fulfillment of part of the dream of Daniel 2. Daniel states: 'God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end' (Dan. 5.26). God divides Belshazzar's kingdom and gives to the Medes and Persians (Dan. 5.28; cf. 6.1).

The doxologies offer up a few descriptive nuggets of God's power and kingdom as well. Daniel says of God in Dan. 2.21a:

> He changes times and seasons,
>   deposes kings and sets up kings.

Nebuchadnezzar writes in Dan. 4.3b:

> His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
>   and his sovereignty is from generation to generation.

Again in Dan. 4.34c he says:

> For his sovereignty is an everlasting sovereignty,
>   and his kingdom endures from generation to generation.

When read in conjunction with Daniel's interpretations of the kings' dreams and apparitions, these statements make plain that the reign of God is at hand, will herald in a new social situation, and will last forever.

5. *Conclusion*

The social utopian stance of the Daniel tales is that the faithful Hebrew captives retain their identity and their superiority over their captors even during

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72. Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, 'Prayers and Dreams: Power and Diaspora Identities in the Social Setting of the Daniel Tales', in John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint (eds.), *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*, I (VTSup, 83; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2001), pp. 266-90 (282).

73. Smith-Christopher, 'Prayers and Dreams', in Collins and Flint (eds.) *Daniel: Composition and Reception*, I, pp. 266-90 (289).

times of extreme stress and dislocation. Their hope resides in God, whose eternal kingdom reigns supreme. It will in the end remove all oppressive kings from power and allow God's humbling truth and justice to rule (Dan. 4.37b). The stories of Daniel 1–6 disassemble royal power and privilege and envision the creation of a better world through the overthrow of earthly kingdoms and powers.

Chapter 6

Genre, Language, and Dialogism in Daniel 1–6

> [T]he corrective of laughter and criticism to all straightforward genres,
> languages, styles, voices, [forces us] to experience beneath these catego-
> ries a different and contradictory reality that is otherwise not captured in
> them.[1]

1. *Introduction*

Two of the greatest problems in studies of Daniel 1–6 are its overall genre
designation and the presence of two languages in the stories. This study has
already introduced the multiplicity of possible overall genre designations
that scholars have suggested for the Daniel narratives. One of the difficul-
ties in establishing the genre of Daniel 1–6 is the variegated subgenres and
forms that the book contains. Discussions of genre usually acknowledge the
presence of these diverse subgenres and forms and privilege one or more of
these constructs as the best way to understand these stories.[2] This study has
also reviewed several important attempts to explain the fact that the book
of Daniel is written in two languages. Bakhtin's view of heteroglossia and
dialogism suggests a new path for the investigation of these two phenom-
ena. The presence of two languages and many subgenres and forms within
Daniel 1–6 also betray aspects of a Menippean construction. Bakhtin posits
that the menippea has two final generic features: (1) a variety of inserted
genres within the work, such as prayers, lists, decrees…; and (2) a multi-
styled, multi-toned, multi-voiced work that includes a variety of genres,
voices and languages in dialogue with one another. This chapter explores
the many subgenres and languages in Daniel 1–6 and seeks to determine
whether these constitute the last two elements of Bakhtin's genre character-
istics for Menippean satire. These elements combine to form an intention-
ally constructed narrative that paradoxically creates an organic unity even
while the various features remain in tension.

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1. Bakhtin, 'Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagi-
nation* pp. 41-83 (59).
2. Lucas discusses the process of genre recognition, including intuitive and con-
scious classification (*Daniel*, p. 23).

2. *Menippea's Multiple Genres*

One of the quests of Daniel research is the desire to establish a comprehensive genre designation for the entire book as well as for the two major portions of the book, Chapters 1–6 and 7–12. The major complicating factor of the search for an adequate description of the overarching genre of the Daniel narratives is the variety of smaller, discrete subgenres that one finds in these stories. The result has been multiple suggested genre designations.[3] In Greek literature, the menippea traditionally uses subgenres such as novellas, letters, oratorical speeches, symposia, and more. In its classical form, it mixes both prose and poetry. Rather than being a confusing jumble of unrelated literary types, however, the genres create a dialogue among opposing ideological positions.[4] Vines states of this construction:

> Menippea's combination of various genres is not haphazard but intentional.
> Menippea weaves disparate genres together to bring their ideological fields
> into contact. Since each genre views the world in its own particular way, the
> use of a genre also evokes its ideological perspective.[5]

The key point of the Menippean structure is that they are combined and used in ways that parody conservative, generic conventions. The application of these subgenres defies in significant ways their ideologically charged use of history. Not only are the subgenres employed in creative, insubordinate, and parodic ways, but also they also often share in the Menippean spirit of the dissolution of normal boundaries. The subgenres ultimately blend into a dialogic whole with an ideological purpose that seeks to challenge past and present social structures and disrupt the monologic voices of authority.

   One of the strengths of the Menippean classification for the stories of Daniel 1–6 is the ability to account for the wide variety of inserted genres. There is no question that Daniel 1–6 contains many subgenres. The work of John J. Collins serves as an exemplar. He has compiled one of the most comprehensive form-critical analyses of the various features found in the Daniel stories. Collins assigns the court legend as the overall genre designation of Daniel 1–6. Following Humphreys, he would designate Daniel 2, 4, and 5 to the court contest; and Daniel 3 and 6 to the court conflict. He also notes the epistle form in Daniel 4.[6] In addition, he maintains that a

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3.   Lucas notes that the aim of genre identification is to clarify a text by indicating right and wrong expectations of readers (*Daniel*, pp. 23-24).

4.   Vines, *Markan Genre*, p. 119.

5.   Vines, *Markan Genre*, p. 115.

6.   Collins, *Daniel with an Introduction*, pp. 41-42. In his discussion on the genre of all six Daniel chapters, Collins explores märchen, legend, court tale, aretalogical narrative and midrash. Others label individual chapters differently. For example, Goldingay describes Daniel 1 as a legend in the context of a court tale set in a framework of a midrash (*Daniel*, p. 6). He similarly describes other chapters in Daniel with more than

variety of further subgenres, macro-genres, micro-genres, and forms exist within these stories.[7] These include: the date formula (Dan. 1.1; 2.1); prayer of petition (Dan. 2.17-18; 6.10, 16);[8] dream report (Dan. 2.29-35; 4.9-18); dream interpretation (Dan. 2.36-45; 4.19-27); political oracle (Dan. 2.29); doxology or hymn of praise (Dan. 2.20-23, 47; 3.28; 4.3, 34-35, 37; 6.26-27); proclamation (Dan. 3.4-5); accusation (Dan. 3.9-12; 6.12-13); inter-rogation (Dan. 3.14-15); royal decree (Dan. 3.29; 6.6-9, 25-26); lists (Dan. 3.2, 3, 5, 7, 10, 15); epistle (Dan. 4.1-3, 34-37; 6.25-26); symbolic visions (Dan. 4.13-17); pesher (Dan. 4.20-26; 5.24-28); admonition (Dan. 4.27); oracle (Dan. 4.31-32); fulfillment formula (Dan. 4.33; 5.29-30); indictment speech or covenant lawsuit (Dan. 5.17-23); and petition (Dan. 6.6-8). Other Daniel scholars have produced different lists of subgenres, which conflict with Collins' in whole or part.[9] The following table enumerates several of the subgenres of Daniel 1–6, which agrees with Collins only in part. This list is not meant to be comprehensive. It is only meant to give one a taste of the number and diversity of Daniel's subgenres.

Date Formula[10]	1.1; 2.1
Time Formula[11]	1.21; 6.29
List[12]	2.2, 10; 4.7; 5.11 (cultic personnel); 2.35, 45; 5.4 (metals); 3.2, 3, 27; 6.4, 5, 8 (secular officials); 3.4, 7, 29; 4.1; 5.19; 6.26 (nation-alities); 3.5, 7, 10, 15 (musical instruments); 3.21; 5.16, 29 (items of clothing); and 5.2, 3, 23 (banquet attendees)

one label. Lucas accepts the nomenclature of court tales of conflict and contest, with the purposes of entertainment, edification and encouragement (*Daniel*, pp. 26-27).

7. Collins, *Daniel with an Introduction*, pp. 43-73. The macro-genre is one, such as prayer, that describes several types of prayers such as petitions or intercessory prayers, which would be classified as micro-genres, while subgenres may encompass macro- and micro-genres. These various subgenres are culled from various lists where Collins explores each chapter of Daniel. In this investigation, all are subgenres because they are subsidiary to the Menippean genre.

8. Collins uses the English numbering for Daniel 6 in his discussion.

9. For example, see Gammie, 'Classification', pp. 191-204 (193-94).

10. See Collin's definitions for the following subgenres: date formula, list, petition, decree, proclamation, epistle, prayer of petition, doxology, dream report, oracle, dream interpretation, miracle or aretalogical narrative, admonition, and story (*Daniel with an Introduction*, pp. 105-20).

11. This subgenre marks the passing of time by use of the formula 'during the reign of king PN' (Tob. 2.1; Acts 11.28), 'until the X year of King PN' or 'until the X of King PN' (e.g., 1 Kgs 11.40; 2 Kgs 25.2; Jer. 1.3; 52.5; Ezra 4.5, 24: Neh. 12.22; 1 Esd. 1.57).

12. Coxon maintains that Daniel 1–6 extends the list genre beyond formal lists to that of 'tripartite lists of words and phrases, often repeated with slight variations', such as the description of Daniel's wisdom in Dan. 5.11-14 (' "List" Genre', pp. 95-121 [106]). This table notates only the traditional lists here.

Acclamation Formula[13]	2.4; 3.9; 5.10; 6.7, 22
Petition	6.7-9
Decree	2.5-6; 3.29; 4.6; 5.7; 6.8-10, 26-27
Report of Decree	2.8-9, 12-13
Proclamation	3.4-6
Report of Proclamation	5.29
Epistle	4.1-37; 6.26-28
greeting	4.1; 6.26
thanksgiving	4.2-3
body	4.4-37; 6.27-28
Historical review	1.1-2; 4.4-36; 5.2, 11-12, 15, 18-21
Schema of Reward or Retribution[14]	2.5-6, 9; 3.15-16, 17-18; 5.16 (reward only)
Schema of Reward	1.19; 2.48-49; 3.30; 5.29
Prosperity Formula[15]	4.4; 6.29
Report of Prayer of Petition	2.17-18; 6.11-12, 17[16]
Doxology	2.20-23, 47; 3.28; 4.3, 34-35, 37; 6.26-27
Ritual Sacrifice	2.46
Oracle	2.29, 45
Dream Report	2.29-35; 4.9-18
Vision or Apparition Report	3.25; 5.5; 6.23
Report of a Vision or Apparition	2.19, 28; 4.5
Dream or Apparition Interpretation	2.36-45; 4.19-26; 5.18-28
Aretalogical Narrative	3.27-28; 6.23-24
Crime Report	6.4-14
Trial	3.8-23; 6.13-19, 25
accusation	3.8-12; 6.13-14
summons	3.13
interrogation	3.14-15
martyrological demand	3.15
martyrological refusal	3.16-19

13. Simon J. De Vries defines the following subgenres: acclamation, schema of reward and retribution, schema of reward, trial, threat, historical review, and schema of reprieve (*1 & 2 Chronicles* [FOTL, 11; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989], pp. 426-37).

14. According to De Vries, the threat subgenre typically signifies a menacing speech by someone with the authority to carry out the menace (De Vries, *Chronicles*, p. 436). Here, however, it is often coupled in a reward and retribution schema, wherein the king offers reward or threatens violence depending on the outcome of some test or challenge (De Vries, *Chronicles*, p. 426). In Daniel, the formula often begins with an 'if' clause (הֵן).

15. This subgenre denotes that a character has prospered, often as the result of divine action. See e.g., Gen. 39.23; 2 Kgs 18.7; Ezra 6.14; 1 Chron. 26.5; 29.23.

16. The report concerning Darius's ritual fast in Dan. 6.19 might also be included as a type of prayer of petition although the god to whom the petition is made remains unstated. The prayer of v. 17 points, however, to the Hebrew deity.

royal attempt to void suit	6.15-16
verdict	3.19-20; 6.17
attempted execution of verdict	3.21-23; 6.18
execution of royal officers	3.22; 6.25
foiling of execution of verdict	3.24-25; 6.23-24
Covenant Lawsuit	4.13-17, 20-33; 5.18-28, 30
verdict	4.13-17; 5.18-28
report of verdict	4.24-26
admonition	4.27
execution of verdict	4.28-33; 5.30
fulfillment formula	4.33
Schema of Reprieve	4.34, 36

Nonetheless, whatever list of subgenres one finally constructs, it is manifest that Daniel 1–6 contains many prose and poetic subgenres that have confused the classification of its overall genre.

The overall genre designation of Daniel 1–6 is Menippean satire precisely because it has so many subgenres that often seem at odds with one another and make other classifications difficult. Daniel 1–6's interesting blend of prose and poetic subgenres is in alignment with one of the 14 features of the menippea. These subgenres are the building blocks of the comprehensive Menippean structure of these stories. Not simply the fact that a variety of prose and poetic genres exist, but also the ways in which these genres are used give convincing evidence of the Menippean quality of these stories. The subgenres of Daniel 1–6 parody orthodox uses of these subgenres, shatter boundaries, test truth, serve seditious, ideological purposes, and generally further the satiric ends of the menippea. With these goals in mind, Collins' overall genre classification and a number of the larger and smaller subgenre classifications within Daniel 1–6 are studied and analyzed below.

The classification of Daniel 1–6 as legend is rejected. Legend is primarily concerned with the wonderful and is aimed at edification, with the goal of stimulating readers to believe or do something good.[17] Daniel and his friends are inspiring and legendary figures, but this fact is secondary to the overall thrust of these stories, which is to ridicule the king. The menippea has appropriated legendary figures and prior traditions to its own ends, as is characteristic of the genre. This can be seen most clearly by how the so-called court conflicts and contests are reported and developed. Both the conflicts and contests consist of fantastic and overblown situations. Court advisors in competition with the Hebrew captives are not simply inept, they are also hopeless, bungling and completely clueless. Conflicts quickly escalate into life and death struggles that require divine intervention for deliverance. Death sentences are reversed and carried out against

17. Collins, *Daniel with an Introduction*, p. 111.

the oppressors. The court stories serve the overall purpose of the destruction of royal power and privilege, and the setting of these tales in the court provides a venue for the reversal and destruction of the monologic voice of royal hegemony. As previously demonstrated, the space/setting of the stories' vignettes has more to do with the narratives' satirical chronotope than with the edifying young Judean captives and their attempts to serve well their colonizer and captor.

The subgenres serve satirical purposes. This includes the date formulae and time formulae of the book. Date formulae are an indication of important events in the reign of the king.[18] Daniel 1 begins with a Judean date formula, indicating that the focus of this chapter should be the exploits of Jehoiakim. Instead, readers quickly learn that Judah's independence has ended due to Nebuchadnezzar, and the focus is on Babylonian rather than Judean concerns. The historical inaccuracy of the dating of this account is a second clue that this form is being used in unusual ways. In addition, the formula refers to Nebuchadnezzar, the great Babylonian monarch, as an instrument of the Hebrew deity. This pericope is not intended as the more usual factual or propagandistic recording of the fall of Judah, but rather is a creative use of an existing form to serve the purposes of the author/narrator. The rest of the chapter supports this conclusion. Rather than learning more of the exploits of the great Babylonian king, the text focuses on Daniel and his friends' subversive activity. The date formula is turned on its head. Moreover, the date formula in Daniel 2 is a Babylonian form, and again the expectation is that something historically important to Babylon follows. The story of the dream of the statue destroyed by the rolling stone is a bizarre and unanticipated outcome. The use of these date formulae creates an atmosphere of historical verisimilitude and official sounding communication that is contradicted by the contents of each chapter.

Time formulae are familiar in historical chronicles for marking the passage of time. What is interesting is that in Daniel 1–6, they denote that especially long periods have passed. In Daniel 1, Daniel's service to the king runs from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (586 BCE) all the way to that of Cyrus of Persia (539 BCE). The concluding sentence of the narratives of Daniel 1–6 (Dan. 6.29), the other time formula, reports that Daniel lives on and prospers beyond the reign of Cyrus (530 BCE). While 56 years is not an impossibly long time to have served at court, it is historically unlikely. As a consequence, these time formulations immediately alert readers that Daniel may well be a supratemporal character. More than half a century has passed, but Daniel has remained unchanged. A feature of the historical chronicle has been usurped in the furtherance of the menippea.

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18. Arnold, 'Aramaic in the Hebrew Bible', pp. 1-16 (10).

Lists are commonly used to enumerate multiple names or items, and often serve the function of an ordering science.[19] They are also an extremely important component of many Menippean creations. The sheer repetitiveness of multiple lists of secular officials (Dan. 3.2, 3, 27; 6.4, 5, 8), cultic personnel (Dan. 2.2, 10; 4.7; 5.11), musical instruments (Dan. 3.5, 7, 10, 15), metals (Dan. 2.35, 45; 5.4), items of clothing (Dan. 3.21; 5.16, 29), banquet attendees (Dan. 5.2, 3, 23), and nationalities (Dan. 3.4, 7, 29; 4.1; 5.19; 6.26) indicates a rhetorical purpose for such tedious enumeration. It must be admitted that the simple fact that the repetition of lists creates a noticeable effect on the ear and eye. The excesses of Babylonian bureaucracy are portrayed in a complex and artistic manner.[20] The endless lists are a formal manifestation of the seriousness of royal matters and the desire for control and provide a vivid contrast with the destructive images of judgment against the empire, including the shattered statue, the collapsed tree and monstrous animals.[21] These examples as well as the repetition of several word phrases or brief clauses indicate that these lists are included not because of lack of skill but in order to create a rhythmic quality that emphasizes the foolishness of human pretensions toward power and control.[22]

Several of the subgenres are related to speech to or by the king. These include the royal acclamation, petition, royal decree, report of the issuance of a royal decree, proclamation, report of proclamation, epistle, and report of reward. The first of these appears in Dan. 2.4 where the king's wise men offer a traditional royal acclamation, 'O King, Live Forever!' Daniel 3.9; 5.10; 6.7 and 22 also contain this royal acclamation. Usually such an acclamation introduces the speech of a person subservient to the king. He or she may make a request of the king or answer one from him. In either case, the acclamation is an honorific salutation. In Dan. 2.4, Chaldean wise men speak the acclamation before they ask the king to tell them the dream. It is followed by a slapstick exchange regarding whether or not the king will tell them the content of the dream. In Dan. 3.9, the form appears in one of its more common settings, as part of a legal accusation against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Yet, the accusation will soon be undermined when the queen mother uses it in a mocking fashion (Dan.5.10). After the acclamation, she tells the king to calm his fears, she negatively compares the king to his father, and she instructs him to summon Daniel. In Dan. 6.7, the cunning and conniving advisors use the acclamation to trap both Daniel and

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19. Collins, *Daniel with an Introduction*, p. 112; and Coxon, ' "List" Genre', pp. 95-121 (96).

20. Avalos, 'Comedic Intentions', pp. 580-88 (587).

21. Coxon, 'List Genre', pp. 95-121 (105).

22. Coxon, 'List Genre', pp. 95-121 (108-11). Coxon lists several phrases that are repeated in various stories throughout the book.

the king. In Dan. 6.22, Daniel uses it on a surface level in the usual subservient and honorific manner, but it introduces his report of his angelic deliverance, which undercuts the king's authority to execute whom he convicts.

The acclamation in Dan. 6.7 is part of a petition that appears in Dan. 6.7-9. Petitions to the king were a common occurrence in the ancient Near East. For example, people could petition the king to appeal a poor legal decision or for redress from some abuse of authority. In this instance, however, felonious officials seek to entrap both Daniel and the king by having the king issue a decree regarding prayer. The king is not solving an abuse of authority situation. Rather, he is unwittingly participating in one. This is an ironic reversal of the usual scenario, which highlights both the despicable cunning of royal officials and the naiveté and gullibility of the king.

These narratives recount several direct and reported royal decrees, as well as a proclamation of a royal decree and a report of such (Dan. 2.5-6, 8-9, 12-13; 3.4-6, 29; 4.6; 5.7, 29; 6.8-10, 26-27). These various decree subgenres are full of humor. First, the subject matter of each of the decrees and proclamations is ridiculous. They deal with dream or apparition interpretation and the reward and punishments related thereto (Dan. 2.5-6, 8-9, 12-13; 4.6; 5.7, 29), coercive obeisance to the king (Dan. 3.4-6; 6.8-10), or a call for obeisance to the Hebrew God (Dan. 3.29; 6.26-27). None involve normative legal administration, economic reforms, land grants, civic improvements, declarations of war or other matters concerning international relations, or any other subject matter typical to royal decrees. The third type of decree, that demands allegiance to the Hebrew God, is the most peculiar of all. Peter W. Coxon calls the decree of Daniel 6 'preposterous'.[23] Second, in Daniel 6, Darius is manipulated into issuing an irrevocable decree (Dan. 6.8-10), and one that turns out to be in opposition to his wishes at that (Dan. 6.16). The king is clearly a royal who can be managed. Third, the decree is irrevocable, something unlikely in real legal affairs because of the king's power. Coxon notes the repetition of the phrase, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians which cannot be revoked in relation to this decree in Dan. 6.9 and Dan. 6.13 (cf. Dan. 6.16) and notes that the language is 'grandiloquently worded' in terms of the law.[24] The officials set this decree in the context of both domestic and foreign law, making it bigger than the king. It is possible that he cannot revoke it because it moves beyond his sphere of influence in Median and Persian law. Preposterous is an excellent choice of words. Fourth, Daniel seems not to take royal decrees terribly seriously. For instance, he asks of Arioch in Dan. 2.15, 'Why is the decree of the king so urgent?' as though royal decrees are not or should not be immediately effective. Moreover, he continues to pray, knowing about Darius' decree

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23. Coxon, 'List' Genre', pp. 95-121 (111).
24. Coxon, 'List' Genre', pp. 95-121 (111).

prohibiting it, in Dan. 6.11. He stands above them or at least apart from them. True royal decrees are, however, a matter of some importance and are not so lightly disregarded. Fifth, each king's attempt to wield royal power is subverted by circumstances or direct refusal. Kings issue decrees in an attempt to determine the meaning of dreams and apparitions (Dan. 2.5-6, 8-9; 4.6; 5.7). In every case, his counselors are unable to meet his demands, and the king offers rewards and/or punishments related to the rendering of the interpretation. Daniel 2 records both lavish rewards and the threat of personal harm and violence against those who are unable to fulfill his orders (Dan. 2.8-9, 12-13). Daniel 5, on the other hand, promises only an extravagant reward (Dan. 5.7). It takes a Judean to bring the king satisfaction. Both Daniel 3 and 6 reflect, in contrast, the impotence of the king to attain full obeisance when the Hebrew subjects refuse to do so. In both circumstances, heavenly intervention prevents the decree from being enforceable Every royal decree and command goes somehow unfulfilled except those related to the blessing of the Hebrew God or the reward of his servants (Dan. 3.29; 5.29; 6.26-27). The narrative result is the diminishment of the reputation of the king.

The royal epistles in Daniel (Dan. 4.1-37; 6.26-28) are also strange. Daniel 4 begins with a standard Aramaic letter or epistle greeting form. The structure of the sender's name (Nebuchadnezzar) before the recipients (to all the peoples, tribes and languages), followed by an initial greeting (may your peace abound!), is typical of standard Neo-Babylonian and Persian correspondence style. The same structure is present in Dan. 6.26-28. Here the sender is King Darius, the recipients are all peoples and nations of every language throughout the whole world, and the initial greeting is 'may you have abundant prosperity'. The greetings of both Daniel 4 and 6 reflect that these are epistles rather than a true letter. The epistle is distinguished from the true letter by the epistle's public character. In the case of royal senders, it may convey a royal decree.[25] In this instance, this is an epistolary form because the king is sending the communication to the public. In ancient Mesopotamian, Hebrew, and Aramaic letters, the blessing in the greeting was usually sufficient to conclude the introductory matters of the letter.[26] In Hellenistic times, however, the blessing of the greeting was usually followed by a more extended thanksgiving or prayer of some sort as we see in Dan. 4.2-3.[27]

Nonetheless, this thanksgiving is odd. First, the Babylonian king offers it to the Hebrew deity. The praise of the Hebrew God by a Babylonian

25. Coxon, 'List' Genre', pp. 95-121 (109).

26. See Dennis Pardee, 'Letters (Hebrew)', *ABD* IV: pp. 282-85 (283-84); Paul E. Dion, 'Letters (Aramaic)', *ABD* IV: pp. 285-90 (286-87).

27. Jerry L. Summey, 'Letter', in David N. Freedman *et al.* (eds.), *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), pp. 801-802.

monarch is the height of incongruity. Second, such thanksgivings customarily included a health wish for the recipients or similar kinds of matters.[28] This is not present in Dan. 4.3, which is entirely focused on the blessing received by King Nebuchadnezzar, the epistle's sender. The epistle of Daniel 6 has no thanksgiving at all. It jumps right into the body of the letter, more in line with more ancient Mesopotamian, Hebrew, and Aramaic letters. Both Daniel letters have bodies. The greetings of these epistles indicate that what should follow is a royal communiqué of great importance. Yet, the messages of Daniel 4 and 6 are inappropriate. They contain three more doxologies to the Hebrew God (Dan. 4.3, 34-35; 37; 6.26-27), one in the form of a decree (Dan. 6.26-27). Furthermore, Nebuchadnezzar's account involving the fallen tree and the animal transformation in Daniel 4 is clearly not the expected communication from a powerful king to his people. It relays instead Nebuchadnezzar's fantastic and severe humiliation at the hands of the Hebrew God and his repentance over his pride. Buchanan suggests that, 'It [Daniel 4] is designed to make the most powerful of the gentiles look stupid and be forced to recognize the superiority of Judaism'.[29] This is further evidence that Daniel 4 is a parody of the king's power. Finally, neither letter has a proper closing after the body, which might include a final greeting, adjuration, benediction, and/or signature. Daniel 1–6 commandeers the epistle, using defective forms, to make fun of the king. The royal letter, a serious and authoritative type of official announcement, normally used to communicate the wishes and commands of the king and thus bolster the power and fear of king and kingdom, is parodied to portray the kings in an unflattering manner. By introducing this chapter with the use of one of the most recognized forms of royal communication, the royal epistolary formula, the author has shocked the audience and ridiculed authority.[30] Once again the genre is shaped and molded into an unexpected and therefore extremely powerful indictment of imperial might.

Daniel 4 is an epistle that contains a historical review. This is just one of the many historical reviews of Daniel (Dan. 1.1-2; 4.4-36; 5.2, 11-12, 15, 18-21). Nebuchadnezzar states in Dan. 4.2: 'The signs and wonders of the Most High God has worked for me I am pleased to recount'. Then, he does so. The letter from v. 4 to v. 36 is a review of his personal history with God. Only when he declares: 'Now, I Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor

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28. Summey, 'Letter', p. 801.

29. Buchanan, *Daniel*, p. 108. Montgomery also notes that this letter is historically absurd (*Daniel*, p. 222).

30. Seow observes a further irony in that 'the signs and wonders of the Most High God' resonates with the Exodus story, a narrative of deliverance from foreign enslavement (*Daniel*, p. 65). Fewell sees Nebuchadnezzar's self-portrayal as a spokesperson of the Most High as an act of unmitigated gall and irony given that he is the destroyer of Jerusalem (*Circle of Sovereignty: Plotting Politics*, p. 64).

the King of heaven…' in v. 37 does he come into the present moment. The most important of the historical reviews within this book may be, however, the one found in Dan. 1.1-2. This historical review recounts Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Jerusalem, his destruction of the temple, and his seizing of the temple vessels. This pericope gives the historical setting for the rest of the Daniel stories. Daniel 5 has many historical reviews, including a recounting of Dan. 1.2 in 5.2, where the narrator relates that the vessels that Belshazzar is going to use as party utensils were captured by his father. The queen mother offers another historical review when she discusses bringing Daniel in to solve the meaning of the apparition in Dan. 5.11-12. Belshazzar gives yet another one when he explains to Daniel that the wise men have failed to interpret the dream in Dan. 5.15. Daniel recounts history back to Belshazzar in Dan. 5.18-21 when he extols the virtues, failings, and punishments of Belshazzar's father. The use of the historical review subgenre plays a significant role in the book in terms of setting up the stories and making important connections between them. Historical reviews help to create a sense of unity across the stories.

This study has noted that the king issues royal decrees to offer either reward or retribution for meeting or failing to meet his requirements. This schema of reward or retribution is present in Dan. 2.5-6, 9; 3.15-16 and 5.16; although this last verse only promises a reward and not the retribution for failure. This schema typically relies on 'if' clauses to set up the reward and retribution: 'If you do X, you will get Y reward. If you do not do X, you will get Z punishment'. The book of Daniel plays with this subgenre in Dan. 3.17-18, where Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego declare, 'If our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire and out of your hand, O king, let him deliver us. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods and we will not worship the golden statue that you have set up'. The form is similar. God will be the one who offers true reward or retribution to them. They will submit themselves to God alone. They resist the two choices the king offers them by giving themselves two others based in God. This both parodies the form and resists the king. In the end, burdens and blessings stem from God.

Daniel and his friends manage to receive the king's rewards and avoid retribution. With the schema of reward and the prosperity formula, the narrator reports that the king gives several rewards to Daniel and his friends (Dan. 1.19; 2.48-49; 3.30; 5.29) and that Daniel continues to prosper at the royal court, presumably because of royal favor (Dan. 6.29). Promotion of inferiors and the bestowal of rewards on them was an important royal function of the king. What is most surprising in such uses of these subgenres is that Daniel and/or his friends are the ones promoted, not the kings' officials. Daniel and his compatriots are advanced because they are beyond compare (Dan. 1.19). They can interpret dreams and apparitions (Dan. 2.48-49; 5.29)

and are favored by their God (Dan. 2.48-49; 3.30; 6.29). These are not the typical requirements for regular advancement in the royal court. Furthermore, God often grants prosperity in the Hebrew Bible. To the extent that kings bestow prosperity on a person, they are often merely the instruments of God. While Daniel's prosperity appears to be granted by the king, it is the Hebrew God who truly grants it. It is surprising that Nebuchadnezzar also reports his prosperity (Dan. 4.4). His prosperity is not, however, from God. Rather, God disrupts it by turning him into an animal. These uses of the schema of reward and prosperity formula reflect the ongoing power struggle between the kings and the Hebrew deity, which the deity is clearly winning.

It is interesting to note that the final line of Daniel 1–6 reads, 'So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian'. Although this contains both a report of prosperity and a time formula, it sounds very much like, 'And he lived happily ever after'. Does this support the argument that Daniel 1–6 is a fairy tale? Not likely. Daniel 1–6 certainly shares with the *märchen* royal settings, trials of young people, fantastic events, heroic actions and miraculous deeds, and miraculous and/or bizarre transformations. Nevertheless, the world of the *märchen* is commonly a place where unreality predominates, the limitations of space, time and causality are unknown, and places and characters are often nameless. The Daniel stories are set in realistic places and times. The fact that part or all of Daniel 1–6 has been confused with the historical wisdom tale or historical chronicle indicates that *märchen* is not an appropriate genre designation to any or all of Daniel 1–6.

These stories also contain several references to prayers (Dan. 2.17-18; 6.11-12, 17) and doxologies (Dan. 2.20-23, 47; 3.28; 4.3, 34-35, 37; 6.26-27) to the Hebrew God. The Judeans' prayers and doxologies in Dan 2.17-18, 20-23; and 6.11-12 are quite traditional. Daniel and his friends petition their God in times of distress (Dan. 2.17-18) and with regular expressions of devotion and praise (Dan. 6.11-12). Daniel's prayer in chapter 2 sets in motion God's divine intervention with Nebuchadnezzar. These reports of prayer are not unusual or unexpected as the Hebrews model faithful actions. The doxology in Daniel 2.20-23 is sometimes seen as an insertion into the text by commentators, but it is not out of character for a Hebrew to express such sentiments.[31] The unexpected is that the ancient Near Eastern kings follow suit. All the remaining expressions of praise and fealty toward the Hebrew deity (Dan. 3.28; 4.3, 34-35, 37; 6.26-27) issue from the mouths of the various kings. Nebuchadnezzar falls down in worship toward Daniel

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31. Collins sees the prayer as appropriate (*Daniel*, p. 160). W. Sibley Towner argues that the overall text is essentially coherent ('The Poetic Passages of Daniel 1–6', pp. 317-26 [326]).

in Dan. 2.47 after receiving divine judgment upon future kingdoms. He shouts a hymn of praise after witnessing a miraculous deliverance that foils his plan to execute those who do not worship him (Dan. 3.28). He writes an epistle with hymnic celebrations of the debasing judgment experienced for his pride (Dan. 4.3, 34-35, 37). Darius offers up hymnic language in an epistle and proclamation report after he too witnesses a miraculous deliverance (Dan. 6.26-27). These regents are depicted as followers of the God of their captives. Of special interest is Darius' direct plea to the Hebrew deity for mercy upon Daniel as he enters the lion's den (Dan. 6.17). It is anomalous for a foreign monarch to pray to the Hebrew deity for mercy. This unexpected act reinforces the powerlessness of the king and seriously questions his supposed authority and the efficacy of the imperial religious system. All this contravenes normal religious protocols for ancient Near Eastern kings, spoofing the leading religious responsibilities of such royalty. The text completely mutes whatever words of praise they might have sung to their own gods. The doxology form is being utilized in such a way as to bring dishonor upon the king.

Daniel 2.46 reports a ritual sacrifice that Nebuchadnezzar orders. Offerings of grain and incense are normally made to one of the gods in the ancient Near Eastern pantheon, but instead it and an associated prayer are offered to Daniel in worship. This is completely absurd. If any human is to be worshiped, it is typically the king, which is precisely what the king will request in Dan. 3.4-6. Many commentators are distressed by the fact that Daniel does not object to the king's worship of him. What they miss is the satirical nature of the text and the import of the human-human reversal. This text reverses the status of the Hebrew slave and the Babylonian king in Babylonian civil religion and is another play on Hebrew Bible reports of ritual sacrifice.

Daniel 1–6 also utilizes in peculiar ways subgenres related to God's actions in the world. The dreams, visions, and apparition reports (Dan. 2.29-35; 3.25; 4.9-18; 5.5) and the narratives that refer to such phenomena (Dan. 2.19, 28; 4.5) in Daniel 1–6 have a number of unusual characteristics. First, the dreams and apparition of the hand in Daniel 2, 4, and 5 are actually oracles that predict the future. In each case, however, readers do not know that fact immediately because it is unclear that they are related to future events. For example, only later in Dan. 2.29 does the narrative clearly establish that Nebuchadnezzar's dream is a portent of the future. The interpretation confirms that fact, especially Daniel's summary in v. 45. Verses 29 and 45, the oracle reports, form an inclusio around the interpretation of the oracular dream. The delay in discovering the oracular nature of the dream is not common. Second, people often seek oracles rather than oracles seeking them, although unsought oracular reports exist in the Hebrew Bible. Third, the oracles come from the Hebrew deity rather than their own gods. Fourth,

both Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar have non-oracular visionary experiences. Daniel has a night vision of Nebuchadnezzar's dream and its interpretation in Dan. 2.18-19. Nebuchadnezzar reports that he sees one like a god walking with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the furnace in Dan. 3.25. Daniel also sees an angel who delivers him from the lion's jaws (6.23). In both Daniel 3 and 6, the angelic visions have miraculous results and constitute aretalogical narratives. Daniel and his friends are delivered from their intended executions. These do not, however, create the fear that the other dreams, visions, and apparitions create in the kings. In fact, Darius celebrates Daniel's deliverance (Dan. 6.24). Hence, these non-oracular visions serve as the standard against which to measure the dread that the kings feel when confronted by the oracles. Further, it should be noted that the king does not need his angelic apparition interpreted for him. He understands instantaneously that the three friends have been saved and calls out to them (Dan. 3.26). The future perplexes and panics these kings.

The kings' alarm in the face of the oracular material also raises idiosyncrasies in the dream or apparition interpretation subgenre present in Daniel 1–6 (Dan. 2.36-45; 4.19-26; 5.18-28). First, royal dream interpretations are usually positive whenever possible. It is unusual that an interpretation is negative. The fact that the kings receive negative interpretations is strange. Second, somehow these kings also know trouble is brewing and are afraid before they hear the interpretation, which should be unexpected given the normal pattern of dream interpretation. Still other aspects of the interpretations are unusual. The king reacts oddly and violently in Daniel 2, first demanding that the counselors tell him both the content and interpretation of the dream, then impetuously condemning all the wise men of the kingdom to death for the inability of those present to meet his wishes. The request for the dream's content and the threat of execution are not typical of dream reports and help to establish the characterization of the king as unreasonable and volatile. While the Daniel 4 dream account is true to form because the king reports the contents and does not condemn anyone to death, both dreams are remarkable because of their fantastic images and the resultant explanations, judgment upon the king. The scene in Daniel 5 is among the most judgmental in the entire Hebrew Bible. Daniel alone among all the wise men of the kingdom can interpret the dreams and apparitions, and the interpretations are uniformly negative for the king. In spite of this negativity, however, the royal reaction is to reward Daniel and to praise the Hebrew deity. The dream report and interpretation forms are creatively subverted in the Menippean construct as parodies of normal royal dream accounts to indicate judgment upon the king.

Two of the stories contain forms and references that are elements of the larger trial subgenre. Ancient Near Eastern trials are typically composed

of procedural stages.[32] These include the accusation, summons, interrogation, defendant statement, introduction of other witness statements and evidence if necessary, verdict, and execution of judgment. In narrative trials, a description of the crime or crime report may precede the literary trial itself. The trials in Dan. 3.8-23 and 6.13-18, 25 parody the archetypal ancient Near Eastern trial to satirical ends. First, both trial reports do not report that the normal stages occur. In Daniel 3, the accusation (Dan. 3.8-12), defendant summons (Dan. 3.13), and interrogation (Dan. 3.14-15) are all present. Then a demand and refusal for compliance follows (Dan. 3.15). This is not typical. A court would not demand compliance before receiving the defendant's testimony and rendering the verdict. The defendants, when confronted with the demand, refuse to comply and assert that they will not offer a defense to the case. Instead, these defendants make a bold refusal to comply, creating a martyrological refusal (Dan. 3.16-19) that is itself a parody on the reward and retribution scheme of the king. Their refusal to follow expected legal protocol brings disapprobation upon the king's legal system and procedures and is a direct affront to the king's power and dignity. The reaction of unconstrained rage may be a somewhat understandable response to such a disrespectful act. The king, therefore, issues his verdict to condemn the men by fire (Dan. 3.19-20) and attempts to execute judgment (Dan. 3.21-23). It is farcical that those soldiers who toss the three into the furnace are themselves torched and the three defendants come out unscathed (Dan. 3.24-25). This literary trial seeks to lampoon the king's mechanism of justice.

The scene in Daniel 6 unfolds in a similar manner. This trial is preceded by a lengthy crime report wherein we learn of the conspiracy of the king's officials (Dan. 6.1-14). His advisors manipulate the king and demonstrate his weakness. The officials then falsely accuse Daniel (Dan. 6.13-14). Daniel is not, however, immediately summoned to stand trial. There is no interrogation, no martyrological demand, and no defendant statement. Instead, we learn that the king is frantically attempting to avoid the suit (Dan. 6.15-16), but by what means? The typical response would be to issue a summons to Daniel, interrogate him, and let him speak in his defense. The most commonsensical and the legally demanded reaction is overlooked entirely. He could also simply overturn the decree. In this story, Darius is forced to uphold a supposedly inviolable decree. It is possible, therefore, to picture him childishly and impotently wringing his hands, wailing,

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32. Magdalene, 'On the Scales', p. 57, points out that rarely does an ancient Near Eastern trial record set forth every procedural stage. Not even literary trials will necessarily describe every stage. Nonetheless, these stages generally occurred in every trial. In the book of Daniel, a close reading of both trials indicates that the author is aware of full trial procedure, but is parodying the normal steps.

'Lions and Felines and Cats! Oh my!' So it is that Daniel is convicted (Dan. 6.17), finally summoned (Dan. 6.17) and cast to the lions in execution of the verdict (Dan. 6.18). Again, divine intervention foils the execution of judgment (Dan. 6.23-24). The officials and their families suffer execution instead for false suit (Dan. 6.25).

Both of these lawsuits result in a conviction on a capital crime. Capital punishment is the definitive expression of state power and control. Capital punishment is the ultimate tool in empire building. The divine intervention that prevents the implementation of the death sentences is a final subversive reversal and parody of the entire imperial legal system. The heroes are saved and the guilty or complicit die in their stead. Innocent families become unwitting and legally unnecessary sacrifices to the cruelty of empires.[33] The true martyrs of the story are most unexpected, and they rarely gain our notice. These lawsuit reversals are parodies of one of the most important royal functions of ancient Near Eastern kings and cut off the most important source of their power. Both the trial and martyrology subgenres are subverted in order to subvert empire.

Human lawsuits are not the only lawsuits in the book of Daniel as God initiates his own suits. Both Daniel 4 and 5 reflect the covenantal lawsuit genre (Dan. 4.13-17, 20-33; 5.18-28, 30). God tries both Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar offstage. Nothing is known about it until judgment is pronounced. In divine trials, the defendant does not always know the charges, is rarely summoned and interrogated, and rarely gets to speak in his or her own defense or present witnesses. The person charged usually only discovers that verdict has been rendered because they suffer some calamity. It is the same in the book of Daniel. The divine verdicts against Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar are announced at Dan. 4.13-17, 24-26 and 5.18-28, respectively. Here, however, the kings do get advance notice. Nebuchadnezzar receives an admonition from Daniel that the king might obviate execution of the judgment in Dan. 4.27. Alas, he does not heed the warning and the verdict is consequently made effective one year later. Nebuchadnezzar turns into an animal (Dan. 4.28-33) with the use of a fulfillment formula in Dan. 4.33. It is fortunate that Nebuchadnezzar learns his lesson and the judgment is revoked. He is restored to himself as reported in Dan. 4.34, 36. This is an instance of the schema of reprieve subgenre, wherein the text reports that a character has committed a sin, received a divine reproach, and experienced a final divine mitigation of the punishment. Belshazzar is not so lucky. He dies the very night the judgment is revealed. He receives no admonition. He has no opportunity to right his wrong. All is lost. What is most striking

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33. The only known biblical example where families die in punishment for false suit is in 1 Kgs 21.1-29, where Ahab and Jezebel's descendants die because they executed Naboth's descendants in the false suit against him.

about the use of this subgenre is the fantastic judgment upon Nebuchadnezzar for pride. The calamities suffered are typically in the nature of illness, early death, drought, crop failure, and the like, such as what Belshazzar suffered. Turning Nebuchadnezzar into an animal demonstrates the satirical use of this subgenre. Further, the punishment is not assessed against him because he took God's people and vessels captive. Rather, the punishment is instituted because Nebuchadnezzar has not understood that he is a mere instrument of the Hebrew deity. Belshazzar dies for desecrating the vessels, a serious affront to God. Why are Nebuchadnezzar's actions not an equal offense? An ideology stands behind the difference between Nebuchadnezzar's and Belshazzar's convictions. In the text, Nebuchadnezzar is God's instrument and Belshazzar is not. The text challenges readers to ask why this is so.

The classical forms and use of many common biblical genres are commandeered and combined by the menippea form of Daniel 1–6 in order to bring scorn upon the king and his kingdom. These many subgenres are interwoven with story narrative, dialogue, and speeches. Moreover, in Daniel 1–6, subgenres are built around other subgenres, which are built around still other subgenres. Some verses contain two or more subgenres or reflect more than one subgenre simultaneously. These genres cross both poetic and prose forms as is common to the menippea. Daniel 4 even offers us a repetition in prose of a prior account in verse when Daniel reiterates part of Nebuchadnezzar's dream with minor variations (see, e.g., Dan. 4.20b reiterating Dan. 4.12-13).[34] This is only one of the doublings found in Daniel.

Some of the forms themselves account for another type of doubling. For example, the historical review causes a reiterative type of doubling. Furthermore, forms themselves are often doubled as the chart and discussion of Daniel's subgenres reveal. Very few of the subgenres occur only once within Daniel 1–6. This too brings all the diverse parts into a Menippean unity. Both the doubling of the forms and content of Daniel 1–6, and the pyramiding of the many subgenres of the book suggest that Daniel 1–6 should not be regarded as six separate stories. It is not a typical ancient Near Eastern story collection. Rather, it is an intentionally constructed unit made up of six stories. The story form itself is one more subgenre used in furtherance of a Menippean undermining of the power of empire. The connectedness of the various stories is not as tight as modern readers might like. Seams exist between and within the stories. Yet, the looseness or roughness of Menippean construction is emblematic of it. Thus, the presence of parodied, ideologically driven, inserted genres proves that Daniel 1–6 exhibits the 13th characteristic in Bakhtin's understanding of the menippea.

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34. Coxon, ' "List" Genre', pp. 95-121 (114-15).

The final question regarding the inserted genres is whether the text uses them successfully to create a dialogic multi-toned, multi-styled and/or multi-voiced work. This analysis of the parodying of the subgenres of Daniel 1–6 suggests that they contribute to a number of different ideologies, tones, styles, and voices that often conflict. First and of most importance, the Judeans and their God reflect a political ideology that is consistently at odds with the political ideology of empire. The parodying of genres produces a lampooning of the king. The king moves between power and impotence, courage and fear, independence and dependency, control of others and being controlled, wisdom and idiocy, grand displays of himself and humiliating displays of himself, and a focus on self and a focus on powers greater than himself. The expected royal demeanor, originally held by the king in Daniel 1, is shattered by the narrative, dialogues, and parodied subgenres. Daniel has the unified personality. Daniel is in control. The inserted genres assist the carnivalistic, oxymoronic role reversals between the kings and our heroes. Imperial government, law, and economics are all subject to mockery. In these things, the authority of empire and its claim to truth are subverted.

In addition, the royal role as chief religious functionary of the empire is scorned through the absolute silencing of that voice. The text therefore sets up another ideological conflict among the pantheon of the ancient Near Eastern gods who lurk wordlessly offstage in the reader's mind, the self-aggrandizing religion of the kings in Daniel, and the true faith of the Judean heroes of the text.[35]

Furthermore, by parodying so many traditional biblical genres, the text mocks not only empire, but also traditional forces within Judah. Nothing is sacred in the menippea; not oracles, visions, apparitions, miracles, prayers, doxologies, sacrifices, fasts, martyrdom, human views of retributive justice, or religious literature of any kind. The only thing worthy of real worship is God. One suspects that the true targets of this derision are those powerful religious persons of Judea who were cooperating with imperial domination. It is as though the officials of Darius' court symbolize capitulating, cooperating, and conniving Judean officials who stand against true persons of faith and resistance. Such officials deserve to come to a quick end in the lions' pit. The text offers a smorgasbord of values and ideas that the reader might consider. In this way, the text disrupts the authoritarian objectivism of the monolog. It undermines controlling authorities and voices. It challenges any sense there is of official truth—imperial or Judean. It offers a

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35. J. Perčíková, 'The Character of Political Power in Assyria', in P. Vabroušek and V. Souček (eds.), *Šulmu: Papers on the Ancient Near East Presented at International Conference of Socialist Countries. Prague 30 September to 3 October, 1986* (Prague: Univerzita Karlova, 1988), pp. 243-53.

covert, subversive, indirect resistance to empire and any who support it. As a consequence, the inserted genres of Daniel 1–6 meet the last characteristic of the Menippean form.

There is one last issue to explore, however, before asserting that Daniel 1–6 is an example of the menippea. It should contain multiple voices and languages that serve satirical, dialogic, and ideological ends, the second part of the 14th characteristic of the menippea.

3. *Menippea's Multiple Languages*

The presence of two major languages in Daniel that do not correspond to accepted generic boundaries is probably the most difficult question in Daniel research. This perplexing and persistent problem as yet admits no adequate solution. The existence of Aramaic in Daniel continues to puzzle scholars. Attempts to explain the development of the text diachronically by means of various source theories has led to an impasse.[36] Others explain the change through reference to the translation history of the book.[37] This has led to more gridlock.

New synchronic narratological and social theories have attempted to explain the presence of the two languages. One of these posits the change as context-driven.[38] Arnaud Sérandour argues that Hebrew represents a local and sacred idiom while Aramaic signifies the official international and political language of profane use. Thus, when the king's servants begin to speak in Dan. 2.4b, they naturally speak in Aramaic, representing the official language of the royal court. The text simply reflects this expected state of affairs and lends authenticity to the account.[39] Hedwige Rouillard-Bonraisin suggests that the language division is a function of openness and hiddenness.[40] 'Le bilinguisme en Daniel tient à l'histoire de la rédaction et au statur des langues de l'époque, mais son état actuel reste indissociable du genre apocalyptique. Globalement il appert que l'araméen est la langue de l'élucidation, et l'hébreu celle du secret'.[41] Her argument is that over time Aramaic became the more commonly spoken language while Hebrew

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36. For good summaries of these issues in Daniel, see Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, pp. 24-38; and Redditt, *Daniel*, pp. 20-34.

37. For a good summary, see Collins, *Daniel*, pp. 12-13.

38. Daniel C. Snell, 'Why Is There Aramaic In The Bible?', *JSOT* 18 (1980), pp. 32-51.

39. 'Hebreu et Araméen dans la Bible', *REJ* 159 (2000), pp. 345-55.

40. 'Problemes du bilinguisme en Daniel', in *Mosaïque de langues, mosaïque culturelle: le bilinguisme dans le Proche-Orient ancien* (ed. Francoise Briquel-Chatonnet; Paris: Jean Maisonneuve, 1996), pp. 145-70.

41. Roulliard-Bonraisin, 'Bilinguisme en Daniel', pp. 145-70 (170).

became more progressively a language of the elite.[42] The Aramaic stories, recounting the distant past, are retained in that language because they are popular. The apocalyptic visions are written in Hebrew because they deal with currently sensitive and dangerous political realities.[43] Both of these proposals are intriguing. Sérandour and Rouillard-Bonraisin acknowledge that when two or more national languages exist in a culture they each embed an ideology, as Bakhtin proposes. In the multicultural, polyglottal world of the Hellenistic Judea, language was an important indicator of self-identity.[44] The preservation of indigenous languages was a means of cultural and nationalistic conservation.[45] Moreover, evidence exists that, throughout history, in times of crisis Hebrew literature consistently revived as an expression of resistance and survival.[46] It may be an overstatement on Rouillard-Bonraisin's part to consider Hebrew as a language for keeping secrets and thus inaccessible to outsiders. The multicultural nature of Hellenistic society precludes the plausibility of such a scenario. Nevertheless, Rouillard-Bonraisin's instincts are correct that this document purposefully utilizes several languages. The recognition that languages are carriers of ideology assists the book in relaying its message.

A more recent argument suggests that the change to Aramaic occurs because of literary artistic considerations related to ideology. Bill T. Arnold contends that the author uses Hebrew and Aramaic intentionally in order to express differing ideological perspectives.[47] The two languages are utilized as rhetorical devices to express the narrator's shifting point of view, and it plays a large compositional role in Daniel. He explicates that, in Daniel 1, the author's point of view is evident on two levels. First, the author is internal to the narrative as revealed by the consistent use of the Hebrew names

42. Roulliard-Bonraisin, 'Bilinguisme en Daniel', pp. 145-70 (149).

43. 'Dans ce contexte, la réaction nationale responsable des passages hébraïques de Daniel s'inscrirait sous le sceau du secret. De langue populaire, l'hébreu deviendrait langue d'initiés. La plupart des visions, énoncées dans cette langue, sont d'ailleurs présentées comme devant être tenues secrètes. Face au tyran qui se regardait, présentait et représentait comme la manifestation terrestre (*epiphanès* sur les monnaies), de Zeus Olympien, la seule arme susceptible à la fois de résister et de galvaniser la résistance était l'énigme, son contraire. L'hébreu se fait l'instrument, et d'une interdiction, et d'une communication, cette dernière étant réservée aux seuls initiés' (Roulliard-Bonraisin, 'Bilinguisme en Daniel', pp. 145-70 [162]).

44. Martin S. Jaffee, *Early Judaism* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1997), p. 37.

45. Doron Mendels, *The Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1992), p. 17.

46. David Aberbach, *Revolutionary Hebrew, Empire, and Crisis: Four Peaks in Hebrew Literature and Jewish Survival* (New York: New York University Press, 1998).

47. 'The Use Of Aramaic', pp. 1-16.

for Daniel's friends throughout Daniel 1. Second, the author's assessment
of Daniel's determination to resist the royal diet in v. 8 and the report of
God's blessings toward the Hebrew heroes in v. 17 indicates that the chap-
ter's ideological point of view is clearly oriented toward Daniel and his
friends. Thus, the author's internal position, both phraseologically and ideo-
logically, is consonant with the use of Hebrew in the opening chapter of this
bilingual document.[48] The point of view clearly shifts, however, in Daniel
2. First, while Daniel 1 opens with a Judean date formula, Daniel 2 begins
with a Neo-Babylonian one. Second, the narrator is moving toward an exter-
nal viewpoint manifested in part by the use of actual rather than reported
speech. Daniel 2.4b begins with the words of the courtiers of Nebuchadnez-
zar, who speak flattering words about the king even as they try to hide their
inability to meet his requests. When the king's servants begin to speak, it
appears that they naturally speak in Aramaic, the official language of the
court, and the text is simply reflecting this expected state of affairs. The
switch to Aramaic in v. 2.4b confirms the shift of the narrator's point of
view to the external.[49] The use of two languages lends authenticity to the
account and contributes to the literary artistry in the composition of these
court tales.[50] The use of both Hebrew and Aramaic, as well as the smattering
of Greek, in the book of Daniel is intentional, and it serves both artistic and
ideological purposes.[51] This new movement in Daniel studies concerning
its multilingualism is going in the right direction. The following analysis
builds upon this prior work.

According to Bakhtin, there are two extremely important factors in the
prehistory of novelistic discourse, laughter and hetero- or polyglossia.[52]
Bakhtin argues that every prenovelistic literary creation has the attribute
of heteroglossia or the presence of multiple conflicting voices in a text.[53]
This is typically indicated by the presence of different ideological voices
in the text, and occasionally made obvious by the presence of two different

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48. Arnold, 'The Use of Aramaic', pp. 1-16 (10-11).

49. Arnold, 'The Use of Aramaic', pp. 1-16 (11-13). This point of view of a detached
distanced observer continues until the end of the Aramaic section through Daniel 7.
Arnold argues that the point of view in chapter 7 continues to be external even though
the genre changes from court tale to vision report.

50. A number of scholars argue that literary artistry is a primary factor in the com-
position of Daniel. For example, see Goldingay, 'Story, Vision, Interpretation', pp.
295-313; Lacocque, *Daniel In His Time*, pp. 8-12; and Lenglet, 'La structure littéraire
de Daniel 2–7', pp. 169-90.

51. In addition to the Hebrew and Aramaic, Greek words appear in Dan. 3.3-5 in the
enumeration of the musical instruments.

52. Bakhtin, 'Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagi-
nation* pp. 41-83 (50).

53. Vice, *Introducing Bakhtin*, pp. 18-44.

sociological or even national languages.[54] This is also true of the pren-ovelistic menippea. The menippea is a multi-styled, multi-toned, and/or multi-voiced work based on the presence of multiple genres, voices, and/or multiple languages in dialogue with one another. The Menippean construct compels new ways for thinking about the use of the multiple languages in Daniel. Are the languages an intentional aspect of the text, an integral part of its Menippean heteroglossic and dialogic nature?

Menippean creations are characterized by an organic unity of seemingly very heterogeneous features.[55] This study demonstrates the preponderance of Menippean satirical characteristics throughout the stories of Daniel, including the broad use of inserted genres that create a conflict of ideas and an atmosphere of parody and judgment. The use of several languages is therefore most likely a purposeful rhetorical and literary strategy in the formation of this narrative that contributes to its heteroglossic ideologi-cal conflicts. Language is ideological because it is an expression of con-textualized social interaction and embodies a distinct view of the world. The interanimation and contestation of languages may, therefore, provide a venue for the testing of ideas.[56] Language is the medium through which an alternative reality may be experienced. Bakhtin states of language in prenovelistic forms, 'Language is transformed from the absolute dogma it had been within the narrow framework of a sealed-off and impermeable monoglossia into a working hypothesis for comprehending and expressing reality'.[57] These languages also in all likelihood contribute to the book's satirical humor. As Bakhtin's delightful quote at the beginning of this chapter indicates, laughter and criticism suggest digging beneath surface indications to capture an alternative reality. The menippea uses and abuses genres, tones, styles, ideologies, monologic truth statements, sacred values, and more in its comical but dogged pursuit of the truth. When considering Daniel 1–6 as a Menippean construction, languages and voices should not be excluded from this list. As a consequence, an exploration of the multiple voices and multiple languages of Daniel 1–6 illustrates how they contribute to the overall Menippean structure and satiric nature of the book.

Multiple voices exist in the Daniel narratives. For Bakhtin, the funda-mental indicator of different voices is the presence of different ideologies. The characters clearly represent very diverse ideologies and therefore voices. Daniel and his friends represent the voice of faithful adherence to the Hebrew God. They seek kosher food to keep them strong, ask for mercy

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54. Bakhtin, 'Discourse In The Novel', in Holquist (ed.), *The Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 259-422 (275).
55. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 119.
56. Bakhtin, *Problem of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 62.
57. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 61.

and intervention in events, are receptive to visions and apparitions from God, seek the interpretations of such, sing hymns to God, pray, and refuse to worship any god but their God, no matter what the cost. The kings, on the other hand, fundamentally are concerned only with themselves. They destroy the Hebrew God's temple, capture his people, and desecrate his possessions. They demand dream interpretations, erect great statues to themselves, make laws in furtherance of their own grandiosity and desires, throw huge banquets… Different ideologies are also manifest in the fact that the heavenly voice of judgment continually casts a pall over the commands and desires of kings. The kings make plans, bark commands, roar decrees, and shout about the magnificence of Babylon. Meanwhile, divine dreams and apparitions portend death and disaster. All will finally be laid to waste. The voice of judgment stymies kings in their every attempt to assert real power. Their voices are cowered. The kings become puppets, singing hymns to the voice of judgment and bestowing favor on the carriers of that voice.

The king's advisors exhibit diverse ideological voices. Some of the king's advisors, such as Ashpenaz and Arioch, are people sympathetic to the Judeans. Others, such as the Chaldeans of Chapter 3 and the satraps of Daniel 6, work against them. These characters are more than bit players, for at some level they must recognize their connivance with the royal captives. They are another expression of the ideological tension in the book. Different ideologies are similarly reflected in the reasoned voices of Daniel and his friends versus the wildly reactive voices of the kings. Daniel's voice, in particular, remains consistently calm and steady throughout the text. The kings' voices, to the contrary, are exploding with inappropriate passions, such as anxiety, fear, rage, and a hysterical worship of the Hebrew God. Except for the officials of chapters 3 and 6 who accuse the Judeans, the kings' officials and family generally try to talk sense into the king or smooth his way.

The voices of different characters thus represent differing levels of wisdom. The wise men of the king are never wise. Daniel, on the other hand, is always wise. Even the queen mother knows this. She too is wise, unlike her husband and son. Moreover, diverse voices are present in different spaces. The royal court scenes, where official, stylized, and solicitous language is the norm, portray voices different from those in the scenes outside the court, such as the discussion between Daniel and Ashpenaz in Daniel 1, where the conversation takes on a more informal and intimate tone, or, in Daniel 3, where open rebellion breaks out. A profound connection between the book's chronotope and vocal tone exists.

The fact that the book of Daniel has both a public and hidden transcript indicates that it is a multi-voiced work. The public transcript carries the voice of cooperation with empire. The hidden transcript carries the voice of resistance. These voices speak simultaneously throughout the narrative.

The voices of rebellion are likewise diverse within Daniel. Most of the time, the voices of resistance are circumspect and remain part of the hidden transcript. Upon occasion, however, they break into the open, as in Daniel 3 and 6 where Daniel and his friends openly defy the kings' decrees regarding worship. Even, however, where open defiance is the rule, there are subtle differences in the voicing of that defiance. The underlying events that lead to the possible deaths of the heroes are quite similar. Yet, in Daniel 3, the king makes a martyrological demand upon Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who then offer an important martyrological refusal. They thereby openly offer themselves as martyrs. Martyrdom is a very effective method of resistance against corrupt legal systems, which Daniel's friends have used.[58] The king in Daniel 6 has a very different response to Daniel's defiance. He prays for mercy over Daniel, and Daniel goes silent into those good jaws. The legal system and the king are just as corrupt in Daniel 6 as they are in Daniel 3—just corrupt in a different way. Nebuchadnezzar is corrupted by power, while Darius is parodied by his impotence. Nevertheless, the Judean's responses are distinct. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes is reported to have once said that even a dog knows the difference between being kicked and being stepped on. It appears that the heroes know the difference between potent and impotent corruption and have different reactions to it.

The voice of the narrator also reflects dialogism. The discussion of Arnold's view noted that the narrator switches from an internal to an external point of view between Daniel 1 and Daniel 2. This is a mark of heteroglossia. Furthermore, the narrator is the only character in the text that uses different social languages within the same national language. He uses official and professional language in telling us most of this story, but he also uses slang in reference to Belshazzar's fear-induced scatatological accident. This incidence of slang is quite grating when set against the usually high register of discourse. It flags that something far beneath royalty has just occurred. For all the high and mighty airs that kings exhibit, they are still quite human with all the frailties that go with it. The different social registers strip the king of any pretensions.

The use of so many different subgenres within Daniel 1–6 is, according to Bakhtin, an expression of heteroglossia. Each subgenre reflects the different voices of its use history. Moreover, the parodying of the form and use history of each genre brings another voice into the text's conversation. Daniel is a virtual chorus of generic voices. This analysis of the many voices of Daniel 1–6 lays bare the heteroglossic satirical nature of the work. The character's voices and actions operate on a number of levels to introduce a series of diverse attitudes, ideological points of view, and narrative tones

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58. Cover, 'Violence and the Word', pp. 1601-29 (1603–1604).

that produce laughter and scorn. In addition, the narrator switches his nar-ratological point of view. He also uses different social registers within one language to contrast two opposing attitudes toward royal status. This too is funny and the parodying of so many biblical genres adds more voices to the textual discourse. In light of these several levels of satiric dialogism in the text, the presence of three languages in Daniel 1–6 logically reflects yet another level of the text's satiric heteroglossia. It is *intentional* to the work.

The ancient Near East had been a polyglot culture for over two millennia before the Hellenistic period. Akkadian and Sumerian sat side by side for centuries, and Akkadian eventually appropriated a great deal of Sumerian in its development.[59] Akkadian became the *lingua franca* in regions where people spoke other languages.[60] Aramaic supplanted Akkadian in that role during the Persian period. [61] After Alexander the Great conquered the area, Greek became the *lingua franca*, but Aramaic, Akkadian, Hebrew, and other languages lived on.[62] The Hellenistic Near East is characterized by a vast and complex polyglossia.[63]

Language development and usage is a fluid process, and languages in polyglot areas can absorb the influence of other languages as indicated above. Polyglots can use their languages in a separate fashion or combine them within a single sentence or speech. Polyglossia is reflected in single written documents early in human history. Archeologists found Sumero-Akkadian interlinear bilingual compositions in Ashurbanipal's library at Nineveh.[64] The Dynastic Chronicle uses both Sumerian and Babylonian traditions in a bilingual form.[65] Letters from el-Amarna reflect 'a kind of creole in which the vocabulary is mostly Akkadian (with some local words and phrases) but the morphology and syntax reflect the local NW Semitic dialects'.[66] In the Persian period, it was common to find Aramaic script written on Neo-Babylonian legal tablets. This intersection of more than one

59. Richard I. Caplice, 'Languages (Akkadian)', *ABD* IV, pp. 170-73 (170).

60. Caplice, 'Languages (Akkadian)', pp. 170-73 (172).

61. Caplice, 'Languages (Akkadian)'; Steven A. Kaufman, 'Languages (Aramaic)', *ABD* IV: pp. 173-78 (174); cf. M.A. Dandamaev and V.G. Lukonin, *The Culture and Social Institutions of Ancient Iran* (ed. and trans. P.L. Kohl; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989 [1980]), pp. 112–16.

62. Kaufman, 'Languages (Aramaic)', pp. 173-78 (174).

63. Kaufman, 'Languages (Aramaic)', pp. 173-78 (173); and Smith-Christopher, 'Daniel', pp. 17-152 (64).

64. Jerrold S. Cooper, 'Sumer, Sumerians', *ABD* VI: pp. 231-34 (231); and William W. Hallo, 'Sumerian Literature', *ABD* VI: pp. 234-36 (234-35).

65. Hallo, 'Sumerian Literature', pp. 234-36 (236); and I. Finkel, 'Bilingual Chron-icle Fragments', *JCS* 32 (1980), pp. 65-80.

66. John Huenhergard, 'Languages: Introductory', *ABD* IV: pp. 155-70 (160).

language in written materials is described as macaronic literature.[67] This phenomenon eventually spread into literature and became especially present in the Middle Ages with the combination of Latin and developing national languages in a variety of literary forms.[68] In this later form, it is common to see the interweaving of the languages throughout the text, which does not appear in the earliest forms of macaronic literature.

Written manifestations of polyglottism are found in the Hebrew Bible. Aramaic is embedded in the Hebrew text in Gen. 31.47 and Jer. 10.11. Ezra 4.8–6.18 and 7.12-26 contains the greatest occurrence of Aramaic in the Hebrew Bible before Daniel. Gerard Mussies discusses the presence of Greek loanwords in the Hebrew Bible, most importantly in 1 Chron. 29.7; Ezra 8.27; Neh. 7.69-71; and Dan. 3.5-7.[69] A mistaken perception exists that macaronic literature is usually the result of a redactional process. This does not, however, have to be the case. The history of literature reveals that some works are originally composed in multiple languages or may quite intentionally have a sprinkling of foreign words.

As explored in Chapter 2 of this study, Bakhtin observes that many pre-novelistic literary forms came into being in the Hellenistic period, eventually becoming the dominant literature. These new genres were responses to the polyglossia of the Hellenistic world. In such an environment, the possibility of macaronic literature could increase radically. He notes that literature in these new genres may use multiple national languages as part of their dialogism. Later compositions of menippea often intermingle different languages or dialects as part of the literary structure and subversive satirical strategy of the work. As a consequence, the mere presence of multiple languages in a single book from the Hellenistic period is not surprising. Because the Hellenistic milieu reflects a time of profound polyglossia, the intermingling of languages, cultures and ideological perspectives animated everyday life. This is reflected in the presence of multiple languages in many different types of texts. The tension between majority and minority cultures created an especially fertile environment where those under subjugation developed various strategies, including literary ones such as serio-comical compositions, to subvert the dominant structures of their time.[70] The reanimation of Hebrew literature in periods of crisis mirrors this peoples' constant reclaiming of their linguistic roots even while they were forced to learn and use the

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67. Bakhtin, 'Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination* pp. 41-83 (78-79).

68. See e.g., Siegfried Wenzel, *Macaronic Sermons: Bilingualism and Preaching in Late-Medieval England (Recentiores: Later Latin Texts and Contexts)* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994).

69. 'Languages (Greek)', *ABD* IV: pp. 195-203 (195-96).

70. Vines, *Markan Genre*, p. 141.

language of the dominant culture. It is therefore quite plausible to maintain that a prenovelistic literary composition of the time could be macaronic. The book of Daniel is an example of one such instance.

The fact that Aramaic was the primary international language of literature and commerce in the ancient Near East for hundreds of years is significant for its' appearance in both of the books of Ezra and Daniel.[71] It is the language of empire. In the book of Ezra, the Aramaic portion first begins at 4.8. Verse 7 states in Hebrew: 'And in the days of Artaxerxes, Bishlam and Mithredath and Tabeel, and the rest of their associates wrote to King Artaxerxes of Persia. The letter was written in Aramaic and translated'. This verse signals that the letter will be in Aramaic, which it is (Ezra 4.11-16)—as is the king's response (Ezra 4.17-22). Other official documents are also in Aramaic within the text. These include: a report from Tattenai and Shethar-bozenai sent to King Darius (Ezra 5.7-17); a decree from King Darius (Ezra 6.3-12); and a letter from King Artaxerxes to Ezra (Ezra 7.12-26). Aramaic conveys official communiqués between the Persian kings and various officials in Yehud in the book of Ezra. Ezra apparently uses two languages to reflect two different literary voices, one the voice of Persian authority. The interweaving of the Aramaic with the Hebrew is unfortunately not perfectly consistent for the surrounding narration is also in Aramaic (Ezra 4.8-10, 23-24; 5.1-6; 6.1-2, 13-18) and one other official communiqué is not in Aramaic, the original order of King Cyrus to build the temple (Ezra 1.2-4). Nonetheless, the lack of precision in this early example of Hebrew macaronic literature does not negate the fact that Aramaic seems to bear the voice of authority and a particular ideology within Ezra.

Aramaic also carries an ideology. The book of Daniel uses Aramaic, the official language of the royal court until the Greek conquest, in some very unofficial ways to express humor and satire toward the king and his empire. The Aramaic conveys a satirical ideological perspective through two fundamental means. The shift to Aramaic in Daniel occurs at a point of reported speech where the counselors respond to the king's request. The king's request in Dan. 2.3 is, however, in Hebrew. If the Aramaic were simply a concession to realism in the report of actual speech, one would expect the Aramaic to begin with the king's request. Instead, it begins with the advisors' response to the king. Daniel Smith-Christopher notes that the counselors' first words, 'O King, live forever!' functions as an ironic statement that sets the predominant satirical tone of Daniel 1–6.[72] Each king who is greeted in this way is in the end humbled in some manner.[73] This

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71. Kaufman, 'Languages (Aramaic,)', pp. 173-78 (173).
72. 'Daniel', pp. 17-152 (51).
73. Other uses of this phrase are found at Dan. 3.9; 5.10; 6.7, 22.

irony provides an important clue that the introduction of Aramaic into the text is more than a simple literary device to inject realism into the dialogue and more than a mere signal of the shift of the narrator's point of view from internal to external. Rather, it is an indication that the Aramaic language is being used in a creative and sarcastic manner.

The extensive use of Aramaic wordplay in Daniel 2–6, explored in Chapter 3 of this study, further demonstrates the text's satirical use of the official language of the court to win an ideological battle with the king. The Aramaic language is manipulated in such a way that it mocks and ridicules the king. His very language is used against him. In this way, the use of Aramaic is itself an act of satire and an integral part of the Menippean structure of Daniel 1–6. Could some equivalent wordplays have been written in Hebrew? Yes, certainly. Daniel 1 also contains wordplays. There is, however, something deliciously wicked and witty in turning the king's official language on him. When the king appears on the scene in full force with direct speech, his advisors begin to betray him in the language of power. This technique enhances the effect of the public versus hidden transcript first revealed in Daniel 1.

The presence of wordplays in both Hebrew and Aramaic also helps resolve another aspect of the language conundrum of Daniel 1–6. The wordplays are one of the most important indices that neither the Hebrew nor Aramaic portions of Daniel 1–6 were translated out of an original in the other language. Most wordplays do not translate well. It is extremely difficult to emulate in the receptor text any acrostics, alliteration, anagrammatical wordplays, antanaclasis, homonym wordplays, onomatopoeia, paronomasia, puns, and rhyming that appears in a source text. Such phenomena literally get lost in translation. Although Aramaic and Hebrew are cognate languages with great similarities, it remains impossible to translate the large number of wordplays in Daniel 1–6 effectively across the two languages. It is for this reason as well that translation theories regarding the presence of the two major languages in Daniel fail. The Aramaic in Daniel is another aspect of its satirical drive.

The appearance of the few Greek words in Daniel 3 highlights the internationality of the macaronic effect. The listing of several of the instruments in Greek indicates that the author has many languages at his command. He could have written in any of the three languages. Furthermore, it is not an accident that the musical instruments are in Greek. Just as the three Judeans will not 'sing' to a Greek tune, readers need not either. The light application of Greek words is a reminder of the social location of Daniel 1–6 and the socio-ideological nature of this literature.

In conclusion, the Aramaic text with its few Greek inserts is a highly complex creation designed to judge king and empire. This manifestation of heteroglossia underscores how language can be employed to destabilize

and delegitimize control.[74] According to Ferdinand Deist, such humor is a particularly effective way for common people to define their identity and to subvert the violence of power.[75]

One question remains. Why does the Aramaic of the book of Daniel not disappear when the kings disappear from the text at the end of Daniel 6? If the only point of the Aramaic is to lampoon the king, then the job is done at Dan. 6.29. One possible answer to the problem is simply to suggest that this early piece of macaronic literature is as imprecise as Ezra is in its application of multi-languaged dialogism. That could be right. It is also possible, however, that the carryover is deliberate and serves its own narratological and ideological functions. A brief exploratory investigation of the structure of the entire book of Daniel is helpful. It is interesting to note that from a language point of view the book has a dual, 1.5 construction; with the exception of Dan. 2.1-4a, which disrupts the schema just slightly, the Daniel narratives begin with one Hebrew chapter which is followed by five Aramaic chapters. The Daniel visions begin with one Aramaic chapter that is followed by five Hebrew chapters. This structural pattern may be calculated. It reflects a twinning, or doubling, of form in the two parts of the book. In Daniel, form is just as important as content in conveying its ideological message.

Furthermore, the first six chapters of Daniel are 'earthbound'. Although a number of otherworldly visions occur, the setting of the chapters are fixed on earth in the royal court, in the royal domicile, in the royal banquet hall, the slaves' quarters, on the executioner's block, on the plain of Dura, and so forth. The space is terrestrial and the language is predominantly Aramaic, the official language of the literary court and the popular language of the intended audience for whom the text is written. In Daniel 7–12, however, the space is otherworldly because heavenly visions dominate the text. Hebrew in this period is already a language that is associated with sacredness and is less well known among the people, although not entirely so. Arnaud Sérandour, it may be recalled, argues that Hebrew represents a local and sacred idiom in this period while Aramaic signifies the official international and political language of profane use. If this is correct, then the use of Hebrew to represent the otherworldly visions would carry its own ideological message. Daniel 2–6 uses Aramaic to bring judgment upon earthly empires. Daniel 8–12 uses Hebrew to bring judgment upon the descriptions of empire in the heavenly vision. In that case, not only would voice follow the chronotope of the text but the use of languages would as well.

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74. Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel', in Holquist (ed.), *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 259-422 (263-75).

75. Ferdinand Deist, 'Boundaries and Humour: A Case Study from the Ancient Near East', *Scriptura* 63 (1997), pp. 415-24.

This structure is obviously imperfect. Daniel 1 and 7 do not follow suit with respect to language and space. Perhaps Daniel 1, as the book's introduction, is intentionally written in the Hebrew as a *reversal* of the pattern of the other earthbound chapters. This underscores the importance of the language switch in Dan. 2.4. If Daniel 1–6 were composed entirely in Aramaic and Daniel 7–12 entirely in Hebrew, one would not pay great attention to the change and probably never bother to question the underlying ideology of language use in the text. Daniel 7, on the other hand, is the introduction to the visionary part of the text and is a hinge chapter within the book. It has, in the concentric structure of Daniel 2–7, many parallels with Daniel 2. It would make sense for it to continue the argument of Daniel 2 in the same language. The language reversal in Daniel 8 might well then jar the reader into noticing the switch to the sacred language. The overall effect is to cause the 1.5/1.5 doubled pattern of the book.

This twinning pattern plays out in content as well as structure between Daniel 1–6 and Daniel 7–12. While it is beyond the scope of this analysis to do a careful study of Daniel 7–12, note several of the mirroring devices between the two major sections of the book of Daniel. First, the date formulae of Daniel 7–12 refer to Belshazzar (Dan. 7.1; 8.1), Darius (Dan. 9.1; 11.1) and Cyrus (Dan. 10.1). Second, Daniel's Neo-Babylonian name, Belteshazzar, is mentioned in Dan. 10.1. Third, Daniel again eats no rich food, meat, or wine in Dan. 10.2. Fourth, precious metals and stone are part of the symbolism of the visions as gold is mentioned alone in Dan. 12.5, gold and silver in Dan. 11.38, bronze in Dan. 10.6, and precious stones in Dan. 11.38. Fifth, the visions of Dan. 7–12 are intensifications of their counterparts in the earlier part of the book. The four beasts (Dan. 7.2-14) and the ram and the goat (Dan. 8.2-14) are extremely arresting images. Sixth, Daniel now acts very much like the kings with regard to oracular visions. Daniel is the one with the terrifying visions that he does not understand and that need interpreting. The interpretations are provided to Daniel by heavenly figures and provoke extreme reaction. For instance, Daniel has 'a dream and visions of his head while he lay in bed' (Dan. 7.2). He repeats that he 'watched in the night visions' (Dan. 7.13). As to his fear, Daniel says, 'my spirit was troubled within me and the visions of my head terrified me' (Dan. 7.15). Even after the dream is interpreted, Daniel states, 'my thoughts greatly terrified me, and my face turned pale' (Dan. 7.28). Again, Daniel 'became frightened and fell prostrate' in the face of another vision (Dan. 8.17). Daniel is overcome by the vision and lays sick (Dan. 8.27). His strength leaves him and his complexion grows deathly pale in Dan. 10.8. The great man of his vision says to Daniel, 'Do not fear' (Dan. 10.12, 19); still he shakes (Dan. 10.17). Daniel must approach an attendant to have his vision interpreted in Dan. 7.16.

In Daniel 8, Daniel tries to understand his vision (Dan. 8.15). Someone stands before Daniel 'having the appearance of a man' (Dan. 8.15). It is Gabriel, who interprets this dream for Daniel, but even so Daniel still cannot understand it (Dan. 8.27). Gabriel gives Daniel 'wisdom and understanding' in Dan. 9.22, which he apparently maintains in Dan. 10.1. The 'one in human form (who) touches and strengthens Daniel' in Dan. 10.18 is also Gabriel. Unfortunately by Dan. 12.8, he again has no understanding. Daniel seeks answers by prayer and fasts (Dan. 9.3), sharing behaviors with his prior self and Darius. Daniel says of one of his interpreted visions: 'the vision . . . that has been told is true' like he once said to Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 8.26). Seventh, kings are just as self-centered, prideful, and vicious in Daniel 7–12 as they were in Daniel 1–6. The text says that no one can be rescued from the ram's power (Dan. 8.4, 7), which is similar to the power of God in Daniel 1–6. The horn of the goat grew as high as the host of heaven (Dan. 8.10), much like the tree before it. The horn 'acted arrogantly' and 'took the regular burnt offering away from him and overthrew the place of the sanctuary' (Dan. 8.11; cf. 8.13), calling to mind the sacred vessels of Daniel 1 and 5. In spite of these acts, the horn 'kept prospering' as did Nebuchadnezzar before his judgment (Dan. 8.12). Moreover, the text again reports that forces sent by a contemptible man will occupy and profane the temple, and abolish the regular burnt offering (Dan. 11.31; 12.11). A kingdom will be divided and be uprooted in Dan. 11.4 like the statue of Daniel 2. A branch from the root of the daughter of a king will rise up in Dan. 11.7 like the trees branches in Daniel 4. The king of the south is moved with rage (Dan.11.11). A king and his rage simply cannot be parted. The king will exalt himself and consider himself greater than any god, and he too will prosper (Dan. 11.36-37). Eighth, God is once again the court of last resort (Dan. 7.10). His throne is made of fiery flames (Dan. 7.9) and a beast is put to death by fire (Dan. 7.11), which counteracts the fiery furnace of Daniel 3. Judgment is given for the holy ones of the Most High (Dan. 7.22) much like in Daniel 4. All peoples, nations and language serve the one who is like a human coming with the clouds of heaven (Dan. 7.14a); his dominion and kingship will never pass away or be destroyed (Dan. 7.14b). The very best is saved for last. Daniel is rewarded at the end of days (Dan. 12.13).

The two major sections of Daniel are not independent pieces. Although a detailed analysis of the precise operation of every connection between the two sections is beyond the scope of this study, the sections are tied together. The switch from Aramaic back to Hebrew is original to the text. The 1.5/1.5 pattern is important to the overall message of judgment in the book. As a consequence the use of three languages in the book of Daniel must be appreciated as an essential feature of its dialogism and satiric artistry – *and* its Menippean shape.

4. *Conclusion*

Daniel 1–6 uses inserted genres, multiple tones, multiple voices, multiple social languages within Aramaic, and multiple national languages, namely Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, to create a dialogic piece. The loosely constructed narratives exhibit varying degrees of irony, parody and humor. Each chapter can function as an autonomous tale, but when the stories are read together through the lens of the menippea, an overall organic unity emerges. There is a consistent and persistent message of judgment that weaves through the stories. The message disrupts controlling authorities and voices. It challenges easy claims to truth. It offers a hilariously subversive resistance to empire and any who support it. Each story creates memorable images independent of the others, but when they are read as a unit, the tone of judgment and satire becomes dominant and clear. This is another connection to the Wizard of Oz stories that provide the inspiration for the title of this study. Dorothy, her friends and her foes engage in many memorable encounters that are vivid and unforgettable, and the collective impression of the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. Daniel 1–6 meets all the characteristics of the Menippean form. The genre question of Daniel can at long last be settled. Daniel 1–6 is Menippean satire, the goal of which is to resist the power of empire.

Chapter 7

C ONCLUSIONS

This study hypothesized that Bakhtin's understandings of genre, the pren-
ovelistic impulse, and Menippean satire might offer new insights as to the
genre of Daniel 1–6, which has been long disputed. Bakhtin argues that the
menippea was a stage in the development of the novel and served to under-
mine the monologism of epic traditions of the past and current authorita-
tive voices of the Hellenistic period in which it first developed. Because
Daniel appears to have been written or finally redacted in this same period,
it seemed natural to investigate whether Daniel 1–6 shares the attributes of
the menippea.

Bakhtin proposes that the Menippean genre has 14 primary character-
istics. These include comic elements; a freedom of plot and philosophical
inventiveness; a use of extraordinary, fantastic situations or wild parodic
displays of learning to test the truth; some combination of both crude
and lofty imagery, settings, and themes; a concern for ultimate questions;
scenes and dialogue from the earthly, heavenly, and netherworldly realms;
observation of behavior from an unusual vantage point; characters who
experience unusual, abnormal moral and psychic states; characters who
participate in scandals, eccentric behavior, and/or inappropriate speech;
sharp contrasts and oxymoronic combinations; elements of social utopia;
a variety of inserted genres within the work; a multi-styled, multi-toned,
or multi-voiced work that is dialogic based on inserted genres, voices, and
languages; and a concern with current and topical issues. This investiga-
tion demonstrates that Daniel 1–6 manifests all these features.

Daniel 1–6 is thoroughly satirical. It is funny, fantastical, and free. It is
wild, witty and wise. It plays with history. It combines the lofty and the
lowly. Its characters travel from other worlds or to strange, foreign lands. It
abounds in visions, dreams, and apparitions. Its kings go mad and become
animals. It uses twins, opposites, and oxymorons to press its point. Its goal
is not, however, merely to be clever, although it is that. Its aims are to test
the imperial versions of the truth and the ethical systems of its day and to
seek answers to ultimate questions. It shatters the monologic authoritarian
voices of empire by combining many genres, languages, and voices into a
unified and dialogic piece. It deconstructs kingly authority and power in

favor of God's authority and power. It offers God's great kingdom to all. Daniel 1–6 meets Bakhtin's criteria for Menippean satire.

This understanding of Daniel 1–6 contributes to the conversation regarding six significant issues in Daniel studies. First, it goes a long way toward explaining why settling the genre designation of Daniel 1–6 has been so difficult and the results so unsatisfactory. The work combines a number of genres and subgenres in creating a dialogic unity, which is confusing to the genre critic. If the overarching genre is the menippea, this amalgamation of genres is natural and purposeful. Second, the Menippean genre designation adds to the comprehension concerning why the book contains two languages. Bakhtin notes that dialogic works are often multi-voiced, multi-languaged, and multi-toned. The heteroglossia in Daniel 1–6 helps to express conflicting ideological viewpoints. The use of Aramaic is itself an act of satire aimed against the ideology of empire. Third, understanding Daniel 1–6 as menippea explicates the overwhelming presence of humor in a book considered worthy of canonization not too many years after it was composed. The comic elements of the book are the foundation of its ability to resist empire in ways that do not directly and violently confront ruling powers. Fourth, the Menippean genre designation offers insight into the book's approach to its social situation. On the surface, the public transcript of Daniel 1–6 presents four brave, wise, and cunning heroes who find success in the court of their conquering kings. Yet, below the surface, in the hidden transcript, the stories of Daniel 1–6 offer tales of resistance to those same kings. Utilizing past legends and history, the book springboards its readers into a critique of current oppression and opens up a new view of reality and mode of being. Fifth, although older epic traditions regarding Daniel and his friends were most likely used in the writing of these stories as is common to the menippea, the end result is a new, unified prenovelistic satire, wherein each story builds on the ones that came before, and seeks through humor to resist the oppressive political forces of its day. The preponderance of Menippean elements creates a compelling case for the careful and intentional construction of these stories in their MT form. This approach to Daniel 1–6 resolves several apparent diachronic problems. Sixth, if Daniel 1–6 is recognized as Menippean-like satire critical of the rule of Antiochus IV, then the apparent difference in tone and attitude between the stories of Daniel 1–6 and apocalyptic visions of Daniel 7–12 simply drops away.

This last issue will require further study. I am convinced that the book is a greater unity than currently perceived. Daniel 7 has important connections to the apocalyptic portion of the book, and it is also in Aramaic and is part of the concentric structure of Daniel 1–7. Furthermore, Good has suggested that the apocalyptic portions of the book also have comedic elements and structure. It is possible that the entire book of Daniel is related to the

menippea, with Daniel 7 functioning as an important transition between the two seemingly disparate types of parody and judgment. Further research on this question will be extremely fruitful.

The story of the Wizard of Oz ends with Dorothy back in Kansas declaring, 'There's no place like home'. The stories of Daniel, while set in the milieu of the court of the king, in the end similarly reject the power and enticements of life in a foreign culture and land, and yearn for the simpler and more fulfilling existence of faithful life in a secure abode.

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