Investigating the Conceptualization of Divinity in the Eden Narrative (Gen 2–3): An Exegetical Project

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ABSTRACT

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Genesis 3:22 is like a proverbial fork in the road for advocates of the doctrine of monotheism who argue for the belief in the existence of one God in ancient Israelite religious life. The pericope implicitly posits a version of divinity that contradicts the monotheistic claim because it briefly depicts Yahweh conversing with other entities he acknowledges as divine, like himself. Consequently, this thesis paper aims to critically revisit the representation and conceptualization of the divine in the Eden narrative. The purpose is to discover how the text represents this concept despite traditional presuppositions. A qualitative approach centered on the synchronic evaluation of the Hebrew text is prioritized in this research. A macro syntactic analysis is used to dissect the text. Additionally, a hermeneutics informed by methods from text linguistics and some elements of semiotics is employed to produce an innovative translation that exhibits biblical Hebrew's modal and volitive nuances and reveals rhetorical and literary techniques the authors designed to convey their message. This investigation is supplemented by a comparative study of the biblical writers' use of concepts like the Divine Council and words like the abstract plural אֱלֹהִים with cognates from the late Bronze Age ancient Near East, which is the period and geographical milieu for the emergence of ancient Israel as a people. In conclusion, the study demonstrates that the authors might have constructed this profound story based on typical ancient Near East primeval myths to establish Yahweh as governor over gods and humans but also meant to invite the audience to imagine divine governance that is non-coercive and relational.

Acknowledgments

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

↓ (anticipated information) = futural events

↑ (recovered information) = past events

0/Ɵ= (degree zero): the main line of communication, i.e., the actuality of the story

Fg = Foreground: A clause with the linguistic function of showing the forward movement or unfolding of a story at the main level of communication

Bg = Background: A clause with the linguistic function of giving information at the subsidiary level of communication.

LA = Linguistic Attitude: What Niccacci calls "linguistic categories of prose"[1] that denotes the author's mode or context of communication as either narrating or discursive/discourse.

LP = Linguistic Perspective: Temporal axes of communication. A clause may convey past or old information, current information at degree Ɵ, or anticipatory information in the future.

Pr = Prominence: Classification of information as *foreground* at either the main level of communication or as *background* at the secondary level of communication.

CNC = complex nominal clause

SNC = simple nominal clause

VC = verbal clause

D = discourse

N = narrative

AMP Amplified Bible

CSB Christian Standard Bible

CEV Contemporary English Version

CJB Complete Jewish Bible

KJV King James Version

MSG The Message Bible

NET New English Translation

NIV New International Version

NRSV New Revised Standard Version

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[1] *Syntax of the Verb In Classical Hebrew Prose* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 11. See p.33 §13 for more details.

OJB Orthodox Jewish Bible

INTRODUCTION

Monotheism is a Western idea used to classify the form of religious belief upheld by Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Although the term does not explicitly appear in any biblical texts, it nonetheless represents the concept that developed from readings and interpretations of stories in the Bible regarding the ancient Israelite deity Yahweh. The term monotheism results from combining two Greek words: *monos,* which means one, and *theos*, which means God or divinity. It is the belief in a single deity. Suppose one were to do a surface reading of the Hebrew Bible. In that case, one may believe that ancient Israelites were monotheistic from their beginning as a people and that, in time, they had to constantly struggle to resist the lure of foreign polytheist ideas from neighboring cultures.[1] However, a more critical look into the biblical texts, which focus on the nature of ancient Israelite religious devotion, will show "complex relations between Israelite monotheism and polytheism."[2]

Deuteronomy 6:4-5, known in traditional Jewish liturgy as the Shema, is often regarded as the quintessential monotheistic affirmation in Judaism and Christianity. The text reads:

> "Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God,
> the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God
> with all your heart and with all your soul and with all
> your might".

Then, there is Exodus 15:11, which asks, "Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods?". These two texts contradict the strict monotheistic claim about the nature of ancient Israel's religion because they both somehow acknowledge the existence of other gods besides the god of Israel.[3] However, they require that Israel show allegiance exclusively to 'the Lord.' Genesis 3:22 is another peculiar and problematic text for the mind, which has been conditioned to envision God as this unseen, unique, supernatural, all-powerful, and all-knowing being responsible for managing the universe.

Yet, verse twenty-two of the third chapter is written: "Then the Lord God said, "See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil." In this section, God is shown to be talking to some other entity (-ies) who has not been part of the narrative until now. In the greater

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[1] See Robert Karl Gnuse. *No Other Gods: Emergent Monotheism in Israel* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 66.

[2] Mark S. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic texts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 5.

[3] Echoing Mark S. Smith, using the term "religion, which implies a discreet group of phenomena separate from other spheres of human life" is anachronistic, as is my use of words like monotheism and polytheism. These notions do not do justice to the ancient Israelites' worldview. I use them descriptively to attempt to make conventions of the past meaningful to modern Western sensibilities. *The Memoirs of God: History, Memory, and the Experience of the Divine in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 2.

Garden of Eden story, only four prominent characters engage each other: God, Adam, Eve, and the serpent. Chronologically, as dialogue, verse twenty-two comes after God has concluded his interaction with those three characters. Yet, we now observe him calling attention to humanity's (two of the characters) newfound condition caused by their eating from the forbidden tree. He cannot be said to be addressing Adam, Eve, or the serpent here. So, to whom does the pronoun "us" refer in this verse?

It can be inferred that at the time of the composition of this verse, the god Yahweh was probably not thought to be unique in his godliness or divinity. The statement he makes in the verse reveals proximity of kind between himself and the unknown addressee(s) to whom he speaks. It also shows that this text's author(s) assumed an ontological difference between divinity and humankind. These problematic verses may be vestiges of old traditions that a late redactor has woven into the final version of the text.[4]

CHAPTER ONE: STATEMENT OF THE QUESTION

1.1   Hypothesis

This thesis aims to re-evaluate the conceptualization of divinity in the Garden of Eden narrative with a focus on Genesis 3:5 and 3:22. It will also explore the question about the conceptualization of divinity from the context of the ancient Near East culture in which the concept would have emerged with the expectation of attaining a better understanding of how ancient Israelite thought might have been influenced by the ideas circulating in that world and how it may have appropriated and reshaped them. The thesis adheres to the school of thought that asserts that the garden story does not necessarily communicate monotheistic ideology but instead resonates echoes of the Ancient Near Eastern conceptualization of divinity known as the divine council, albeit within a Yahwistic framework. This council initially consisted of various member entities who, in the biblical texts, were part of a genus often referred to with the generic designation *'elohim*. This original mythical idea is reworked into a Yahweh-centric popular tale in the present form of the text.

1.2   Status Quaestionis: Literature Review

The following pages will present an overview of how scholars have interpreted the text and formulated their understandings of the divine. The review is not extensive. A moderate selection of scholars has been chosen to represent popular positions from Christian and Jewish

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[4] "…although […] the story is by no means entirely the product of his fertile imaginationSee Julian Morgenstern, *The Book of Genesis: A Jewish Interpretation*. (New York: Schocken Books, 1965), 46. "In some of these cases we can deduce that there was an older form of the narrative in which God addressed his heavenly court." Hermann Gunkel, *The Stories of Genesis*. (Texas: Bibal Press, 1994), 57.

studies. This will serve to compare the traditional understanding of divinity with the hypothesis argued for in this paper.

1.2.1 Who and what is God in Genesis 2-3

How should the deity's characterization in the Eden narrative be understood? The narrative explicitly identifies Yahweh as a creator god who wields divine authority over the garden. He is quite active in the story, but little is said about his personality or identity apart from his function as creator and overseer. He comes, and he goes out of the garden as he pleases. Still, from a literary standpoint, there is no character development. God's persona is rather one-dimensional. So, what exactly is God? Where is he from? The story takes for granted that the audience is privy to this information. As a book that focuses on beginnings, Genesis is quite silent about the origin of God. It is impossible to attain the answers to these questions from a simple reading of the version of the text available in the canon. This project requires a much more complex investigative approach. One that requires the exegete to dig through the differing sources for data fit to reconstruct a history of the concept of God in ancient Israel as illustrated in the Eden narrative.

The scholarship on the Eden narrative does not seem to give much attention to the question of the nature of divinity. When scholars do consider the matter, it is usually with a priori assumptions about the deity. Terje Stordalen makes a similar remark. He states:

> Contemplating the character of God in Genesis 2–3, it dawned on me that I had not recognized a focus on the character of God as an important issue in literature on Genesis 2–3. Checking the matter again confirms that the more influential commentaries do not accord much space to the issue. (There are comments on the mythological background of the text, but few directly on the divine character.) Even in studies based on narrative perspectives this has not been a major topic[5].

Most scholars also presuppose a Judeo-Christian doctrine of God (monotheistic) and anachronistically read it into the text. They presume that the authors of the text shared the same concept of God as they do.

Accordingly, Nahum Sarna, who equates the idea of God presented in Genesis 1 to chapters 2-3,[6] imagines a God for whom "morality and ethics constitute the very essence of his nature"[7]; this is a good God of "universal sovereign will."[8] For Sarna, this notion opposes "the

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[5] Terje Stordalen, "The God of the Eden Narrative," in *Enigmas and Images: Studies in Honor of Tryggve N.D. Mettiger*, ed. Goran Eidvall and Blazenka Scheuer (Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 4.
[6] In his estimation, this picture of God is an "idea embedded in Genesis of one universal creator."
[7] Nahum M. Sarna. *Understanding Genesis*. (New York: Schocken Books, 1970), 17.
[8] *Understanding Genesis*, 17.

contemporary pagan concept"[9] whence "the gods were innately capricious."[10] From the outset, his exegetical analysis seemed to be determined by the belief that the Primeval History describes a "fundamental difference between polytheism and monotheism."[11] He is quite sure of his Jewish monotheistic reading of the Garden of Eden story. He does not deem it necessary to explicate the theological tensions in Genesis 3:5,22. He simply allocates them to instances in the text of *Imitatio Dei* or explains them as an etiology of man's free moral agency.[12]

Regarding divinity in the narrative, Von Rad's position, starting with Genesis 3:5, is that "Elohim can be understood as plural (LXX)."[13] In other words, it can be translated as gods. However, to safeguard the monotheist view of the uniqueness and indivisibility of God, which he adheres to, he explains verse 22 by reverting to the presumed Priestly creation of Genesis 1:26. Basically, he claims the use of the plural "Let us" is meant "to prevent one from referring God's image too directly to God the Lord."[14] Moreover, to further justify this claim, he devises a peculiar speculative exegesis which suggests that in Psalm 8, the image of God in which man was created "does not refer directly to Yahweh but to the angels."[15] In his reading, God, who is majestically other, condescends to the level of the heavenly hosts and "thereby conceals himself in this majority," meaning God includes himself in the congregation of the angels.[16] He affirms that this is why the plural pronoun 'us' is used in Genesis 3:22 and 1:26.

Lyle Eslinger examines the three usages of the first-person plural pronoun by the deity in the Primeval History: Genesis 1:26, 3:22, and 11:7. He suggests that they serve the "rhetorical purpose" of differentiating the nature of the gods from that of the humans.[17] He estimates that this is how the narrative schematize "we," "the gods," versus "them," "the humans."[18] Eslinger states that this principle was so fundamental to the worldview of the Israelites of antiquity that the authors of Genesis 2–3 were willing to risk the theological coherence of their belief in the existence of one God. Eslinger does not spend much time questioning the type of divine nature presented in the Eden narrative. Instead, he discusses hyperchronic analysis, which he explains as a supplement "to diachrony's historical focus and synchrony's atemporal focus."[19] He frames this as a theory that aims to enable a researcher to examine concepts that stem from times before history. These concepts include the awkward plural in Genesis 3:22, which he thinks the authors used as a rhetorical device to express archaic human anxiety about the threat of transgressing the ontological threshold that restrains humans from becoming gods.

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[9] *Understanding Genesis*, 23.

[10] *Understanding Genesis*, 17.

[11] *Understanding Genesis*, 16.

[12] See *Understanding Genesis*, page 27.

[13] Gerhard Von Rad. *Genesis: A Commentary*. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956), 86.

[14] *Genesis: A Commentary*, 57.

[15] *Genesis: A Commentary*, 57.

[16] *Genesis: A Commentary*, 57.

[17] Lyle Eslinger. "The Enigmatic Plurals like 'One of Us' (Genesis I 26, III 22, AND XI 7) in Hyperchronic Perspective." *Vetus Testamentum* 56, no. 2 (2006): 173.

[18] Eslinger, "The Enigmatic Plurals", 174.

[19] Eslinger, "The Enigmatic Plurals", 180.

1.2.2   Targum Onkelos and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan

According to Matthew Oseka, the post-exilic Jewish Aramaic translations of the Hebrew Bible known as Targum Onkelos and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan interpreted Genesis 3:5, 22 theologically. The Targumim did not remain faithful to the letter of the text. They made sure that the serpent in verse 5 was depicted in a way that did not insinuate he had direct insight into the knowledge of Elohim. Instead of telling Eve about becoming like Elohim because of eating from the forbidden tree, Targum Onkelos made the serpent say to her that "she and Adam would be like (כ) "the mighty" (רברבין) who knew the difference between (בין) "good and evil."[20] Moreover, Oseka asserts that Targum Pseudo-Jonathan made the 'mighty,' which replaced the original wording 'Elohim' to signify the angels. He states the LXX does not redact Genesis 3:5 but renders Elohim into the Greek plural (θεοί) gods. The Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and Targum Jerusalem also rewrote the twenty-second verse to not only reject the idea that Adam became like the divine but also to change 'knowing good and evil' into 'to know how to discern between good and evil.' Oseka asserts that this redaction was "to emphasise that the direct knowledge of good and evil was reserved for God."[21]

1.2.3   Midrash and Talmud

As for the Midrash's outlook on the divine plurals of Genesis 3, Oseka reports that for verse five, the Midrash tries "to rule out any interpretation undermining God's absolute unity."[22] Then, for verse 22 it posits that God is probably speaking to his assistants. He notes that the Midrash goes to length to correct the Masoretic text; Oseka writes:

> "The received (Masoretic) vocalisation"[23] translated into *like one of us*, "אחד was parsed as the absolute state, while ממנו was parsed as singular (literally: "from him", figuratively: "by himself, on his own"). Consequently, אחד was harnessed to the infinitive לדעת which was said to be modified by ".ממנו[24]

He explains that the objective was to alter the meaning of the text to say that Adam, after having eaten from the forbidden fruit, has attained the ability to make moral choices on his own.

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[20] Oseka, Matthew. "History of the Jewish Interpretation of Genesis 1:26, 3:5, 3:22 in the Middle Ages." *Scriptura*, vol. 117, no. 1, 2018, 5.
[21] Oseka, "History of the Jewish Interpretation." 2018, 7.
[22] Oseka, "History of the Jewish Interpretation." 2018, 10.
[23] Oseka, "History of the Jewish Interpretation." 2018, 10.
[24] Oseka, "History of the Jewish Interpretation." 2018, 10

1.3.1   Medieval Jewish Interpretation

Rabbi Saadia Gaon understood that *'elohim* in Genesis 3:5 refers to angels. He translated it as such "in his Arabic rendition of the Pentateuch."[25] According to Oseka's reading, the Rabbi's understanding of the divine plurals in 3:22 seems rather ambiguous because of how he interprets the verse. He translates verse 22 as "…Adam has already been made like one of us."[26] It is unclear whether he thinks the 'us' references the angels, which he affirmed as indicative of Elohim in verse 5, or someone else. Next, there is Rashi, who understands Genesis 3:22 to disclose information about humans' uniqueness amongst earthly animals because of having gained knowledge of good and evil. Although this particularity is analogous to God being unique in the heavenly realm, it is unclear whether Rashi thinks the knowledge humans have attained is the same as divine knowledge.

Abraham Ibn Ezra interpreted Genesis 3:5,22 in view of Genesis 1:26, which he understood in a theological sense to refer to God and the angels. Therefore, when verse 22 states that the "human has become like one of us," the 'us' must be pointing to the angels.[27]

Maimonides, through the Targum Onkelos, explained Elohim as having multiple meanings. For example, the word signifies God (s) and could also mean those who possess power or might. This is the sense in which he proposes that Genesis 3:5 should be understood. So, upon eating the forbidden fruit, humans would not become divine but acquire knowledge like 'the mighty' ones.[28]

1.3.2   Patristic and Mediaeval Interpretations

Regarding the Church fathers, Oseka states that the East and West factions of the Church "unanimously put a trinitarian construction on the plural forms" in Genesis 3:22.[29] He reports that Justin Martyr, for example, dismissed the notion that when God uses the pronoun *us* in the

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[25] Oseka, "History of the Jewish Interpretation." 2018, 12.

[26] Oseka, "History of the Jewish Interpretation." 2018, 12.

[27] Oseka reports, "In theological terms, Abraham ibn Ezra opined that God said "let us make [...]" to the angels and that human beings were created by God in the image of angels. In his view, the plural forms occurring in Genesis 1:26 and in Genesis 11:7 (ונבלה and נרדה) indicated that the LORD addressed his angels. Therefore, according to Abraham ibn Ezra, אלהים in כאלהים ידעי טוב ורע (Genesis 3:5) and ממנו in כאחד ממנו (Genesis 3:22) denoted God along with his angels." "History of the Jewish Interpretation." 2018, 13.

[28] For Maimonides, "the mighty (רברבין) as the non-divine general meaning of אלוהים would be preferable in the context of Genesis 3:5." Oseka, "History of the Jewish Interpretation." 2018, 17.

[29] Oseka, Mateusz. "Christian Patristic and Mediaeval Interpretation of the Plural Forms in Genesis 1.26, 3.5 and 3.22 Situated against the Classic Jewish Exposition." *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism*, vol. 14, 2018, 38.

creation and garden narratives, he is speaking to the angels, the first elements, or himself. Justin opted instead for the concept of a personified divine wisdom manifested in Jesus, whom he alleged God was conversing with in Genesis 3:22 and in the first chapter. This was also the overall view during the Middle Ages. Even so, Oseka reports that patristic and medieval Christian theologians were aware of "the lexical and grammatical features of God's generic name in Hebrew."[30] He points out that Justin related the Hebrew word *El* to power, and Jerome proposed that *'elohim* could be interpreted as singular or plural depending on the context.

In medieval times, Peter Abelard also proposed that *'elohim* was the plural form of the Hebrew words for God, *El*, and *eloha*. He suggested that *'elohim* could signify the "true or false God(s) or judge(s), depending on the context."[31] Oseka explains that Abelard thought that the plural ending of *'elohim* was to signal the multiplicity of the constitution of the Godhead. However, Abelard suggested that when the word *'elohim* appears in singular lexical forms, it is evidence of the unity of divinity, while its syntactic link to plural words was to demonstrate the variety of persons in the Godhead.

Finally, Oseka describes the pseudo-Clementine literature of the Middle Ages, which he states shows how the patristic and medieval Christian interpretation of the plural forms of Genesis 3:5, 22 was based on the rendering of the LXX. He recounts a dialogue in pseudo-Clementine literature between an orthodox and a heterodox advocate, in which the heterodox argued that the plural forms were "proof of polytheism."[32] He states that the orthodox refuted the heterodox by explaining how the term God could refer to "varying degrees of power and authority."[33] It can signify the true creator of the universe, while it can also reference false idols.

Moreover, the orthodox expresses that in the Bible, the term was used with respect to "Moses (Exod. 7.1), Judges (Exod. 22.27, 28) or angels could be called 'gods' because they represented the LORD in the world, stood proxy for and acted on his behalf."[34] Thus, the plural forms do not necessarily imply polytheism. At best, the orthodox party theorizes that they signify the presence of the trinity in primeval events.

1.3.3   John Van Seters

Van Seters indicates that in the critical study of Genesis, exegetes have generally "explained the whole book on the basis of its parts."[35] He does not deny the text's compounded makeup per se. He questions the methodology, which does not consider the importance of determining "the nature of the literary work before interpretation can properly begin."[36] So, he sets out to establish the genre of the literature by analyzing and comparing its form to

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[30] Oseka, "Christian Patristic and Mediaeval Interpretation" 2018, 45.
[31] Oseka, "Christian Patristic and Mediaeval Interpretation" 2018, 46.
[32] Oseka, "Christian Patristic and Mediaeval Interpretation" 2018, 46.
[33] Oseka, "Christian Patristic and Mediaeval Interpretation" 2018, 46.
[34] Oseka, "Christian Patristic and Mediaeval Interpretation" 2018, 46.
[35] *Prologue To History: The Yahwist as Historian in Genesis*. (Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 1.
[36] Van Seters. *Prologue,* 1.

Mesopotamian and Greek national traditions about primeval history. In so doing, he identifies the book of Genesis as an *archaiologia* that was created by an ancient historian, namely the Yahwist, who shares "interests and content as well as similar structural and compositional forms and techniques" with other authors from antiquity[37].

He defines history as a kind of auto-contemplative activity that a civilization undertakes about its past. He states that through history, a people group reevaluates decisions and events that have come to have a bearing on its present. By this definition, history helps form a national identity and brings cultural values to the fore. Van Seters also recognizes historiography as "a genre of tradition."[38] In this sense, tradition is a medium, written or oral, intended to carry customs and ideas from the past to subsequent generations.[39] For Van Seters, this suggests that Genesis is a traditional text of the Yahwist, purposed to "render an account of the traditions" about ancient Israel's origins to explicate its raison d'être and, by extension, define its national identity.[40]

Manufacturing or writing history is the product of literate societies. This would seem to be the social context from which Genesis was constructed. Nonetheless, Van Seters is not in favor of dating the Yahwist's work to the time of the United Monarchy circa the ninth century B.C.E., and he is opposed to Gunkel and other scholars who "regarded the older sources of the Yahwist and the Elohist merely as collectors or schools of storytellers."[41] In his assessment, the Yahwist's historiography chronologically followed and "supplemented Dtr by extending the history back in time to the beginning of the world."[42] This emphasized "a strong ethnic identity so important to a people scattered in exilic and diaspora communities."[43] He postulates that during the exile (perhaps in the sixth or fifth century B.C.E.), foreign ideas would have

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[37] Van Seters. *Prologue*, 2.
According to Van Seters, a common function of the *archaiologia* was to be the "prologue to the national traditions" of peoples.
[38] John Van Seters. *In Search of History: Historiography in The Ancient World and The Origins of Biblical History*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 2.
[39] He further explains "Tradition is used to fortify belief, explain authority, legitimate practices, regulate behavior, give a sense of personal and corporate identity, and communicate skills and knowledge. The forms that the verbal tradition may take […] Many traditional forms […]— But a history is not merely the sum of its parts, and to analyze a history by taking it apart in order to discern the original functions of the various elements will never yield the meaning of the whole."
[39] John Van Seters. *In Search of History*, 3.
[40] Van Seters. *Prologue*, 332.
[41] Van Seters. *In Search of History*, 227.
S. Mowinckel dates J "as late as the end of the ninth or early eight century B.C." John Van Seters. *In Search of History*, 236.
Moreover, Van Seters asserts "the notion that a period of very rudimentary literacy, such as must have been the case in the Solomonic age, could have produced an extensive and complex piece of historiography is hardly tenable". *Prologue*, 332.
[42] Van Seters. *In Search of History*, 361.
[43] Ibid.

influenced the diasporic intelligentsia, and he declares that "this alone accounts for Babylonian materials reflected in the primeval history."[44]

Regarding the Eden narrative in Genesis 2-3, Van Seters has concluded, after studying the works of C. Westermann, O.H. Steck, and E. Kutsch, that the text's composite nature is not the result of patchworking different sources. He also rejects the notion that this characteristic of the text is due to the use of oral traditions, where various "narratives about creation and paradise have been combined to produce the present unified story."[45] Rather, he proposes an alternative understanding of the material in Genesis 2-3 diachronically. In other words, he suggests that the Pentateuchal tradition is developmental, and that the Yahwist played a role in this process. The challenge is determining his role and position in the history of ideas in ancient Israel through comparative analysis of "traditional elements in J to particular parallels in written and datable works."[46]

Van Seters begins his analysis by comparing the Eden narrative to the oracle in Ezekiel 28. It is a myth about this archetypal king who dwelt in the garden of God and was demoted from a glorious status due to his impertinent aspiration to divinization. Van Seters endorses Marvin H. Pope's argument that the oracle is based on "the myth of the fallen god El." In contrast to the Eden narrative, he affirms that the oracle is not about the creation of humanity and is void of any "notion of sin and a fall or expulsion from paradise."[47] As such, the two texts could not come from the same source, and the similarities are artificial.

According to Van Seters, Ezekiel's prophecy is influenced by the creation myths found in the Neo-Babylonian tradition. This tradition features two ritual texts that depict the creation of the world. One of these texts describes how Marduk created the earth, the divine realm, and all living things, including humans. The second myth portrays Anu as the creator of the heavens, with Ea as the creator of minor deities tasked with promoting the growth of civilization. Finally, Ea created the king to maintain the temples and humans to serve the gods.[48]

To these two myths, Van Seters adds a third text that illustrates not only the creation of the common man but also that of the king. In the text, the king is to be made "distinctively superior" by the goddess Belet-ili as instructed by the god Ea. The king is endowed at his conception with remarkable "royal attributes of wisdom, strength, and beauty by the different gods of the pantheon," they grant to him "the various insignia of his royal office" at his coronation. These events are exhibited as having taken place simultaneously at a prehistoric moment. Van Seters claims that the author aims with this approach to design a myth about "the general legitimation of kingship."[49]

He hypothesizes from this the depiction of the king's creation in Ezek. 28:12-29 is "dependent upon the Babylonian tradition."[50] The oracle does not need to replicate the Babylonian myth in detail. Therefore, Van Seters declares mythical elements such as the

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[44] Van Seters. *Prologue*, 332.
[45] Van Seters. *Prologue*, 117.
[46] Van Seters. *Prologue*, 119.
[47] Van Seters. *Prologue*, 120.
[48] Van Seters. *Prologue*, 60.
[49] Van Seters. *Prologue*, 61.
[50] Van Seters. *Prologue*, 120.

mountain of God, the initial sin and fall, and the expulsion from paradise, absent from the Babylonian motif, to be an innovation of Ezekiel. He is presumed to have appropriated the myth about the legitimation of royalty and added the above-mentioned elements to generate "an antiroyal ideology" that served as a contemporary "prophetic" critique of Tyre.[51]

Van Seters elaborates further on the relationship between Gen 2-3 and Ezek. 28, stating that "the royal figure of Ezekiel has been transformed by J into the first male human" and given a wife. However, he is naked as opposed to adorning kingly attire. The Yahwist adopts Ezekiel's Garden of God scenario and the transgression motif leading to expulsion. The couple, unlike the king, do not possess wisdom. They aspire to it. Surprisingly, Van Seters does not interpret their disobedience "as an act of hubris so much as the result of youthful curiosity."[52]

Still, he notices "tension within the composition." This, he cautions, is due to the close arrangement by the Yahwist of Ezekiel's death oracle with the motif of oracle about expulsion. The oracles respond to the king's claim to godlikeness typified by wisdom. In Genesis, this divine wisdom is symbolized by the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, which is forbidden to humans at the risk of death. Yet, when they attain deification from eating this fruit, the Yahwist constructs the consequence for their sin by utilizing "the punishment of expulsion from the second Ezekiel oracle" and denying them access to the tree of life instead of making them die as expected.[53]

The basis of Van Seters' thesis is that the Yahwist, as a historiographer, had various materials at hand to design his primeval history. These materials consisted of Ezekiel 28 and Neo-Babylonian creation myths. There is even a late Mesopotamian tradition about the god Marduk creating humankind, which he presumes the Yahwist have modified. The commonality in these sources is that they "reflect the same milieu of the exile in the Neo-Babylonian period," but they are different in presentation.[54] Van Seters suggests this diversity is what makes the present text appear disjointed.

Van Seters' commitment to the theory that Genesis 2-3 was produced in a late exilic setting has impelled him to conjecture a possible Greek influence through Hesiod's Pandora to "account for the separate creation of the woman in the Yahwist's story."[55] He finds no analogous motifs in the Eastern tradition J would have referred to. So, he is left to consider Western traditions that share traits like the biblical version. Nevertheless, he acknowledges that it is "methodologically unsound to try to reconstruct a common myth," linking Greek traditions to Genesis 2-3.[56]

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[51] Van Seters. *Prologue*, 121.

[52] Van Seters. *Prologue*, 121.

[53] Van Seters. *Prologue*, 122.

[54] Van Seters. *Prologue*, 128.

[55] Van Seters. *Prologue*, 125.

[56] *Ibid*.

1.4.1   Bruce Vawter

Bruce Vawter states that "despite all its shortcomings," he is still "convinced of the documentary hypothesis'" relevancy. Upon reviewing Genesis, he found its composite characteristics are self-evident, while literary problems endure. Yet, the hypothesis remains the most plausible explanation.[57] He maintains that no original versions of Genesis were available for scribes to enhance. The present form of Genesis is most likely a collage of diverse sources: Yahwist(J), Elohist(E), Deuteronomist(D), and Priestly (P).

He agrees with Van Seters that the initial authorship of Genesis should be assigned to the Yahwist historian whose objective was to "explain Israel to Israel."[58] He situates the Yahwist in the tenth or ninth century B.C.E. when Israel would have become a nation. Vawter specifies the distinguishing marker that makes Israelite history stand out from its immediate surroundings is that the Yahwist's account is centered on the involvement of the national deity in general world affairs through human agency, specifically that of ancient Israel.

Vawter claims the E source writer is "a shadowy figure" who may have used material unrelated to the "northern Israelite" traditions to supplement J. He holds a distinct theological perspective "lacking in J and sometimes in P."[59] The priestly content reveals interests of "the exilic and postexilic circles and communities." It emphasizes religious and moral piety and ethnic identity and is unapologetically monotheistic.[60] The book of Genesis begins with P and has inherited from it its structure.

Vawter assumes a redactor (R) arranged the sources in the form in which they currently appear. He is not an author proper. He is not engaged in creative writing; his creativity is more like a maestro conducting an orchestra, but he did not compose the music because "the ideas proposed by Genesis are those of J and P, and occasionally, of E." Vawter's view is that Genesis is the introduction of "the Pentateuch or Hexateuch."[61] This book comprises various literary genres: genealogies, myths, legends, sagas, narratives, aetiologies, and epics.

For Vawter, Genesis 2-3, the chapters that are the focus of this thesis paper, contain a "basic story" of creation and the fall of Man.[62] However, he contends, it is joined to another narrative about a garden that is more mythological in content. The creation story begins with the uncultivated state of the world before human existence. Man is then created to cultivate the ground. The tree of the knowledge of good and bad is part of this story, and man is forbidden to eat its fruit. Man is given authority over newly created animals. Yet, one of the animals misleads him into disobeying, and as a result, Vawter states, "the earth is cursed," and nature is in disarray.[63]

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[57] Bruce Vawter. *On Genesis: A New Reading.* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1977), 16.
[58] Vawter. *On Genesis*, 18.
[59] Vawter. *On Genesis*, 19-20.
[60] Vawter. *On Genesis*, 21.
[61] Vawter. *On Genesis*, 23.
[62] Vawter. *On Genesis*, 65.
[63] Vawter. *On Genesis*, 64.

In the second narrative, "God plants a garden in which he places man." There is a tree of life in the middle of this garden. After the creation of man, Some event took place in the garden, but information is lacking about the specifics of this event. Whatever happened must have been devastating because it resulted in man's expulsion from the garden and barred from "the opportunity at immortality."[64] Vawter asserts that the Yahwist enhanced the stories by inserting a geographical description in the garden narrative and an episode about the making of a woman.

In his commentary of the narrative, Vawter suggests the presence of the combined name Yahweh Elohim is a product of the redactor "who has used it to tie the Priestly and Yahwistic creation stories together." He describes the Yahwist as "unself-conscious" in his anthropomorphic representation of God.[65] By unself-conscious, he may refer to the author's willingness to depict the deity in human forms.

As stated above, Vawter argues that one of the original stories that make up Genesis 2–3 initially centered around the Tree of Life. The plot, like the epic of Gilgamesh or the myth of Ea and Adapa, might have been about the pursuit of eternal life. But that has changed with the "present structure of the story," which now revolves around the tree of knowledge of good and bad.[66] Interestingly, he refutes the theory that the geography in Gen 2:10–14 recalls "the Canaanite myth which placed the residence of God at the source of all the waters."[67] The basis of this disapproval, he evinces, is that the language is less poetic, and this, he postulates, is because the Yahwist intended to convey a less "mystical" but more natural picture of the garden. Furthermore, the location of the divine mountain is, as reported in Ezekiel 28, in "the far north rather than the east."[68] Thus, he asserts the hypothesis is nullified.

The position of this thesis stands contrary to Vawter's dismissal of the probability of the Yahwist employing the Canaanite motif of the mountain of God. He might have altered the motif to suit a specific purpose. He does not have to maintain the motif in its Canaanite form since his plan might not have been to replicate it but to extract symbols familiar to his audience to communicate his message. So, the text does not have to literally "say that the garden produced a river that watered the whole earth" as attestation of the use of the motif[69]. The very instance of such a river coupled with the garden, the numinous trees, the deity, etc.…could have induced the imagery of the mountain of God (with all its symbolic implications) in the ancient Near Eastern mind, which this thesis presupposes was the intended audience for the narrative.

As for the pericope about the serpent in Genesis 3:15, Vawter clarifies that its purpose is strictly etiological. The aim is to explain the origin of most humans' "instinctive revulsion" of snakes.[70] He states that "early Jewish" thought may have seen in the serpent a stand-in for "the principle of evil," but it was never interpreted to be Satan. Early Church Fathers like Irenaeus of Lyons ca. 130-200 A.D. allegorically read into "the passage a prophecy of the victory of Christ,

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[64] Vawter. *On Genesis*, 65.
[65] Vawter. *On Genesis*, 67-68
[66] Vawter. *On Genesis*, 68.
[67] Vawter. *On Genesis*, 69.
[68] Vawter. *On Genesis*, 69.
[69] Vawter. *On Genesis*, 69.
[70] Vawter. *On Genesis*, 82.

the Messiah over Satan."[71] Eventually, Christian theology would classify Genesis 3:25 as "Protoevangelium (beginning of the gospel)."[72]

Notably, Vawter discusses the meaning of the woman's name, which is defined in verse twenty as "mother of all the living: Eve."[73] He evinces the Hebrew word *Hawwah,* translated into Eve and recognized as meaning life may have originally had semantic correspondence with the term serpent. This would not be evident in the Hebrew Bible. However, some Arabic and Aramaic cognates would point to this etymology. He claims the Yahwist would have been aware of this "sense of the *Hawwah* (serpent-mother=mother goddess?)" and deliberately chose it in his text to "read as mother of all the living."[74] Vawter's position might be correct. Unfortunately, it requires a lot of generosity because he does not provide any reference notes in the commentary to validate these assertions.[75]

Vawter upholds that verse twenty-two, the focus of this thesis, is "perhaps the most primitive" in the narrative.[76] He acknowledges that the plural pronoun *us* and "Yahweh's agreement with the serpent's contention in 3:5" that the effect of consuming fruit from the tree of knowledge will lead to humans becoming "like gods" indicate that the Yahwist used a myth that was not demonstrative of the presumed monotheist conceptualization in late Israelite religion.[77] Vawter loosely affirms that this verse alludes to the theme of "Yahweh in the council of the elohim."[78]

1.4.2   Gordon J. Wenham

The Word Biblical commentary affirms that "Genesis makes use of multiple sources," but the documentary hypothesis' allocation of these sources is questionable.[79] There is no clear consensus on identifying and demarcating their dividing lines. Hence, the commentator favors "a fragmentary or supplementary view of the composition of Genesis."[80] Admittedly, P is posited as having priority over J, who seems to be altering the material in texts like the flood story. For example, he postulates J as the "final editor of Gen 10," who modified the list of nations by incorporating sections such as Gen 10:8-19, 21, 24-30.[81]

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[71] Vawter. *On Genesis*, 82.
[72] Vawter. *On Genesis*, 82-83.
[73] Vawter. *On Genesis*, 86.
   However, as he points out, "no birth has occurred nor will occur until 4:1."
[74] Vawter. *On Genesis*, 87.
[75] *Ibid*.
[76] *Ibid*.
[77] Vawter. *On Genesis*, 87.
[78] Vawter. *On Genesis*, 88.
[79] Gordon J. Wenham. *Word Biblical Commentary, Vol 1: Genesis 1-15*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982), xxxviii.
[80] Wenham. *Word Biblical Commentary,* xlii.
[81] Wenham. *Word Biblical Commentary,* xxxviii.

J is asserted to be "the major contributor of material" to the primeval history, and he tends to edit and organize data attributed to P. This would imply that P may be older. Wenham stresses that J is not the original author of Genesis. There seems to be a "proto-J material," as exhibited by the flood narrative, which might have combined elements of J and P. Even so, he is skeptical of the common origin of these two sources because of the variation in content.[82] The existence of this pre-Pentateuchal material is theorized from observing the similarity between the Gilgamesh version of the flood narrative and the current form of the story in Genesis.[83]

Inference of a proto-J and P material can also be made from analysis of the second-millennium Atrahasis epic and a composite Sumerian flood story dating back to approximately 1600 B.C.E. The comparison of these texts, which deal with the creation of man and animals, a flood, and other motifs with Genesis 1−11, "seem to bear witness to an outline of earliest antiquity common to Babylon and Israel." It is presumed J had access to such an "outline of primeval history" to construct the present Genesis prehistoric narrative.[84] Wenham insists the similarities between Genesis 1-11 and the primeval accounts of its ancient Near Eastern counterparts do not indicate "the writer of Genesis had ever heard or read the Gilgamesh epic."[85] These stories were part of the shared cultural inventory of the time, so their presence in ancient Israelite literature need not be controversial.

The worldview of the ancient Near East assumed reality consisted of the material world and an analogous invisible supernatural dimension that the gods occupied. In this understanding, the gods, like humans, "could think, speak," walk, see, and eat. However, from their domain, they also controlled and could self-materialize in the human sphere.[86] The Bible attests to this mode of comprehending life. Nevertheless, the biblical authors had a unique way of framing the ideas constituting this outlook. For example, Wenham relays that the Mesopotamian origin stories have a more "humanistic optimism." In contrast, the Bible's account presents the beginning "as perfect from God's hand and grew then steadily worse through man's sinfulness."[87]

The difference in presentation may be the effect of the polemical nature of some of the primeval texts, which Wenham notes may be targeting "the religious ideas associated most closely with Mesopotamia."[88] Some of these ideas were *hieros gamos* and cult prostitution, which Wenham argues are presupposed in Gen 6:1-8, superstitious hubris in "the tower of Babel story" in which Babylonian civilization is depicted as foolish, and the various polytheist systems of "pagan mythology."[89] He affirms that these themes show "the striking originality of the message of Gen 1-11" instead of the Mesopotamian traditions that its writers used during composition.[90]

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[82] See Wenham. *Word Biblical Commentary,* xlii.
[83] Wenham. *Genesis*, xxix.
[84] Wenham. *Genesis,* xli.
[85] Wenham. *Genesis,* xlviii.
[86] *Ibid*.
[87] Wenham. *Genesis,* xlviii.
[88] Wenham. *Genesis,* xlviii.
[89] Wenham. *Genesis*, xlix.
[90] Wenham. *Genesis*, l.

Wenham states that scholars are skeptical that there was ever an Elohist behind Genesis. He insists that the theory, which contended for two separate sources to explain why there are different words to identify the deity in the primeval narrative, "finds little favor today."[91] By quoting Westermann, he advances that a previous version of the garden narrative highlighting the name Yahweh was probably edited with the addition of the word Elohim to specify that the deities mentioned in Genesis 1 and 2 were the same. Nevertheless, he counters this assertion with J. L'Hour's position, which shows that "the Yahwistic author has deliberately used this form to express his conviction that Yahweh is both Israel's covenant partner and the God (Elohim) of all creation."[92]

He suggests that the meaning of the tree of knowledge, which is only attested to in the Eden narrative, should be understood by analyzing "the use of the phrase as a whole here and in other passages" along with the morphology and syntax.[93] Thus, he concludes that knowledge of good and evil cannot describe the result of obedience or disobedience to divine commands; it does not mean "moral discernment," sexual knowledge, or omniscience.[94] In agreement with Cassuto, Westermann, Vawter, and Clark, he affirms that eating from the tree "offered insight."[95] This kind of insight is possible through superintelligence, which allows one to capture the mechanics of ultimate reality. Wenham avows that "the wisdom literature also makes it plain" that this kind of wisdom is the unique property of the deity and is forbidden to humans as "confirmed by Ezek 28."[96]

Concerning the divine plural, he posits the object pronoun '*us*' and determiner our of Gen 1:26, 3:22, and 11:7 as referents to "the heavenly beings, including God and the angels."[97] He supports this interpretation by citing Philo, Jewish commentators, Skinner, Von Rad, and Mettinger "among recent commentators."[98] Following Jouon and Cassuto, he also argues for "the view that this was a plural of self-deliberation" or "self-encouragement."[99] Although he admits that the editor of Genesis did not understand the plural to refer to the Trinity, he does not reject the possibility of this early Church interpretation.

1.4.3   Summary

In summary, the scholarship examined suggests that Genesis 3:22, despite its logical and theological challenges within the broader context of the Eden narrative, reflects a monotheistic view of ancient Israelite religious belief. Post-exilic Jewish commentators, Patristic traditions, medieval Christian theologians, and scholars in the twenty-first century generally seem to

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[91] Wenham. *Genesis*, 56.
[92] Wenham. *Genesis*, 57.
[93] Wenham. *Genesis*, 63.
[94] Wenham. *Genesis*, 63.
[95] Wenham. *Genesis*, 63.
[96] Wenham. *Genesis*, 63,64.
[97] Wenham. *Genesis*, 85.
[98] Wenham. *Genesis*, 27.
[99] Wenham. *Genesis*, 28.

underestimate the significance of the divine plural. While they acknowledge its existence, they do not see the need to explore the nature of this issue further.

This hesitancy is probably due to their constriction within a binary theistic paradigm, which pits polytheism against monotheism. Their modes of inquiry also advanced from the presupposition that ancient Israelite beliefs about divinity and that which the Bible appears to reflect were the same. As stated above, the dedication to these notions was so strong that the Midrash even tried to correct the Masoretic vocalization of Genesis 3:22, generally translated into '*like one of us*' and tried to render it into a singular form. This thesis will explore the translation and meaning of this short clause with hopes of gaining insight that may contribute to the further exploration of the question of ancient Israelite conceptualizations of God.

1.5   Steps of Inquiry

This thesis presupposes that the notion of divinity reflected in Genesis 3:22 originated from a time that long predated the current form of the Eden narrative that is available to us. [100] Hence, this position contradicts scholars who argue for a literary unity of the primeval history. [101] The composite nature of the text seems self-evident. Surely, a certain coherent narrative structure is present in the Eden story's current form, but at the micro level, signs of divergent ideas are rather clear. Verse 22 remains one such occurrence of variant viewpoint and theology in the story, which is not, for example, explained by simply relegating it to a literary style designed to express some "different aspect of reality."[102]

In recent years, scholars like Thomas Römer have questioned the relevance of biblical scholarship in continuing to "use the term 'monotheism' when speaking of the theological discourses of the Hebrew Bible."[103] In concert with this view, the investigation of the text will proceed with the conviction that the current version is the result of redaction processes. As suggested above, verse 22, in contrast to the rest of the narrative, reflects a primordial conceptualization of divinity. The question of discovering at which point this would have been the case in Israelite history will have to be determined by surveying extrabiblical and archaeological data because there is no direct biblical evidence to corroborate this hypothesis.

Notwithstanding, at least one preliminary remark that can almost be asserted with certainty is that during the United Kingdom, the dominant theological belief in Israel and Judah

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[100] It may even be a resonance of a belief system that Nissim Amzallag refers to as "an archaic pre-Israelite cult of YHWH, defined here as primeval Yahwism."
Nissim Amzallag. "The Serpent as a Symbol of Primeval Yahwism" *Semitica* vol 58, (2016): 210.

[101] See Howard N. Wallace who stipulates that there arose "a new emphasis on the unity of the chapter in their present form". *The Eden Narrative* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 5,10.

[102] Thomas L. Brodie, *Genesis as Dialogue: A Literary, Historical, and Theological Commentary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 8.

[103] Thomas Römer. "Yhwh, the Goddess and Evil: Is 'Monotheism' an Adequate Concept to Describe the Hebrew Bible's Discourses about the God of Israel?" *Verbum et Ecclesia* 34, no. 2 (2013): 1–5.

could not have been monotheism, polytheism, or even henotheism but was, at best, monolatrous. Yahweh would have been the head or supreme ruler amongst other divinities to whom the people pledged allegiance and devotion.

This thesis' proper formulation and substantiation will depend on a thorough and effective methodology. The complexity of the topic requires that such methodology consists of a mix of distinct but complementary tools and a multi-disciplinary approach. This thesis does not intend to oversimplify the process. The task is daunting, but it is necessary. The following pages will outline the methods employed to move along in the study of the question of divinity represented in Genesis 3:22.

1.6   Methodology

1.6.1   Textual Criticism

There exist several textual representatives for every book in the Bible. What is meant by representatives are the various manuscripts that serve as witnesses for the biblical texts. There are no autographed, original copies of the books of the Bible. These available manuscripts are used as sources to produce modern editions of the Bible. The Masoretic text, the Qumran documents, and the Septuagint (LXX) are examples of said manuscripts. The Masoretic text, as preserved in the Biblica Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS), will be the main reference point for this research.[104] However, other witnesses will be evaluated for variant readings. This exercise aims to help determine a text's earliest and most probable reading before beginning the work of exegesis.

1.6.2   Macro-Syntactic Analysis

In the past, biblical Hebrew syntax was challenging and relied heavily on personal decisions and context. There were no clear and consistent guidelines to determine the mode and even the tense associated with the morphology of a verb and its functions in a clause, let alone a paragraph. Scholars often relied on lexical definitions and context. As a result, the five Hebrew verb forms were "translated by nearly all the tenses in modern languages, by every mood (except by the imperative for WAYYIQTOL) and by both aspects or 'modes of action' (complete and incomplete)."[105] In recent years, modern linguistics has contributed new insights about the nature

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[104] "The canonical concept that has been accepted in Judaism leads solely to the literary compositions that are reflected in 𝔐, and therefore it is these alone and not earlier or later stages that have to be considered" Emmanuel Tov. *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible.* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001) 172.

[106] Niccacci. *The Syntax*, 10.

and structure of biblical Hebrew. Thus, engaging the Hebrew texts with a more methodical certainty is now possible.

Consequently, this thesis will produce an original translation of the Eden narrative of Genesis 2–3 for exegesis based on a macro-syntactic analysis. Alviero Niccacci developed this synchronic method, which interacts with the Hebrew text in its current form. This approach aims to help create a stable theoretical system based on 'text linguistics' that enables exegetes to examine how the Hebrew verb forms function beyond the individual sentence onto the framework of the greater text. From that point, it can be determined "which modern tense should be used to translate" and if the verb should be nuanced with volitional moods.[106]

1.6.3   Word Study

The term *'elohim* is commonly used in biblical texts to refer to divine beings. Many contemporary Bibles often translate it as God with a capital g. This translation is burdened with theological and philosophical assumptions that may align more with contemporary sensitivities than with the original worldviews that shaped the word. To accurately interpret the concepts in the writings where this word is used, it is essential to understand its range of meanings. However, a mere lexical analysis falls short of the requirements for this thesis. A thorough examination of the word *'elohim* is thus essential. This study will explore research conducted on this word by two scholars, Joel S. Burnett and Terrence Wardlaw. Burnett does a diachronic study of the word *'elohim.* At the same time, Wardlaw focuses on the biblical application of the word and its interpretation by Judeo-Christian traditions. Conclusions derived from these investigations will be meticulously integrated into the relevant texts examined within this thesis. This approach aims to enhance the overall analysis and contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

1.6.4   Comparative Method

In recent and not-so-recent years, archaeological discoveries at Ras Shamra in ancient Ugarit have shed light on Canaanite religious beliefs. This is important to biblical studies as ancient Israel emerged from Canaan, and it seems that apart from just geography, it might have also shared a worldview with the other indigenous groups in this region. These discoveries can give an extra-biblical perspective of the situation on the ground during the emergence of ancient Israel and will be invaluable to this research.

The biblical corpus offers limited insights into the early religious beliefs of the ancient Israelites, making it difficult to have an accurate view. So, to gain a clearer picture, it becomes essential to conduct a comparative study that juxtaposes the scarce information found in the Hebrew Bible with data from the broader ancient Near East. This approach allows for exploring

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[106] Niccacci. *The Syntax*, 10.

the similarities and differences in religious practices and beliefs, shedding light on the religious landscape of early Israelite society.

1.6.5 Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics may generally be defined as the art or discipline of interpreting texts. Friedrich D.E. Schleiermacher is credited as being one of the most influential figures in the development of this field of study.[107] The notion of 'discipline' used in this definition is loosely applied to suggest the methodical aspect of hermeneutics. However, it must be emphasized that it is not exactly a method. Hence, the recourse to the conception of hermeneutics as art. Using the term 'art' to characterize the configuration of this process is not meant to imply that hermeneutics is a random exercise like the rolling of dice, the outcome of which is indeterminate. The referent art denotes, instead, the type of skill necessary for an interpreter to direct the interplay between the grammatical and technical/psychological features of interpretation in Schleiermacher's model, which he called *strict practice*.[108]

This understanding of hermeneutics as the conscious, artful disposition that the interpreter holds toward "accurately getting to what the speaker (*author*, emphasis mine) thought he or she was saying to his or her audience" in a designated speech or text is germane to this thesis paper.[109] The two distinct aspects of the principle of strict practice each have their function but are complementary in the process of interpretation. The grammatical part has its grounding in the "prescribed grammar and syntax of a particular linguistic community."[110] Thus, in keeping with the principle of 'strict practice,' an interpreter must have a thorough knowledge of the language and the historical context that gave rise to the formulation of the text. This procedure is known as divination.[111]

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[107] He was convinced that "every linguistic interaction, not just with ancient and fragmentary texts but also everyday conversations, requires interpretation and so falls under the discipline of Hermeneutics." Theodore Vial. *Schleiermacher: A Guide for the Perplexed*. (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2013), 48.

[108] "Neither language nor the individual as productive speaking individual can exist except via the being-in-each-other of both relationships. Precisely because in all understanding both tasks must be accomplished, understanding is art. Every single language could perhaps be learned via rules, and what can be learned in this way is mechanism. Art is that for which there admittedly are rules but the combinatory application of these rules cannot in turn be rule-bound." Friedrich Schleiermacher. *Hermeneutics and Criticism: And Other Writings*. (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 229.

[109] Vial. *Schleiermacher*, 48.

[110] McLean, Bradley H. *Biblical Interpretation and Philosophical Hermeneutics*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 39. "The task is to understand the sense of an utterance from out of the language" Schleiermacher, Friedrich. *Hermeneutics and Criticism: And Other Writings*. (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 232.

[111] "Schleiermacher's term 'divination' does not denote some kind of mystical communion with a

The technical or psychological aspect focuses more specifically on trying to detect the motivations and particular ways the author utilizes the language of her/his culture in composing the text.[112] In this manner, the technical /psychological and grammatical modules work as apparatus that approximates the intended meaning behind the text.

1.6.6   Semiotics

Etymologically, Semiotics "is traceable to the Greek word *sema*−'marks, signs' (singular *semeion*). It is commonly defined as the science or 'doctrine' (in the sense of systematic study) of signs."[113] Things or entities as symbols can roughly be defined as signs. As Denasi puts it, "Signs literally represent the world of beings, objects, ideas, and events."[114] Any human-made artifact can be used as a sign. Semiotic analysis applies "the synchronic and diachronic study of signs."[115] It investigates the nature and function of signs in their present context and the history of their development "over time."[116] Another definition posited by Charles Sanders Peirce is that semiotics is the study of "anything that stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity." Thus, semiotics analyzes signs as objects to make meanings.[117] This thesis will appeal to semiotics to identify the use of techniques such as binary opposition to create meaning in the text.[118]

1.7   Hypothesis of this thesis

The text of Genesis 3:22 suggests that it is a fragment of an earlier tradition that posits a different understanding of divinity. This earlier tradition probably depicted a council of deities governing the universe. This is no longer explicit in the Hebrew Bible because of a process of demythologization and monotheization of the texts.

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deceased author…a kind of intuiting or 'read(ing) between the lines' of the text and making temporary hypotheses with a view to appreciating the inner origin of a text in the mind of an author" is what is meant. [111] McLean, Bradley H. *Biblical Interpretation and Philosophical Hermeneutics*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p 42.

[112] McLean refers to this as the "inner discourse of the writer's activity in composing". *Biblical Interpretation and Philosophical Hermeneutics*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.41.

[113] Marcel Danesi. *Messages and Meanings: An Introduction to Semiotics*. (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press Inc., 1994), 2.

[114] *Ibid*.

[115] Danesi. *Messages*, 4.

[116] *Ibid*.

[117] *Ibid*.

[118] Consult Jacques Fontanille. For more information, see *The Semiotics of Discourse and* Mary Klages' *Literary Theory: The Complete Guide*.

A diligent and comprehensive research approach is required to establish the validity of this hypothesis. It involves identifying and accounting for the hermeneutical impulse and intuitions that motivate this research. Correspondingly, various exegetical tools, including the abovementioned methods, are necessary. The outcome of substantiating this thesis could lead to a more percipient interpretation of the history of the diverse ideas in the Hebrew Bible. Consequently, this research has the potential to open new avenues of inquiry, challenge existing assumptions about the religious beliefs of the ancient Israelites, and reassess what values, if any, they can offer to the postmodern mind.

CHAPTER TWO: Divine Plural in the Primeval History

Before proceeding with the analysis, explaining some basic features of Niccacci's approach to syntax is important to make it easier to follow the translation process. He developed a system based on H. Weinrich's text linguistics theory that organizes "narrative texts from three aspects: linguistic attitude, foregrounding and linguistic perspective. Each of these leads to the discovery of different dimensions in such texts."[119] Linguistic attitude identifies whether a text unit is a narrative/narration or discourse/direct speech. Foregrounding or prominence is divided between information that is foreground, meaning at the level of the story or background, which consists of supplemental or peripheral information. Finally, linguistic perspective situates the viewpoint from which the story unfolds. It could be *degree zero* denoting the story is moving forward, *recovered information* that takes place in the past, and *anticipated information* taking place in the future. The following symbols represent the different angles of linguistic perspective: ↓ (anticipated) ↑ (recovered) 0 (degree zero).

The Pentateuch has three instances in which the pronoun "*us*" refers to deity. An overview of the interpretations of the plural form in Genesis 3:22, from classical to modern times, is provided above. The upcoming pages will discuss the three passages in the Primeval history that showcase this divine plural. The objective is to understand the Hebrew terms corresponding to this concept by conducting a macro-syntactic analysis of the texts. The result will then be compared with contemporary English translations to gain more insight into the nature of divinity. The three passages under analysis are Genesis 1:26, Genesis 3:22, and Genesis 11:7.

2.1   Genesis 1:26

The passage in Genesis 1:26 is likely familiar to most readers with even a vague knowledge of the Bible. For thousands of years, scholars have debated the meaning behind humans being created in God's image and the significance of the plural pronouns used by God. This thesis will focus on the meaning of the divine plural, with insights from observations about the imago Dei. Table 1 will serve as an exhibit of the analysis of the two clauses in verse 26.

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[119] Niccacci. *The Syntax*, 19. §3

Afterward, general conclusions about the nature of the image of God will be drawn. This will help shed light on the conceptualization of divinity in the Eden narrative and primeval history.

Table 1. Genesis 1:26

Verse	Grammatical construction	Hebrew	Verb form	English translation
26a	VC in N	וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים	WAYYIQTOL (3rd msc. Sing.) (Narrative)	And/then he said Elohim
26b	VC in D	נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כִּדְמוּתֵנוּ	YIQTOL (1st common plural) (Discourse) (Jussive) Fg degree 0	We should make a grounder in the image of us according to the semblance of us
26c	VC	וְיִרְדּוּ בִדְגַת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבַבְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל־הָאָרֶץ	WeYIQTOL (3rd common plural) (Discourse) Fg degree 0	So they may rule…
26d	SNC	וּבְכָל־הָרֶמֶשׂ הָרֹמֵשׂ עַל־הָאָרֶץ׃	Qal participle. Masc. Singular; absolute Fg degree 0	

Verse 26 can be divided into three separate verbal clauses: v. 26ᵃ, 26ᵇ, and 26ᶜ. Verse 26ᵃ is a WAYYIQTOL construction, which "is the verb form used" to articulate Biblical Hebrew narrative. This is the verb form in Narrative that makes the story move forward. [120] The discourse section begins in v. 26ᵇ with a YIQTOL (an imperfect) in first position of the clause and is thus a cohortative form.[121] Verse 26ᶜ is a weYIQTOL verb form and thus confirms the volitional nuance of v.26ᵇ [122]

Verse 26ᵇ is a direct volitive form.[123] According to Waltke & O'Connor, it expresses "the will or strong desire of the speaker…where the speaker cannot effect a desire without the consent

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[120] Niccacci. *The Syntax*, 37. § 16
[121] It should be noted that the aspect of the verb (i.e., imperfect) merely indicates if the action indicated by the verb is completed or not completed.
[122] See Niccacci, *The Syntax,* § 61. Niccacci noted, "There are examples of the cohortative at the head of a clause…Sometimes the cohortative is continued by additional cohortatives preceded by WAW. Niccacci also specifies that […] in cases where the persons are identical *and where they are different* (italics mine) it seems that the coordinated forms express the volitive aspect of the action […]." § 61, p. 88.
[123] See note above. Niccacci, *The Syntax,* §61.

of the one addressed, it connotes request" and would be instead an indirect volitive.[124] Hence, in verse 26[b], the deity seems to be sharing, almost as a recommendation, his desire to some anonymous addressee(s) with whom, it appears, he shares kinship and status, simultaneously inviting them to participate in the intended project of making or creating a human. The volitive mood or tone, here, is not a request, nor does it evoke an imperative or a duty (a "must"). It is meant to put forward an encouragement or motivation that can be best communicated in English using the auxiliary verb "should." [125]

Verse 26[c] is a third-person jussive. The author chose this form to continue the volitive mood from the previous sentence and convey the intention behind the preceding statement. The clause comprises a series of conjunctions outlining the different constituents of the human's dominion.[126]

26[d] is a simple nominal clause with the participle הָרֹמֵשׂ (crawling, creeping) in the absolute state. A participle is "a non-finite verb form used as a noun (specifically as an adjective)." Grammatically, Hebrew participles correspond to "the English adjectival participle."[127] The form הָרֹמֵשׂ suggests an active fientive voice, demonstrating that the action predicated about the subject is continual. Waltke states that this type of participle "can govern… a prepositional phrase," which in this verse is the phrase 'on the land.'[128]

Some effort is put into accurately translating the text, but the nuances in Hebrew are not fully conveyed in many English Bible versions. For instance, the NRSV suggests that God has made a final decision, and all parties must adhere to it, while the CEV places the divine plan in an unspecified future. The amplified version adds a Christian Trinitarian interpretation not found in the original text. See below for the alternate translations:

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[124] According to Robert David, a Cohortative followed by weYIQTOL expresses "vouloir faire," something the subject wants to do. If this Cohortative were not followed by the weYIQTOL, it would be expressed as an imperative in the first person, "Let us make," which is not the case here. Thus, the importance of a macro-syntactical analysis. It helps distinguish between a wish and a self-imposed duty (must). For further explanation, see *Traduire La Bible Hébraïque: De La Septante à la Nouvelle Bible Segond*. pp. 282–299.

[125] This paper briefly discusses 'image and likeness' in § 4.1.3. However, that is not the focus of the thesis.

[126] "The volitive value of the weYIQTOL (indirect jussive) comes out even more clearly when it continues an initial YIQTOL (direct jussive)." Niccacci. *The Syntax*, 91. § 62.

[127] Waltke, O'Connor. *An Introduction*, 612. § 37.1a.

[128] Waltke, O'Connor. *An Introduction*, 616. § 37.3b.

"Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion…" (NRSV)

God said, "Now we will make humans, and they will be like us. We will let them rule ..." (CEV)

Then God said, "Let Us (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) make man in Our image, according to Our likeness [not physical, but a spiritual personality and moral likeness]; and let them have complete authority ..." (AMP)

God spoke: "Let us make human beings in our image, make them reflecting our nature So they can be responsible (MSG)

In contrast, to make explicit the volitive value of the different verb forms in this verse, this thesis translates Gen 1:26 into: Then said *'elohim*, "We should make a grounder in the image of us according to the semblance of us so they may/could rule…"

2.2   Genesis 3:22

The subsequent passage of scripture is widely understood to confirm the Fall of Man due to original sin. It is one of the few instances in the Hebrew Bible where a mysterious plural pronoun is syntactically associated with what would be the theologically singular noun, God. As is clear by now, this text is fundamental to the inquiry at hand. The forthcoming pages will provide an initial exploration of this passage through a macro syntactic analysis.

Table 2. Genesis 3:22

Verse	Grammatical construction	Hebrew	Verb form	English translation
22a	WAYYIQTOL	וַיֹּאמֶר ׀ יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים	WAYYIQTOL (Narrative)	Then said the divinity Yahweh
22b	x-QATAL	הֵן הָאָדָם הָיָה כְּאַחַד מִמֶּנּוּ	Qal; perf. 3rd pers. Masculine sing. (Discourse)	Well lookie here, The grounder *is come to be* like one out of us
22c	SNC	לָדַעַת טוֹב וָרָע	Qal; infinitive construct (Discourse)	Toward the knowing of good and bad

Verse 22[a] is the general verb form used in narrative linguistic attitude. The verbal form for verse 22[b] is "QATAL for reporting."[129] Yahweh is reporting on a past event told previously in 'narrative,' the linguistic attitude for which the WAYYIQTOL is the typical form used.[130] The actual episode is probably the pericope of Genesis 3:1-7, but the specific event that Yahweh is reporting on is narrated in verses 6 and 7. Grammatically, this event begins with what is the first of a series of WAYYIQTOLs, namely וַתֵּרֶא then וַתִּקַּח, וַתֹּאכַל, וַתִּתֵּן, וַיֹּאכַל: *She saw, she took, she ate, she gave to her man, and he ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and bad.* Consequently, both their eyes were opened וַתִּפָּקַחְנָה (Niphal[131], WAYYIQTOL), they knew וַיֵּדְעוּ (Qal, WAYYIQTOL). Therefore, they sewed וַיִּתְפְּרוּ (Qal, WAYYIQTOL) and they made וַיַּעֲשׂוּ (Qal, WAYYIQTOL) for themselves loin-coverings.

The verb הָיָה (to be) in 22b is a Qal verb (3rd pers. masc. sing) in Qatal form. In English, the QATAL verb form "is rendered by the present perfect, a tense which belongs to the realm of comment."[132] , a subcategory of the linguistic attitude discourse. In discourse, this construction "always comes first in the sentence."[133] Alternatively, on some occasions, it may be "preceded by a subject." [134] The author/redactor of the Eden story uses this technique of juxtaposing WAYYIQTOL/QATAL to enable Yahweh Elohim to retrospectively observe the event when the grounder and his woman partook of the forbidden tree's fruit.[135]

The Hebrew phrase כְּאַחַד מִמֶּ֫נּוּ, which this paper theorizes to be alluding to a divine plurality, consists of two words. The first, כְּאַחַד, is made of a preposition כְּ, and a common singular noun in the absolute state אַחַד. The second, מִמֶּ֫נּוּ, is also compounded with a preposition מִן, and the first person, plural pronominal suffix נַחְנוּ. The phrase seems to imply that "the grounder is now like any of us" because the man and woman have acquired the ability to perceive as they were unable to before eating the fruit. Henceforth, Yahweh affirms they have attained a cognitive ability seemingly exclusive to divinities (*us*). The construction of verse 22[c], "לְ + infinitive, often explains the circumstances or nature of a preceding action."[136]

It is intriguing to note that Yahweh's statement in verse 22 not only recalls the events that were narrated in 3:6 and 7 but also mirrors the words (…*you will not die…your eyes will open and you will become like divinities…*) spoken by the serpent to the woman in verses 4[b] and 5. These verses depict the serpent as possessing prescience akin to an oracle who foretells the future. This raises the question of how and where the serpent obtained this knowledge. Should

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[129] Niccacci. *The Syntax*, 41. §22
[130] Niccacci. *The Syntax*, 41. §22

[131] A Hebrew verb stem that expresses simple action with a passive voice.
[132] Niccacci. *The Syntax*, 42. §22
[133] Niccacci. *The Syntax*, 41. §22
[134] Niccacci. *The Syntax*, 180. §149
[135] "When the event is related in Narrative the WAYYIQTOL is used; but when the same event is reported in discourse, after verbs of 'saying', 'telling', 'hearing' ('report'), QATAL is used". Niccacci. *The Syntax*, 41. §22
[136] Waltke, O'Connor. *An Introduction*, 608. §36.2.3e

we assume that the serpent's nature is divine since Yahweh 'elohim seems to confirm that the type of knowledge it appears to possess is a divine characteristic?

Genesis 3:22

Well, lookie here! The grounder has come to be like one out of us for the knowledge of good and bad

Genesis 3:4ᵇ–5

Not to die, you all will die

For the divinity is one cognizing

That right on the day of you all eating from it

Then (them) both of your eyes, they will open

Thus, you all will come to be like divinities

Ones cognizing of good and bad

(Thesis' translation)

The analysis of this text finds no grammatical or semantic grounds to overlook the possibility that the plural pronoun stands as a referent to the word and idea 'gods,' which is the generic English translation of the noun "*'elohim*." The thesis presupposes this word, in this context, describes a distinct class of otherworldly entities that appears to include various sentient beings that differ in genus. The meaning of *'elohim* will be discussed in chapter three of this paper.

When examining the macro syntactic analysis compared to popular Bible translations, it becomes apparent that the latter struggles to convey the imagery intended by the Hebrew language accurately. While the NRSV comes closest to achieving this, it still falls short by translating the Hebrew interjection הֵן as the verb "see." On the other hand, the CEV leans too heavily into interpretation rather than pure translation, while the Amplified prioritizes fidelity to Christian doctrine over precise translation. Though not necessarily incorrect, the MSG introduces elements absent in the Hebrew text. Translations are listed below for further comparison.

Then the Lord God said, "See, the humans have become like one of us, knowing good and evil" (NRSV)

The Lord said, "They now know the difference between right and wrong, just as we do" (CEV).

And the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us (Father, Son, Holy Spirit), knowing [how to distinguish between] good and evil" (AMP)

God said, "The Man has become like one of us, capable of knowing everything, ranging from good to evil" (MSG).

2.3   Genesis 11:7

Genesis 11:7

The divine plural is last seen in the story of the tower of Babel, where humans gather in the land of Shinar to construct a towering city. However, this endeavor is not well-received by the deity, who intervenes to impede its advancement. As with prior texts, we will apply macro syntactic analysis to the Masoretic version of this pericope and provide some accompanying observations. You may refer to Table 4 for the analysis.

Table 4. Genesis 11:7

Verse	Grammatical construction	Hebrew	Verb form	English Translation
7a	VC	הָבָה	Qal; imperative; 2nd pers. Masculine; sing. Fg ↓ Degree 0 (Discourse)	Come on, you!

7b	VC	גֵרְדָ֔ה	Qal 1st pers. Plural; cohortative; direct form YIQTOL 1ˢᵗ position Fg ↓ Degree 0 (Discourse)	We should go down
7c	VC	וְנָבְלָ֥ה שָׁ֖ם שְׂפָתָ֑ם	Qal; weYIQTOL; Plural; cohortative; indirect form Fg ↓ (Discourse)	Hence, we may mix-up, there, their lips
7d	CNC/ 2SC	אֲשֶׁר֙ לֹ֣א יִשְׁמְע֔וּ	Qal; imperf. 3ʳᵈ pers. Masculine; plural (Discourse X- Yiqtol)) Protasis?	that they will not hear
7e	SNC/2SC	אִ֖ישׁ שְׂפַ֥ת רֵעֵֽהוּ׃	Discourse Apodosis? P.142	A man lips of his companion

The emphasis of verse 7 is foreground with linguistic perspective at degree 0.[137] The literary unit begins with an imperative followed by two cohortatives, a complex nominal clause and ends with a simple nominal clause. The imperative is the verb הָבָה in verse 7ᵃ. It stems from the root יָהַב, which can mean *to give*, as in causing to come forth, provide, or ascribe. It can also imply the idiomatic expression "come now (orig. grant, permit)" as in Gen 11:3, 4, 7; 38:16. It is often used for encouraging or motivating others in a non-coercive manner.[138] Gesenius explains it as an "adv. of exhorting, *come! come on! come now, go to*; Ex. 1:10. (Arab. هَبْ give,

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[137] In Discourse, the prominence foreground implies the story is moving forward. This is typified by the indicative x-YIQTOL, volitive forms, or SNC. See Niccacci. *The Syntax*, 187. §87 and page 121 §92 for the explanation on how to identify degree zero in discourse,

[138] Brown, F., Driver, S. R., & Briggs, C.A. *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 396.

Where is the footnote number "The effect of the plural cohortative is frequently heightened by a verb of motion in the imperative, which functions as an auxiliary or interjection… the verb *yhb* 'to give' occurs only in the imperative, sometimes in this role. Such an imperative may be linked to the cohortative with a *waw* or it may be juxtaposed asyndetically". Waltke, O'Connor. *An Introduction*, 574. § 34.5.1a

grant.).”[139] It is not obvious why this exclamation is in the second person masculine singular. However, a rule of thumb is “such imperative may be linked to the cohortative with a waw” or contrasted without any.[140]

Verse 7[b] is a direct volitive form that is positionally initial.[141] Yet, it is preceded by an imperative.[142] In these instances, “le sujet émet le souhait de faire une action qui aura des conséquences exprimées par le (ou les) ו (waw: conjunction) + cohortative suivant.”[143] In other words, the speaker expresses in a somewhat hypothetical mood that he or she *wants to* act and intends to realize said desire to effect a future outcome. This is demonstrated grammatically by waw coordinated with indirect cohortatives.[144] The initial or direct volitive forms like 7[b] can also function as “continuation constructions.”[145]

Verse 7[c] is an indirect volitive form, which is continuative like the previous clause.[146] Indirect volitives are coordinated forms that “express the volitive aspect of the action (often with a nuance of finality).”[147] According to Robert David “le cohortatif indirect sera toujours traduit sous la forme « …afin de ».”[148] Nevertheless, since the clause is a weYIQTOL construction following an imperative, it “should be translated” with the auxiliary verb ‘*may*.’[149] Cohortative → weYIQTOL in discourse is non-initial and marks the aim or intention(volitional).[150]

Verse 7[d] is a complex nominal clause denoting motive.[151] In discourse, it is “used to express the future.”[152] It cannot have any volitional nuance in this condition. It is an x-YIQTOL

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[139] Wilhem Gesenius, & Samuel Prideaux Tregelles. *Gesenius Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures*. (London: S. Bagster & Sons, 1857), 336.

[140] Waltke, O’Connor. *An Introduction*, 574. § 34.5.1a
“The combination *hbh* with the cohortative is used in Gen 11:3,4 by the conspirators at Babel” and in verse 7 by God. Waltke, O’Connor. *An Introduction*, 574. § 34.5.2a
[141]For the three volitive forms in Hebrew see Niccacci. *The Syntax*, 88. §61.
[142] See Robert David. *Traduire La Bible Hébraïque: De La Septante à la Nouvelle Bible Segond*. (Montréal: MediaPaul, 2004), 281 where he identifies « les cohortatifs directs 1[re] position précédés d’un impératif (classe a.1.1) » et « les cohortatifs directs 2e position quel que soit le type de proposition qui précède (classe a.2) »
[143] “The conjunctions serve to connect sentences, and to express their relations one to another.” Kautzsch & Cowley. *Gesenius*, 305, § 104.
[144] David. *Traduire La Bible Hébraïque*, 283.
[145] Niccacci. *The Syntax*, 88. §61.
[146] Niccacci. *The Syntax*, 88. §61.
[147] Niccacci. *The Syntax*, 88. §61.
[148] David. *Traduire La Bible Hébraïque*, 283.
[149] Niccacci. *The Syntax*, 90. § 61.
[150] “This is a non-initial construction used in speech. Its function is to continue a direct volitional form in order to express another volitional action (‘indirect jussive’), usually to denote purpose” … Accordingly, weYIQTOL expresses a volitive rather than a simple future” Niccacci. *The Syntax*, 187. §159-160
[151] Niccacci. *The Syntax*, 30.
[152] Niccacci. *The Syntax*, 170. §135.

grammatical construction that "indicates fg of ↓ in the communication." It tells of the anticipated result or consequence the speaker (s) desired and aimed for.[153]

Verse 7[e] is a simple nominal clause construction that marks the prominence "foreground of the communication" in discourse.[154] It also indicates degree zero linguistic perspective "for the axis of present time." This is akin to the continued unfolding of the story being viewed from the front row.[155]

Popular Bible translations of this passage are mainly consistent. However, they all fail to convey the true volitive nuance of the volitional mood of verse 7[b]. They all use the phrase "let us go down" as a translation. Yet, as has been argued extensively throughout the paper, the semantic sense of this clause is too strong. Therefore, the chosen translation of the text for this thesis is "*Come on! **We should go down so that we may mix up**, there, their lips and they will not hear a man lips of his companion*". This version emphasizes the volitive mood of the cohortative by employing auxiliary modal verbs. Below are some examples of popular translations:

Come, let us go down, and confuse their language there so that they will not understand one another's speech. (NRSV)

Come, let Us (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) go down and there confuse *and* mix up their language so that they will not understand one another's speech. (AMP)

Come, let's go down there and confuse their language so that they will not understand one another's speech. (CSB)

Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. (KJV)

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[153] Niccacci. *The Syntax*, 171. §135.
[154] Niccacci. *The Syntax*, 171. § 135 and 117 § 87.
[155] Niccacci. *The Syntax*, 121. § 92

2.4   Conclusion about the Divine Plurals

The macro syntactic analysis of the three pericopes in the book of Genesis, wherein the divine plural appears, has revealed certain particularities that are not evident in most traditional translations. Genesis 1:26 and 11:7 use the Hebrew grammatical form for the cohortative volitional mood. A detailed definition is available above, which suffices to say that it expresses will or desire, not commands. In these two texts, the deity addresses other individual (s) who are usually assumed to be subordinates, which is the traditional theological interpretation. As demonstrated by this thesis' translations, in applying the cohortative, the authors make the language employed by the deity more inclusive and collaborative. In both cases, his will or desire appeals more to participation than compulsion.

Secondly, Genesis 3:22 seems to confirm the snake's statement in Genesis 3:5, especially clause 5[d]. Yahweh affirms that humans have become like "us," seemingly agreeing with the snake, stating to the woman in 3:5[d], "You all will be like divinities." On a synchronic level, it can be concluded inductively that the divine plural in the Primeval history refers to other divinities comparable to Yahweh. This would explain why the author chooses to use the first person plural cohortative in two of the examples examined above, whence Yahweh is shown to desire to take initiatives in which he wishes to involve them. In these instances, the discourse is less imposing.

CHAPTER 3: The Concept of God: What is the meaning of אֱלֹהִים?

The following pages will be an overview of two scholars' attempts to explain the term אֱלֹהִים *'elohim* used in the Hebrew Bible to refer to God. First, Joel S. Burnett's view on the word argues that "the comparative evidence for the noun *'elohim* provides a historical and philological frame of reference for understanding the Hebrew expression."[156] At the synchronic end of the research on the word *'elohim* there are scholars like Terrence Wardlaw whose inquiry "in the conceptualization of words for God" stresses the canonical approach over the historical.[157]

3.1.1   Joel S. Burnett

Burnett asserts that there are "two drastically differing interpretations of '*elohim*" in the scholarship of ancient Israelite religion. One is that the term was used as a plural form of the name of the deity El. Alternatively, the other is that biblical *'elohim* was a purely literary expression produced by monotheistic Judaism after the exile and had never played a role in Israel's worship and cultic traditions.[158] He affirms that the attestations of the use of cognate words, which are grammatically plural but function in the singular, like *'elohim* are found in Late Bronze Age documents from Armana, Qatna, Taanach, and Ugarit. He points out *ilanu* which is a plural in western Akkadian, as "an exact parallel to Hebrew *'elohim*."[159]

Burnett discusses occurrences in a Canaanite vassal letter to Egypt when the plural *ilanu* is used as a singular referent to Pharaoh as an example of divine plural acting as a singular like the Hebrew *'elohim*. He also highlights a couple more instances "in which singular *ilanu* is used in reference not to Pharaoh but to proper deities"[160] and the plural morphology coheres with a singular verb. He asserts that there was a preference for the plural form over the singular *ilu* as the designation for an individual deity or a king in the southern Levant throughout the Late Bronze Age.

ilanu like the Hebrew *'elohim* functions both as singular and plural even though there are singular forms for both. Burnett concludes from evidence in El Amarna tablet 151 "that singular *ilanu* conveys a meaning different from that of simple *ilu*"[161]. What is the reason behind this phenomenon? It was once thought that the divine plural was used to express an entity's

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[156] *A Reassessment of Biblical Elohim*. (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001), 7.
[157] Wardlaw, Terrence R. Jr, *Conceptualizing Words for God within the Pentateuch: A Cognitive-Semantic Investigation in Literary Context*. (New York: T&T Clark International, 2008), 13.

[158] Burnett. *A Reassessment*, 5.
[159] Burnett. *A Reassessment*, 8.
[160] Burnett. *A Reassessment*, 8.
[161] Burnett. *A Reassessment*, 16.

encapsulation of the essence of all the members of a divine organization.[162] However, he refutes this explanation based on alternate usage of *ilanu* in an idiom which is translated into 'the god of my head' in texts like El Amarna 198:2 and in "a letter found at Mari," which he claims means "my personal deity."[163] The personal deity is not necessarily the head of a pantheon. The terms "god of the head" and the notion of the chief of the pantheon are unique, as exemplified in the Mari letter. Thus, *ilanu* cannot be used exclusively to distinguish the chief god of a pantheon[164].

Based on the witnesses at "Amarna, Qatna, Taanach, and Ugarit."[165] Burnett concludes that *ilanu* and *ilu* possess the same semantic reach, whether referencing a personal god, imperial god, patron god of a city, or a deity's statue. Nevertheless, upon closer examination of El Amarna 151, he states the plural form seems to convey a secondary definition made apparent through grammatical analysis.

Burnett suggests that the singular *ilanu* is "a variety of the abstract plural."[166] According to Genesius, plurals, in Hebrew, express the idea of collectivity. They do not simply serve to communicate notions of quantity. Abstract plurals that generally end with *-im* suffixes (*qᵉtulim*, *zequnim…*) "sum up either the conditions or qualities inherent in the idea of the stem or else the various single acts of which an action is composed."[167] He locates corresponding Biblical Hebrew abstract plural varieties in Late Bronze Age Ugarit and Phoenician.[168] He does not agree that the concept of 'plural of majesty' was present in the royal or noble vernacular of "the Canaanite rulers of the Amarna period" because of the scarcity of explicit examples.[169]

He proposes using the term "concretized abstract plural" because he claims it is more accurate than categories like plural of amplitude, plural of excellence, plurale modestiae, or plural of majesty.[170] According to Burnett, these terms tend to be misleading as they may direct one who is inattentive into understanding the plural forms as serving as adjectives to the referent.

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[162] As early as 1913, Johannes Hehn and later Albright's position was that "the plural denotes a multiplicity of gods and thus equates the individual or deity so designated as the embodiment of the pantheon". Burnett. *A Reassessment*, 16.

[163] Burnett. *A Reassessment*, 16.

[164] Burnett. *A Reassessment*, 16. Foot note number Notably, "ilani in family legal documents from Nuzi, evidently a reference to figures of household gods, which are mentioned here as part of the ancestral heritage… they served to secure the continuity of the family and the solidarity between one generation and the next... They seem to represent the deified ancestors of the family." Rainer Albertz. *A History of Israelite Religion in The Old Testament Period Vol. I: From the Beginnings to the End of The Monarchy*. (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), 38.

[165] Burnett. *A Reassessment*, 18.

[166] Burnett. *A Reassessment*, 21.

[167] E. Katuzsch and A.E. Cowley. *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1909), 397. § 124b.

[168] See page 21 of Burnett. *A Reassessment*

[169] Burnett. *A Reassessment*, 20.

[170] Burnett. *A Reassessment*, 22.

In his view, the plural form has less to do with the object it may be pointing to and more with "the idea associated with the stem, i.e., an abstraction."[171]

In Burnett's view, the Phoenician singular *'lm*, based on evidence from Iron Age Phoenician and Akkadian epigraphs, is a derivative of a "Late Bronze Age Canaanite" expression which implies the "general abstraction (divinity)," the divine or deity.[172] The attestations for the singular *'ilm* continue past the eighth century B.C.E. It must be noted that *'ilm* can be used to refer to male or female deities[173].

'Elohim, like *'ilanu* and *'ilm*, is an abstract plural. It denotes the abstract quality of divinity, just like the words 'metaphysics' and 'information' can function as singular or plural. But it also has the generic sense, which can be translated as god, deity, or divine. Generally, it is a common noun that "is somewhat more flexible in its usage" than other Biblical Hebrew words like *'el* and *'eloah,* which can all connote the word god. As an example of the semantic polyvalence of *'elohim*, Burnett indicates several occurrences in the Hebrew Bible when the idea of divinity, as expressed by that word, describes humans with extraordinary abilities instead of gods. He cites Ps 45:7-8, Ps 8:6, and Exodus 4:16 as examples.[174]

According to Burnett, Hebrew Bible authors' discourse about the divine in non-Israelite settings is more likely to use the singular *'elohim*. There are, however, some exceptions. In texts such as Gen 20:13 and 1Sm 4:7-8, *'elohim* is coordinated with plural verb forms. He points out the peculiarity of this phenomenon, notably in Gen 20 vv. 3, 6, and 17, where singular verbs are used "in the comments of the narrator."[175]

3.1.2   Terrence Wardlaw

Wardlaw is critical of traditional comparative analyses in studying "the meaning of words for God."[176] In his view, the diachronic investigation is engaged in hypotheticals and is somewhat futile since there is no access to sources to verify its proposals. In his estimation, the Bible has a definitive understanding of words for God, so the emphasis ought to be there. Nevertheless, he concedes that comparative research can help "approximate the definition of obscure, uncommon words" in the biblical corpus.[177]

As the title of his book suggests, Wardlaw's project is to understand the meaning of words used to conceptualize the divine in the Pentateuch. So, he resorts to cognitive linguistics analysis. This approach "brings together" various disciplines that aim to study the nature of the

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[171] *Ibid*.

[172] Burnett. *A Reassessment*, 24. Elsewhere Burnett, states *'ilm* and the Hebrew *'elohim* are "an Iron Age reflex of the Canaanite expression reflected in the Amarna letters and in other Late Bronze Age cuneiform documents." *A Reassessment*, 28.

[173] Burnett. *A Reassessment*, 26.

[174] Burnett. *A Reassessment*, 57.

[175] Burnett. *A Reassessment*, 73.

[176] Wardlaw. *Conceptualizing Words for God*, 56.

[177] Wardlaw. *Conceptualizing words for God,* 13.

mind and how it functions.[178] Cognitive linguistics analysis investigates how a subject's mind apprehends information and fabricates meaning through a series of structural processes made possible through language. As he sees it, the structure of meaning is "not universal, but rather language-specific"[179]; it is also contextual and perspectival.[180]

As stated above, Wardlaw doubts the comparative approach's potential to produce optimal results in the search for understanding the meaning of words for "God" in the Hebrew Bible. He suggests that comparative philology is limited in its methodology and that past comparative attempts failed to consider "the arbitrariness of linguistic signs."[181] The studies neglected the social contexts from which words like *'elohim* obtained their significance. Since no social group's construction of reality is the same, the semantic range of signs or words varies across the linguistic spectrum. He argues that "the working assumption of some comparative scholars" undermined this semiotic variability and have therefore presumed "that there was linguistic similarity in the conceptualization of 'god' throughout the ancient Near East."[182]

For Wardlaw, the meaning of words for *god* "is embedded and developed within the language-system of the text itself"[183]. He affirms that this semantic configuration was prompted by "the religious community of ancient Israel and by the present Church." [184] This implies that a degree of meaning is now embedded in the tradition through those two institutions' reception and canonization of the text. So, a reader will understand what the words for *god* within scripture signify by being attentive to certain linguistic indicators standardized through these institutions' hermeneutical parameters. He seems to be advocating for a confessional reading of the text.

One of the reasons Wardlaw suggests cognitive linguistics is advantageous to the quest for understanding the Biblical Hebrew words for God is its emphasis on conceptualization or perspective. By perspective, he refers to various ways diverse religions, languages, and cultures may ideate. Thus, Cognitive linguistics enables the investigator to maintain the dynamism and porous feature of semantics in focus.[185]

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[178] Wardlaw. *Conceptualizing Words for God,* 23.

[179] Wardlaw. *Conceptualizing words for God,* 27.

[180] "…the semantic associations of words for "God" in Biblical Hebrew differ from words for "god" in other ancient Near Eastern languages. Perspective is part of meaning, and occasionally traditional comparative descriptions of the reference and connotations of word for "God" fail to emphasize the different perspectives between languages, cultures, and religions in the ancient Near East, as well as socio-religious groups within ancient Israel itself". Wardlaw. *Conceptualizing words for God,* 27.

[181] Wardlaw. *Conceptualizing words for God,* 17.

[182] Wardlaw. *Conceptualizing words for God,* 14.

[183] Wardlaw. *Conceptualizing words for God,* 37.

[184] Wardlaw. *Ibid*.

[185] "There may be differences in the understanding of words for "God" between the normative and prescriptive text of the Pentateuch on the one hand, and the vernacular of the heterodox or unorthodox factions within Israel, as well as the distinctive socio-religio-cultural systems of opposing religions. The notion of conceptualization or perspective captures this distinction in meaning". Wardlaw. *Conceptualizing words for God,* 28.

Wardlaw counts 812 occurrences of the word אֱלֹהִים in the Pentateuch and 2,602 in the Old Testament. He states that the word refers to Israel's deity and thus generally means 'God.' It is also used to refer to "foreign gods, idols."[186] According to Wardlaw, the primary sense of the word is 'God,' which is a title for the Israelites' deity. Furthermore, he suggests it is often morphologically plural "with a singular referent." Seven hundred forty-two times, this plural form refers to the one god, Yahweh, in the Pentateuch.[187] It functions as a common noun and appellative. It appears 55 times with a definite article and sometimes with pronominal suffixes[188].

From a cognitive linguistics reading of the primeval narrative, Wardlaw concludes אֱלֹהִים to signify creator i.e., the one who "spoke the heavens and the earth into existence, established times, created all living plants and creatures" and made humanity.[189] אֱלֹהִים, or God, is depicted metaphorically as a sovereign king who is inclined to express beneficence to those he reigns over. In this primary sense, אֱלֹהִים is יְהוָה who is engaged in a covenantal relationship with the Hebrews. Consequently, he has the authority to ascribe divine law and expects an obedient response. Wardlaw contends the form אֱלֹהִים to be a plural of majesty. He affirms that it is "a variety of the abstract plural," a noun that "sums up the characteristics belonging to the idea and possesses the secondary sense of intensifying the original idea."[190]

Secondly, Wardlaw asserts that אֱלֹהִים is used in the sense of "a true plural in reference to foreign gods or idols around 67 times within the Pentateuch."[191] In this sense, the term represents the ontological categorization of deity, namely "spiritual beings" in contradistinction to that of humans. In this sense, the word idols also refers to any non-Mosaic objects of worship, graven, carved, or imagined. He proposes this sense of the term to be a common noun since it has the categorical range that can encapsulate all non-Israelite deities into a class.[192]

In a rather complicated fashion, Wardlaw reaffirms that comparative studies and archaeology can be insightful in facilitating the process of understanding the conceptualization of אֱלֹהִים as a class term. In the instance, for example, that at different historical periods and geographical locations, אֱלֹהִים, in "reference to idols (Gen: 31:32)", graven images and fetishes may have elicited a "plethora of images from ancient Near Eastern iconography" in the minds of the "original or early audiences of the Pentateuch." At the same time, "non-Mosaic objects of worship" depicted in epic poetry and folk stories may have conjured another kind of mental picture, i.e., that of forbidden objects of worship in "non-Mosaic religious practices."[193] In turn, how ancient Israel viewed non-Mosaic religious practices would affect these two frames of reference. Here, Wardlaw concurs that the comparative approach is an appropriate instrument. The comparative methodology seems to have salient use when and if the object of study is אֱלֹהִים as a referent to foreign deities and idols. In this sense, the term should be understood as a

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[186] Wardlaw. *Conceptualizing words for God*, 98.
[187] Wardlaw. *Conceptualizing words for God*, 98
[188] In Hebrew, pronominal suffixes denote personal or possessive pronouns.
[189] Wardlaw. *Conceptualizing words for God*, 100.
[190] Wardlaw. *Conceptualizing words for God,* 104.
[191] Wardlaw. *Conceptualizing words for God,* 109.
[192] Wardlaw. *Conceptualizing words for God,* 109.
[193] Wardlaw. *Conceptualizing words for God,*111.

common noun. However, when the term is pointing to יְהוָה, it is an appellative. It must be understood as a title.

The last sense of using the term, states Wardlaw, is as an idiom. For illustration, he gives the בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים in Gen 6:2, 4. He suggests this phrase to have semantic ties to the usage of the word אֱלֹהִים in 1 Sam 28:13, where the woman of En Dor uses the word to refer to the appearance of the conjured dead prophet, Samuel. Wardlaw states that "the reference to a dead spirit, in conjunction with the parallel occurrence of אֱלֹהִים and שֵׁדִים in Deut 32:17, may indicate that in the vernacular אֱלֹהִים meant "spirit, spiritual being" (either good or malevolent)."[194]

So, it was not just used to relay a monotheistic picture of God like in Gen 1 or to refer to a plurality of divinities as in other ancient Near Eastern literature. In his estimation, everyday people may have understood אֱלֹהִים to mean "spirit, preternatural being."[195] As such, בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים is a "class term" which, he proposes, means "spiritual beings." This notion or concept would have been appropriated and integrated into the monotheistic characterization of אֱלֹהִים as God in Gen 1.[196]

Wardlaw does not show how he comes to that conclusion; he gives the impression of wallowing in the arbitrary type of speculation he accuses comparative theorists of engaging in. To what does he attribute this distinctive difference between the common people's worldview and that of other social classes in the greater society they form? The concept/notion of *spirit,* as Wardlaw perhaps understands, also rings prochronistic to the temporal domain (primeval era) those stories seem to want to portray.

Granted, by the time of the Dead Sea Scrolls, a dualist theology that allowed for the possibility of belief in disembodied spirits and demons was part and parcel of Jewish thought.[197] Still, this thesis argues that this is not only a later development in reading the Genesis text but that this notion is also probably foreign to the thinking of the early Bible authors. The Pentateuch's conceptualization of the בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים thus, could not be equivalent to that of later Jewish and Christian understandings of angels. The scope of this thesis will not allow further elaboration on this topic. It was necessary, nonetheless, to highlight those issues.

3.1.3   The Divine Council

The motif of the divine council is often alluded to in the Hebrew Bible, but the biblical authors do not expound on it. Instead, they assume that their audience is already familiar with the

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[194] Wardlaw. *Conceptualizing words for God,* 112.
[195] Wardlaw. *Conceptualizing words for God,* 112.
[196] Wardlaw. *Conceptualizing words for God,* 112.
[197] The idea of disembodied spirits appears to be a product of apocalyptic literature. See: Annette Yoshiko Reed. *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity: The Reception of Enochic Literature.* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 63, 86; Smith. *The Origins*, 35,3- 37; Kelly, Henry Ansgar. *The Devil, Demonology and Witchcraft*. New York, USA: Doubleday, 1968 and Wray, T.J. and Mobley, Gregory. *The Birth of Satan*. New York, USA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

concept. As a result of the cultural and temporal distance from the historical contexts that gave rise to this motif as it appears in the Bible, it is necessary to analyze both the biblical data and comparative evidence from similar cultures in the ancient Near East to gain a well-rounded understanding of the notion of the divine council. It will help one appreciate how this idea might have influenced the conceptualization of divinity in the Eden narrative.

So, what is the divine council? The divine council is a term used in various Canaanite and ancient Near East texts to refer to the gathering of the gods. It depicts the collective deities of several people groups. The ancient Israelites also used similar terms, such as "heavenly hosts," but with certain nuances. The presence of the concept of the divine council in the Hebrew Bible raises questions about monotheism, our understanding of divinity, and how we use the word "God." According to E. Theodore Mullen, Jr. "the Hebrew concept of the divine council is more closely paralleled by the Canaanite assembly than by the Mesopotamian."[198] He does not utterly negate the possibility that Mesopotamia influenced biblical literature. However, features of the motif in these two Northwest Semitic groups show a common point of origin.

The discovery of Ugaritic texts in Ras Shamra in 1929 provided valuable insights into the culture of Northwest Semitic people during the second millennium B.C.E. This discovery helped us better understand the beliefs of ancient Israelites as recorded in the Bible. Mullen pointed out that the Ras Shamra corpus is the only known evidence of Canaanite mythology depicting a "complete pantheon" from this period.[199] The three compositions that constitute its content share "the same poetic style" even though they were composed in different periods.[200] This style of poetry is also mirrored by early Hebrew poetry.[201] For Mullen, this proves that "Canaanite mythology presented a strong influence on the religion of Israel."[202]

In the Bronze Age, people believed that gods and goddesses in Mesopotamia and Syria would gather as a council or assembly. In Ugaritic, the word for council is *phr*, and an Akkadian cognate exists, *puhuru*. This term seems to refer to a group that meets at the gate and can also refer to "the pantheon as a generic whole without reference to any particular deity."[203] Mark Smith emphasizes the Ugaritic term to "be divided into three categories" *phr 'ilm,* which means the assembly of the gods, *phr bn'ilm* the assembly of the divine sons and *phr m'd* the assembly of the council.[204] A text may present a specific deity presiding over the assembly, as in the expression *phr Baal.* Still, it is unclear if these expressions denote the pantheon in totality or "restricted groupings of deities centered around particular gods."[205] Mullen asserts that, in cultic

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[198] E. Theodore, Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council in Canaanite and Early Hebrew Literature.* (California: Scholars Press, 1980), 3.
[199] Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council*, 2.
[200] Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council*, 2.
[201] "Vocabulary found in Israel's oldest poems and the Ugaritic texts suggest continuity in the literary tradition between these corpa. […] None of these points of contact between Ugaritic literature and 'Canaanite' culture should be construed as suggesting a simple equation between them. Even so, their complex literary traditions can hardly be separated". Smith. *The Origins*, 17.
[202] Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council*, 2.
[203] Smith. *The Origins*, 41.
[204] Smith. *The Origins*, 41.
[205] Smith. *The Origins*, 42.

texts, there is another appellation that is often used for the council, that is *mphrt bn'ilm* (the assembly of the sons of 'El).[206]

There is no cognate for the Ugarit and Akkadian *Phr* in Hebrew. Mullen locates the terms *edat* as in *adat 'el* of Ps 82:1; *dor* as it appears in Amos 8:14; *mo'ed* in Isa 14:13; *Qahal* in Ps 89:6 and *sod* in Ps 89:8, Jer 23:18, Job 15:18 as words denoting the council or assembly in the Hebrew Bible. Despite the divergence in etymology and the multiplicity of ways the council is labeled in Hebrew, Mullen reaffirms "a common tradition" for the council terminology.[207]

However, he fails to elaborate on this shared source. In contrast, he shows the similarity between the Ugaritic texts' conceptualization of the divine council with its common designations "*banu 'ili (-mi)*, the sons of 'el, or *banu qudsi*, the sons of Qudsu (Atirat)" and the Old Testament's designation of the divine council as "*bene elim* (Pss 29:1; 89:7); *bene elohim* (Deut 32:8) *bene ha'elohim* (Gen 6:2,4' Job 1:6; 2:1) *bene elyon* (Ps 82:6); *kol elohim* (Ps 97:71) or simply *qedosim* (Job 5:1; Deut 33:2-3)"[208].

The conception of the Ugaritic high god El and the Hebrew Bible's Yahweh are very similar. Mullen states that both are "creator, king, and absolute ruler gods."[209] As Mullen stated, El "was viewed as the creator-deity in Ugaritic mythology."[210] The Bible describes him as "El the Most High, creator of heaven and earth" in Genesis 14:19– 22.[211] An eighth-century BCE inscription from Phoenicia refers to him as "El, creator of the earth," as do Canaanite sources.[212] Furthermore, he was the head of the pantheon and "*abu banu ili*" which is "father of the gods," and so the gods were known as "the son (s) of El, *binu/banu 'ili*."[213] He was also called the father of Baal and "Bull 'El, his father, King 'El, who created him."[214]

Even if scholars like U. Cassuto, M. Pope, and U. Oldenberg hold the position that "El was deposed and emasculated by the young storm-god Baal,"[215] Mullen asserts that "the evidence from Canaan and Phoenicia completely contradicts this view."[216] This is most likely a misunderstanding resulting from scholars' failure to realize there was a distinction between the office of presiding over the pantheon and governing the cosmos. In this interpretation, El was king of the gods, while Baal reigned over the cosmos. Thus, El, along with Athirat, his consort, was known as the progenitor of the gods "who are called the seventy sons of Athirat."[217]

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[206] Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council*, 117.
[207] Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council*, 119.
[208] Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council*, 119.
[209] Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council*, 4.
[210] Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council,* 13.
[211] Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council*, 14.
[212] Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council*, 14.
[213] Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council*, 15.
[214] Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council*, 16.
[215] Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council*, 4.
[216] Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council*, 4.
[217] Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council*, 18.
N.B. "The storm-god Ba 'l presents a possible exception to this fact. Ba 'l is commonly called *binu dagni*, 'the son of Dagnu'" Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council*, 19. "Baal's own title, *bn dgn*,

The divine council was also configured according to the pattern of the family structure. Smith concurs with this assessment, affirming that "the divine family was deeply grounded in West Semitic societal concepts."[218] The notions of council and family seem to be complimentary terms conveying a compendious portrait of divinity in the worldview of ancient Semitic people. Ugaritic mythology, markedly, presents the pantheon as "a large multi-family or joint household headed by a patriarch with several competing sons"[219] (children). Yet, the realm of the divine may have consisted of an incalculable number of entities, but the myths focus on the "dominant deities" and leading actors. Seventy, "a well-known conventional number for a generally large family group," is often preferred.[220]

The divine council or family was most likely arranged in a four-tier hierarchical order. At the very top is El, who is "pictured as the aged judge" and "king, father, and progenitor of the gods," presiding over the council, rendering judgment when necessary. He is "surrounded by the other gods when the assembly is in session."[221] He conducts the affairs of the greater council and his immediate household and renders decrees. The words of El, in the Ugaritic literature, are said to be "the controlling power within the cosmogonic realm."[222] He alone is thought to be wise. The cosmogonic gods "were allowed to vie for power among themselves, the outcome of each conflict was sanctioned by 'El alone."[223] From the upper level, he is often accompanied by his consort Athirat, "who may influence his decisions."[224] She is somewhat of a counselor who intercedes before El. Together, they are parents of the gods and humanity.[225]

Level two of the pantheon and the divine household consists of the "royal children," who Smith indicates may be known as the "*'ilm rbm*, the great gods." Some are prominent among those deities. For example, "Anat, Atharat, Athar, YD'-YLHN, Shapshu, Yarih, Shahar, and Shalim." Baal is also included but is somewhat like an adopted or illegitimate son. Members at

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'*the son of dagan*' (1.2 I 19; 1.5 V 23-24) apparently points to his separate paternity from the rest of the divine family. Yet Baal can also stereotypically refer to El as his father, since El is generically regarded as the father of the pantheon." Smith. *The Origins*, 64.

[218] Smith. *The Origins*, 54.

[219] Smith. *The Origins*, 55.

[220] Smith. *The Origins*, 55.
Moreover, Smith suggests "the number of gods perhaps survives the later Jewish notion of the seventy angels, one for each of the world's putatively seventy peoples (1 Enoch 89:59, 90:22-25; Targum Pseudo-Jonathan to Deut 32:8; bT. Shabbat 88b; Sukkah 55b). Smith, The Origins, p. 55.

[221] Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council,* 120.

[222] Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council*, 146.

[223] Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council*, 142.

[224] Smith. *The Origins*, 45.

[225] Lowell K. Handy argues contra Smith that "Asherah was seen to be on par with El as far as the divine levels were concerned. El's decisions may have been the final appeal, but Asherah's choices for a deity to hold a particular position certainly are presented in the surviving myths to outrank El's". Furthermore, he recommends the goddess be identified as "divine Queen Mother, with both authority and power" as opposed to mere mother goddess since, he claims motherliness is not necessarily one of Asherah's primary characteristics. Diana V. Edelman. *The Triumph of Elohim: From Yahwisms to Judaisms*. (Kampen: Kok Pharos Publishing House, 1995), 33.

this level tend to be warrior gods "associated with nature or natural phenomena." They, additionally, have the power of fertility. Smith cautions that their association with natural phenomena should be understood as their mode of actualization or manifestation and not as an ontological characteristic.[226] These deities may also have their own families and houses.

Third-level gods attend to the needs of those in the two upper levels. Generally, these third-level deities are analogous to the human "craftsmen in Ugaritic society" who "were employed by the Ugaritic dynasty." The last level was made up of deities who "are household workers" and domestic laborers such as "female servants, messengers (ml'ak), gatekeepers or divine guardians."[227] They, too, are divine. However, they were agents without any free will who "simply took orders, delivered messages, and behaved themselves." This fourth tier of the divine hierarchy is well attested to in the Bible as angels. They are presumed to be "the same characters as the messengers of the Ugaritic texts."[228]

Even if not in detail, it is important to mention the probable astral nature of the divine family in Ugaritic and Israelite texts. Smith points out "Shahar and Salim," the two sons of El known as Dawn and Dusk, Yarih the moon-god, and Shapshu the sun-goddess are a "category of deities called star-gods". This astral feature might have also been prevalent in "the later religion of Israel." The tradition might be hinted at in Job 38:6-7.[229]

3.2   The Mountain of God

As mentioned above, El is the head of the pantheon in Ugaritic mythology. When a meeting or assembly of the council is convened, "its meeting place is defined as *gr ll*, the Mount Ll" or most likely "the Mount of El." Mullen avows for the biblical attestation of this mountain in Ezekiel 28:14, "*har qodes 'elohim*"; in Pss 36:7; 50:10 and "in the lament over Helel ben Sahar in Isaiah 14."[230] This cosmic mountain, Mullen states, is known in some Ugarit and Akkadian texts as "*hursanu*" that is (1) mountain region; (2) the place of the river-ordeal" in Akkadian. This "meeting place of the divine council" is the location of El's habitation. Furthermore, he posits that "the *hursanu* is the place of judgment and interrogation upon entry to the Underworld."[231]

This mountain, where El resides, and the gods assemble for deliberation, Mullen associates with the Hebrew *Sheol*. He argues *Sheol* might have originally meant "the place of

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[226] Smith. *The Origins*, 45.

For example, in Ugarit text CTA 2. I. 36-37 "El receives the messengers of Yamm in the full manifestation of their terror, *'A fire, two fires //Their tongues like sharpened swords'*". The Hebrew Bible also uses this motif in Ps 104:4. Moreover, Mullen explains "the concept of messengers as being fire-like in appearance was common to both Israel and Canaan (cf. also Ps 57:5)". Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council,* 141.

[227] Smith. *The Origins*, 57.

[228] Edelman. *The Triumph*, 36-37.

[229] Smith. *The Origins*, 63.

[230] Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council*, 128.

[231] Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council* 132.

interrogation" and is probably comparable to the Ugarit gate of the Underworld at the foot of the mountain. As recounted in the Ugarit text CTA 4. IV. 20-24, this *hursanu* mount was also the site of "the tent-dwelling of El," whence flow out the waters that fill two unspecified rivers.[232] Conclusively, in the beginning, El's residence was not a temple but a tent which was deemed to be of substantial size and "contained more than one room," reminiscent of the ancient "Israelite Tabernacle (*miskan*)" which was built by divinely appointed artisans. Similarly, El's tent was constructed by "the divine craftsman Kotar" and lavishly decorated with footstool, couch, and many other sacred accessories.[233] From there, El managed the cosmic order and delivered policies.

Through further evaluation of Canaanite mythology, Mullen locates the Mount of El "in the Amanus mountain range, to the north of Ugarit." He affirms that this same northern location is implied in the Hebrew Bible texts of Isa 14:13; Ps 48:3; Ezek 38:6, 15; 39:2.[234] Moreover, he argues that the story of the king of Tyre in Ezekiel 28:1-9 parallels traditions about the mount of El in Ugarit literature, *har 'elohim* in Hebrew. For example, in Ezekiel's oracle, the king pretends to be El or God, who sits on the throne amid the seas, which Mullen compares to the Ugarit tent-dwelling amid "the double deep."[235] The king also possesses supreme wisdom, just like El.

Interestingly, in the biblical literature, the mountainous region where the deity is presumed to reside is associated with a paradisical garden. In Gen 2−3, this garden is described as a place of bountifulness with the possibility of everlasting life. The garden motif is illustrated in Sumerian mythology as the land of Dilmun, "The Cedar Land," a place far away, which Mullen describes as "the site of the life-flowing rivers."[236] In the Mesopotamian Epic of Gilgamesh, the protagonist Utnapishtim and his wife are said to be granted entrance to this paradise and access to eternal life solely by "decree of the divine assembly." Still, Mullen points out that though the Mesopotamian and West Semitic traditions of the motif of the garden both inform the biblical paradise narrative, they, nevertheless, diverge on the locality of this divine abode[237].

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[232] Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council*, 132-133.
[233] Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council*, 134.
Mullen calls to attention the fact that "it is apparent that the *miskan/ohel mo 'ed* is an earthly representation of the heavenly abode of the deity, especially in light of its parallels with the tent of El. That the deities were pictured as tent dwellers, even by the highly urbanized culture of Ugarit, is illustrated in the texts. In the Kirta epic, where the earthly kings are depicted as having well-built palaces, the gods are still pictured as dwelling in tents…The *miskan* may be equated with the *'ohel*. This is precisely the case with the oldest Hebrew traditions of *'ohel mo 'ed*, which are contained in the JE traditions (Exod 33:7-11; Num 11:16-29; 12:4-10). These passages reveal that the tent-shrine of Yahweh was conceived as the place of dispensation of his will." Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council*, 170-171.
The *'ohel mo 'ed* is the Hebrew Bible's 'Tent of Meeting.'
[234] Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council*, 148.
[235] Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council*, 150.
[236] Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council*, 152.
[237] Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council*, 153.

Ultimately, the Hebrew Bible's image of the divine consists of Sumerian, Mesopotamian, and Canaanite traditions. The motif of the divine garden and the mountain of El with living waters flowing from it were eventually integrated into the world matrix of the Israelite deity Yahweh. The *hursanu* which held El's tent becomes Mount Zion:

It was on this mount that Yahweh dwelt (cf. Pss 46;48; Isa 2:2−4; Mic 4:1−3). Life-giving streams flowed forth from its base (Isa 33:20−22; Ezek 47:1−12; Joel 4:18; Zech 14:8). The gods' dwelling place and the presence of the life-giving streams establish the mountain's cosmic nature. Like the mount of El, Zion is associated with the mountains in the far North.[238]

In certain biblical traditions, on Mount Zion, Yahweh takes residence in a temple instead of a tent and meets with the council of the gods there. Isaiah 14:13 calls this place the Mount of Assembly. It is from there, like in the Ugaritic traditions about El, that "Yahweh and his council deliver their decree" (Isa 6:1−13; 1 Kgs 22:19−23; Zech 3:1−10).[239] Mount Sinai (Horeb) and Mount Hermon are other mountains connected to Yahweh in the Bible and non-canonical texts. As Mullen seems to propose, the motif of the cosmic mountain is not exclusive to a specific tradition in biblical literature. He states, "any mountain with springs at its base or side where a sanctuary to the god exists" can signify the divine mount that served as the gateway to "Heaven and the Underworld."[240]

Undoubtedly, the notion of the Divine Council and the Mountain/Garden of God motif were part of the source data used to produce the Eden narrative. Thus, awareness of these ideas is required to proceed towards an exegesis of the text. Knowledge and understanding of these motifs can help fill some of the conceptual and logical gaps apparent in the narrative. For instance, this thesis paper argues that the divine plurals in the Primeval history instantiate a previous version where there was a divine council present in the events reported by the story, and the motif of the Garden served as a backdrop to further evince this image.

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[238] Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council*, 154.
[239] Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council*, 155.
[240] Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council*, 157.
"The accounts of the meeting place of the divine council in *Enuma elis* reveal that the assembly met at the where Heaven and the Underworld converged…the meeting place of the assembly, then, is located neither in the Heavens nor the Underworld. Rather, it is positioned at the midpoint; in *Enuma elis* this becomes Babylon. Prior to the building of Babylon for its meeting place, the assembly meets in Ubsukkinna, the court of Assembly in Nippur." Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council*, 165,166.

CHAPTER FOUR: Synthesis and Interpretation

There was ample evidence in the previous pages suggesting that ancient Israelites and other Northwest Semitic groups during the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age I commonly believed in a divine assembly. Moreover, Joel S. Burnett's research, outlined above, firmly establishes that the Hebrew word *'elohim,* and its Northwest Semitic cognates function as an abstract plural, conveying the fullness of an idea associated with a root word.[241] Therefore, it seems fair to conclude that *'elohim*, in many cases, signifies the concept of divinity, referring to the condition or quality of being divine. However, given its polyvalence, it may also connote the sense of the English common noun god, i.e., a title.

According to Robert Karl Gnuse, the widely held belief that monotheism originated with Moses may not be accurate. Rather, the concept may have emerged because of "great intellectual struggles surrounding topics such as evil, human suffering, and the universal rule of God."[242] Babylonian Judahites during the Exile first concocted this idea, which Mohammed expanded upon in Mecca and Medina in the 7th century C.E. Gnuse argues that many scholars now accept that epigraphic artifacts from Kuntillet' Arjud and Khirbet el-Qom intimate a weakened form of monotheism in the pre-exilic period, indicating that religion at the grassroots level in ancient Israel was likely polytheistic or, at best, henotheistic. This observation implies that Israelite religious thought was not unique in its milieu at its inception.[243]

As noted by Gnuse, distinguishing between Canaanite and Israelite people during the early 'settlement' period continues to be a challenge for many archaeologists. This is because these groups were quite similar culturally, with any notable differences only becoming apparent later. Initially, Yahwism was likely a religion practiced by clans, involving the worship of multiple deities, including Yahweh. However, as the community advanced towards statehood, the new polity prompted a shift towards the exclusive worship of Yahweh, who eventually became the national deity. This shift led to the emergence of Israelite monolatry within the greater Canaanite religious system, which eventually transformed into Jewish monotheism in Babylon. Early Yahwism was a complex religious institution that developed over time, reflecting the region's changing social and political landscape.[244]

Yahweh was not an original deity in the Canaanite pantheon. Andre Lemaire, who appears to favor "Albrecht Alt's model of peaceful infiltration/violent expansion"[245] to explain the emergence of Israelites in Canaan, suggests that biblical texts like Deut. 33:2, Judges 5:4−5; Hab.3:3−7 which may have been written between the tenth and sixth century BCE "show a clear

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[241] See page 55 of this thesis paper.

[242] Robert Karl Gnuse. *No Other Gods: Emergent Monotheism in Israel*. (England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 74.

[243] Gnuse. *No Other Gods*, 71.
"Scholars now sense that Israelite culture has much more in common with Late Bronze Age Palestine (1550-1220 BCE) than previously thought". Gnuse. *No Other Gods*, 29.

[244] Gnuse. *No Other Gods*, 33.

[245] Gnuse. *No Other Gods*, 43.

unanimity about the southern origins of YHWH" in the Edomite region south of Canaan.[246] He proposes Yahweh to have been a mountain deity adopted from the Midianites in the Negev by a Mosaic clan from Egypt, led by a warrior named Joshua. This theory is advanced from interpreting segments in the book of Joshua that he deems to have historical merit, such as its representation of the battle against Canaanites at Hebron and the Merneptah Stela from Egypt circa 1213-1204 BCE. The stela tells of King Merneptah subduing "a people called Israel" in Canaan.[247]

Lemaire's position is that the stela and chapter ten of the book of Joshua report the same event, yet each version serves as propaganda favoring a respective side. Nonetheless, he maintains this monument, being the earliest archaeological witness of ancient Israel, may "provide a valuable chronological reference for the beginnings of Yahwism in Israel" in the 12th century BCE. This would be when Israel came into being through an alliance of invading Egyptian groups with alleged Hebrew clans, which Lemaire affirms "arrived from northern Mesopotamia." These Mesopotamians would have had their own ancestral beliefs but were compelled to be initiated into the cult of Yahweh to form a more cohesive confederation.[248]

Before the formation of the state, the Yahweh religion practiced by this new coalition was undoubtedly syncretistic, incorporating competing ideas from various groups. The religious practices of settlers in the north and south of the land would have also differed significantly, with notable variations between family and greater society. Each sector had its interests in forming the nascent Israelite identity. Rainer Albertz identifies "two different strata of Israelite religion," one about personal piety and the other from the official religion, with a "local level" existing between the family and state substrata.[249]

According to Albertz, personal religious beliefs were shaped by family experiences, while political experiences were responsible for creating religious symbols in mainstream religion. The mainstream religion comprised various groups such as priests, elders, prophets, the royal household, and the intelligentsia, each with their religious understanding and competing for control of the collective consciousness. Though Yahweh became the god of the tribes of Israel in the early period before the state, the ancestors may have, at first, been associated with a series of El deities. This assumption would be consistent with the image portrayed in the patriarchal narratives.[250]

At that time, families carried out religious practices, with the father acting as priest or leader of the cult. Each family followed different regional forms of the god El. This description

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[246] Andre Lemaire. *The Birth of Monotheism: The Rise and Disappearance of Yahwism.* (Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 2007), 21.
[247] Lemaire. *The Birth*, 31.
Lemaire is not alone in this perspective, Herbert Niehr reports "on the basis of several extra-biblical sources, YHWH's origin can be traced back to the hill country of Midian/Edom, where he was venerated as a local weather god like Hadad or Baal in Syrian and Palestine". Edelman. *The Triumph*, 51.
[248] Lemaire. *The Birth*, 31.
[249] *A History of Israelite Religion in The Old Testament Period Vol. 1*. (Louisville: Westminster/John Know Press,1994), 19.
[250] Albertz. *A History*, 31.

aligns with Albertz's idea of "internal social revolution in Late Bronze Age Canaan." In this theory, the local farmers and shepherds separated from the city aristocrats to establish their economy in the deserts and hill country. Meanwhile, a group of "prisoners-of-war, of ethnically differing origin" who were subjected to "forced labor" in Egypt migrated to Canaan and contributed to the ongoing social change through their liberation traditions.[251]

The origins of Israelite national identity and religious beliefs are still debated among scholars. However, the available data suggests that Israel's culture was not significantly different from that of neighboring societies across the ancient Near East. The people in the area shared a common worldview, positing the existence of multiple deities, and there was a continuous exchange of ideas among various groups. The biblical account of Israel's formation by a coalition of individuals from Canaan, Egypt, and Mesopotamia seems to have some historical reliability. It is believed that the main deity among the proto-Israelites was El, then the Yahweh-El theology was eventually embraced by different clans, evolving into Yahwism during the monarchy. Finally, by the post-exilic period, Yahweh was the only God accepted by the Judeans, setting the stage for the beliefs that would eventually develop into the monotheism still practiced today.

Establishing a solid theoretical foundation was crucial to understand the events described in the Genesis 2-3 narrative. This will help create an approximate reconstruction of the scenarios and assist with formulating the correct hermeneutical framework to conduct an exegetical procedure untethered to doctrinal dogmatism. In agreement with Burnett, who observed that the word *'elohim* should be interpreted as an abstract plural, which means that it is a morphologically plural word that functions in a singular mode and is sometimes used to convey the idea of collectivity, it is now possible to present an interpretation of the text, relying on a translation which is the result of the application of macro syntactic analysis.

As demonstrated in chapter one, the contention is that the interpretation of the Eden narrative through the configuration of monotheism has constrained the range of potential conclusions. This thesis paper has also maintained that to fully appreciate ancient Israelite thought, proceeding with a "diachronically informed synchronic reading" of the text is heuristically favorable.[252] This approach emphasizes the necessity to consider the context of the ancient Near East's 'polytheistic' beliefs while acknowledging the presence of a "monistic impulse" within ancient Israel, as identified by Smith.[253] By examining the narrative this way, a deeper understanding of the text's complex theological and philosophical ideas can be achieved. For that reason, it was essential first to describe the concept of the 'divine council,' which was the prevalent form of divine conceptualization in the region during the Late Bronze Age and one

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[251] Albertz. *A History* § 2.21, 45.

[252] David McLain Carr. *The Formation of Genesis 1−11: Biblical and Other Precursors*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 55.

[253] Smith. *The Origins*, 51.
In agreement with this, Westerman states that "the biblical narratives are no exception. They must not be taken out of their broader context". Claus Westerman. *Genesis: An Introduction*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 65.

of the concepts that inspired the way some of the authors of the biblical texts might have imagined God.[254]

4.1   The Nature and Purpose of the Eden Narrative

Wenham admits that "the Garden of Eden story does fulfill functions often associated with myths in other cultures" but finds it difficult to categorize it.[255] He cites Gunkel, who prefers to call it a "faded myth"; Von Rad and Westermann, who label it "simply narrative (*Erzählung*)"; Jacobsen, mytho-historical; and Otzen, who denies any mythological traits at all[256]. However, in step with Levi-Strauss, this thesis affirms if the narrative functions as and displays the universal structure of myths, then it is a myth.[257] Myth, in reading Northrop Frye, stems from *mythos*, "a story usually about the acts of gods…myths take us back to a time when the distinction between subject and object was much less continuous and rigid than it is now."[258] Even though the gods in myth are usually associated with "aspects of nature," and the Eden narrative seeks to deconstruct this image of the divine by erasing any pantheistic feature from it, the discursive mode through which this is undertaken is mythological.

Bernard F. Batto argues the belief that Genesis 2-3 depicts the loss of Paradise and that its authors drew inspiration from a Mesopotamian story about the beginning of mankind is unfounded. This alleged Mesopotamian account supposedly resembles the "Golden Age of Hesiod," which portrays a perfect world marred by the introduction of a woman and the resulting evil. [259] In taking this stance, Batto refutes Van Seters' suggestion of Greek influence on the Eden narrative, citing the absence of any indication of a paradise story in Mesopotamian literature.[260] Consequently, for reasons extraneous to this thesis, he affirms that Sumerian texts like "the description of Dilumn in *Enki and Ninhursag*, Nudimmud's spell in *Enmerkar and the Lord*

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[254] See Gnuse: "Traditional Jewish and Christian belief read the narratives in Genesis and so assumed that originally people, descended from Adam and Eve, all worshiped one god in the heavens. At some early point in time human perversion led people to turn from the worship of the one true god and revere the demons, even making idolatrous statues of them." *No Other Gods*, 134.

[255] *Word Biblical*, 54.

[256] *Ibid*.

[257]Mary Klages. *Literary Theory*. (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 16.

[258] Words with Power: Being A Second Study of The Bible and Literature. (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 1990), 22.

[259] Bernard F. Batto. *In The Beginning: Essays On Creation Motifs in The Ancient Near East And The Bible*. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 54.

[260] Van Seters states, "There is nothing, however, in this Eastern tradition that would account for the separate creation of the woman in the Yahwist's story and her role in the downfall of humanity. For this we may find some clues in the Western traditions. From the side of the Greek traditions, there is a certain similarity between the figure of Eve and that of Pandora in Hesiod." Van Seters. *Prologue*, 125.

Aratta, the Sumerian King List and the Rulers of Lagash" do not serve as true evidence of a paradise motif in the literature.[261]

Although this thesis paper concurs with Van Seters' perspective that the Eden story in its current form probably originated in the late exilic period, like Batto, there is doubt about any influence of Greek thought on the narrative. Unfortunately, as already mentioned, no concrete evidence supports this assertion. Even if there were no Mesopotamian motifs of Paradise for Genesis 2-3 to draw from, Van Seters' argument for a late exilic dating for the story remains valid.[262] There is no shortage of texts intimating this. Gnuse indicates that the book of Joshua alludes to the "gods served by the ancestors in the region beyond the river."[263] There is also the reference in the patriarchal narratives about Ur of the Chaldees, which is assumed to be "Ur of Mesopotamia which could be qualified as 'of the Chaldees' only from the 10th to the 6th centuries" B.C.E." These may be somewhat distorted representations. Still, they presuppose a special connection to Mesopotamian culture that prevailed during the exilic period.[264]

Furthermore, the Eden narrative seems only to be mentioned in texts from "the Neo-Babylonian period," such as Ezekiel 28, 31, 36; Isa 51:3, and Joel 2:3. Moreover, the vocabulary of Genesis 2-3, which happens to be "attested exclusively or primarily in exilic or post-exilic texts" bears late wisdom literary features and lexicon.[265] Suffice it to say that there is perhaps some historicity to Israelite ancestry having a point of departure in Mesopotamia, or it may be that the current edition of Genesis 1-11 reflects the late exile-post-exilic context of its last redactors. In any respect, the Mesopotamian influence on the Primeval History is apparent, especially when considering its authors' continual allusions to conjectural "things in the *East*."[266]

At a superficial level, it may appear as if the Eden narrative tells a story about the origins of humanity, but this may be an oversimplistic way of looking at the text. Instead, the proposal is that it was intended to introduce and explain the story of a people who would come to form the ancient nation of Israel[267]. Thomas L. Brodie submits that Ben Zvi understands the Primary History as "a form of founding myth or a creation myth of Israel."[268] Likewise, Bill T. Arnold categorizes Genesis as "Israel's proto-historical writings, or a national epic." So, it is a kind of preamble to Genesis, the prologue to the greater historiography of ancient Israel.[269]

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[261] Batto. *In The Beginning*, 56.

[262] "Such a combination of creation and paradise themes in J from late Babylonian and prophetic sources can only mean that Genesis 2-3 is a rather late exilic text." John Van Seters. *Prologue To History: The Yahwist as Historian in Genesis*. (Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 125.

[263] Van Seters. *Prologue*, 180.

[264] Westerman. *Genesis*, 158.

[265] Joseph Blenkinsopp. *The Pentateuch: An Introduction to The First Five Books of The Bible*. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 65.

[266] Bill T. Arnold. *Genesis*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 12.

[267] "Adam stands as the earliest known ancestor of the Hebrew people". William Todd. *New Light on Genesis*. (London: The Furnival Press, 1978), 32.

[268] Thomas L. Brodie. *Genesis As Dialogue: A Literary, Historical, And Theological Commentary*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 43.

[269] Arnold. *Genesis*, 2.

Prior versions of this Israelite historical narrative composed between the tenth and ninth century BCE may have existed. They probably consisted of traditions from the kingdom of Judah. They are no longer available, and the current Genesis story appears to be quite an expansion of these previous editions that have been redacted throughout time since. It is uncertain whether the production of this work should be credited to a single Yahwist historian from then or if it is more appropriate to presume a dynamic Yahwistic instinct that was actualized in different ways, at times in synch but often in friction with competing ideological forces at separate epochs in the development of the history of ancient Israelite thought.[270]

Considering the complex history of the present text, the latter seems more plausible. The Eden narrative should be understood as part of a greater pedagogical program intended to bolster the identity of the late Judahites during an unprecedented crisis, particularly in the exilic period. It was designed partly to promote Yahweh as the only creator God who controls history.[271] It is no coincidence that it is positioned at the beginning of the first book about the origin and "the past of a single people and land."[272]

This ordering is purposed to situate the people's history at the prehistoric moment of the world's creation.[273] Biblical redactors began to undertake this "construction of continuity in identity"; in the process, they denied the presence of other deities from the early Israelite worldview by "pushing them into the backdrop of the national literature" and attributing their characteristics and functions to Yahweh. To be clear, prophets and reformers were already rearranging the traditions at various stages of the pre-exilic period, but their initiatives reached maturation during the Exile.[274]

Correspondingly, Gnuse refers to William Tremmel's category of 'consummate religion' to describe the revolutionary point in the evolutionary process of a religion where "the concept of universe has been accomplished, and God is no longer attached to a specific place, or limited

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[270] "As everywhere in the Bible, the present text shows many traces of textual growth, or we might say, signs of a wirkungsgeschichte that is part of the biblical tradition itself." Nathan MacDonald, Mark W. Elliot, and Grant Macaskill. *Genesis and Christian Theology*. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), 85.

[271] "L'Hour argues that the Yahwistic author has deliberately used this form to express his conviction that Yahweh is both Israel's covenant partner and the God who controls all creation." *Word Biblical*, 57.

[272] Mark S. Smith. *The Memoirs of God: History, Memory, and the Experience of the Divine in Ancient Israel*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 84.

[273] Similarly, Westerman expresses, "The identification of the creator with the God whom Israel met in its history is the reason why the primeval event has pre-fixed to history." Westerman. *Genesis*, 108.

Genesis 2-3 is not a cosmogony in the true sense of the genre. It is, instead, a "great epical history of the Garden of Eden, the flood, and Israel's ancestors". Arnold. *Genesis*, 46.

[274] Smith. *The Memoirs*, 84.

Furthermore, Herbert Niehr proposes that in the postexilic period, the concept of "the divine assembly" is used "to maintain YHWH's position of supreme god. This same function can also be detected in those places where YHWH is called God of gods or Lord of lords. Herein the concept of the divine assembly has been condensed into a Yahwistic title meaning the supreme god." Edelman. *The Triumph*, 63.

power." The Eden narrative could be reflecting this very moment in ancient Israelite religion. Herein, Yahweh is depicted as the sole creator of heaven and earth who is "both transcendent and immanent."[275] As already mentioned, this monotheistic idea is being formulated by exilic Judahites who are using old rudiments of pre-exilic Yahwism, such as the concept of the divine council, the motif of the mountain of God, and the motif of the barren desert to reshape them into this new belief system. This mode of reconfiguration would partly explain the tension present in the text. Different traditions of varying themes are being woven together to form this narrative.[276]

Wallace suggests a J document that is the product of "the period of the empire."[277] He also claims, "the present form of the primeval history of J possesses many traditional motifs and elements of other cosmologies and cosmogonies of the ANE." There is the Sumerian flood story that starts with "the creation of humans, animals and kingship, followed by the founding of cities," Phoenician cosmogony that depicts the development of civilization by the gods, which is reminiscent of Gen 4:17-24 especially since it is written in a similar "genealogical form." Additionally, The Eden story of Genesis 2-3 echoes Akkadian and Sumerian compositions in syntax and grammatical construction, being that much like them, it begins with a temporal clause in verses 4[b]-7 explaining the nature of things during creation at a moment before time proper began. Finally, like Enkidu in the Epic of Gilgamesh, man is made from clay. The making of a woman in Atrahasis is described in terms of being built with the author using the cognate of the Hebrew *bana.* Like in Mesopotamian literature, the purpose of humans is to serve the gods.[278]

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[275] Gnuse. *No Other Gods*, 132, 133.

[276] Batto. *In The Beginning*, 44.
"We cannot ignore the fact that both J and P in Gen 1-11 not only adapted and refashioned their material but also were heirs of an already formed tradition" …Moreover, the author signals, "One must always be conscious that one is dealing with a tradition which has a long and varied history, which grew and was adapted hundreds of years in Israel before it took written form under J and P, and of which every single part had a prehistory outside Israel. One must be aware then that what J or P wanted to say to the Israel of their day through this or that story need not necessarily agree with the intention of the story in earlier Israelite or pre-Israelite form". Westerman. *Genesis*, 64-65.
Intertextuality as literary activity is not exclusive to Hebrew literature "This sort of *free* adaptation will be seen in the interaction of Genesis 2– 3 with precursor traditions known from Mesopotamia as well (likely in adapted, Levantine forms). It is a characteristic, I believe, of ancient intertextual dependence within an oral- written environment where such written texts were largely used and adapted in *memorized* form." David McLain Carr. *The Formation of Genesis 1-11: Biblical and Other Precursors*. (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer Verlag, 2021), 208–213.

[277] "A mid-tenth century date for the J source would put it at a time when not only Israel's social and political structures were changing, but the means of communication were changing as well" Wallace. *The Eden Narrative*, 47.

[278] Wallace. *The Eden Narrative*, 65-66.

4.1.2   Exegesis: Decoding Genesis 2-3

It seems self-evident that the Eden story contains very old traditions. The description of the deity in anthropomorphic terms, as opposed to late traditions in Genesis 1 and Ezekiel 1, which tend to portray divinity in more abstract language, is one of the convincing arguments for this position. The thought of adepts of this religious movement stripping their deities of human characteristics instead of the inverse seems more plausible. Hence, the theological undertones of the story sway closer to the polytheistic spectrum. This intersection of older traditions with new ones would also justify the discordance of viewpoints in the story. From the data presented thus far, this thesis now moves toward an interpretation of the narrative relying on the macro syntactic method informed by semiotics analysis. First, here is the basic structure in which the narrative appears to be arranged:

Genesis 2

»   *Prologue (2:4-6)*

-The plot

»   *Condition of the land (vv.5-6)*

»   *Making of the grounder (v.7)*

»   *Planting the Garden of Eden (vv.8-9)*

»   *The river (vv.10-14)*

- Characters and their deeds

»   *Grounder in Garden (v.15)*

»   *Divine resolution (v.18)*

»   *First directive to the grounder (vv.16-17)*

»   *Making of animal life (vv. 19-20)*

»   *Making of woman (vv. 21-23)*

»   *Etiology of the making of the woman (v.24)*

»   *Human Condition (v.25)*

Genesis 3

- Exposition

»   *Enter the Serpent (v. 1)*

»   *The woman (vv. 2-3)*

- The Conflict

»   *The Serpent's speech (vv.4-5)*

» *The event of disobeying (vv.8-11)*

» *Blame game (vv.12-13)*

» *Lot of the serpent (vv. 14-15)*

» *Lot of the woman (v.16)*

» *Lot of man (vv. 17-19)*

- The climax

» *The grounder names the woman (v.20)*

» *The deity clothes the humans (v. 21)*

- The resolution

» *The deity acknowledges humanity's ascension to divinity (v.22)*

» *The deity evicts the grounder from the Garden (v. 23)*

» *The deity secures the border to the Garden (24)*

Although verses 1-3 are assigned to chapter 2, they belong to the previous creation narrative in chapter 1. It is the most logical conclusion based on a text linguistic analysis of the pericope. It evaluates its relationship to both chapters, specifically looking at the characteristics and function of grammar, syntax, and lexicon. Four complex nominal clauses depend on the preceding WAYYIQTOL forms, which shift the temporal axes of the nominal sentences to the past, indicating background information is being conveyed. By the fourth verse, the narrative is paused with a simple nominal clause to communicate information retrospectively about events that have been occurring presumably in chapter 1, stating:

אֵלֶּה תוֹלְדוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ בְּהִבָּרְאָם translated as '*these, the accounts/genealogies of the skies and the land when they were produced.*'[279]

Background information like verse 4ᵃ is not a true break of the narrative unit. It does not lead to nor imply a tense shift in the account. The actual tense shift will happen in verse 5 with the antecedent information preceding the narrative proper of verse 7. The position of this thesis is that the fourth verse consists of two nominal clauses, though Niccacci argues that it "should not be split into two parts" because of its chiastic structure.

Perhaps verse 4ᵇ בְּיוֹם עֲשׂוֹת יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶרֶץ וְשָׁמָיִם: possesses a dual feature, in that it can be dependent on either the preceding WAYYIQTOL of the first verse or the following WAYYIQTOL of verse 7. It can function not only as a title or introduction formula to the Garden

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[279] The clause consists of a third person plural niphal infinitive construct. Niphal express simple action with a passive voice, infinitive construct prefixed with the preposition בְּ may be used in a temporal clause. The preposition is translated as 'when' or 'while'. Gary D. Pratico and Miles Van Pelt. *Basics Of Biblical Hebrew*. (U.S.A: Zondervan, 2005)

narrative but also as a temporal phrase. It communicates antecedent information about the condition of the land before the deity made a grounder to inhabit there. If viewed in pair with 4[a], then the chiasm forms a device that serves as a bridge linking the first two chapters of Genesis[280].

The authors of Genesis 2-3 used a well-known grammatical strategy from the Bible to communicate information relevant to comprehend the ensuing narrative. They constructed Chapter 2 by syntactically placing a retrospective form (nominal clause) intended to designate antecedent events (verses 5,6) in the first position, followed by the form used to express the flow of a narrative (WAYYIQTOL in verse 7, see Table 5). This technique conveyed specific information to situate the Eden narrative in pre-history or primeval times. It also highlighted for the audience/reader that Yahweh alone was the divinity doing the described acts.[281]

Table 5. Genesis 2:5-8

וְכֹל שִׂיחַ הַשָּׂדֶה טֶרֶם יִהְיֶה בָאָרֶץ [5a]	(background)	↑	Waw-x-YIQTOL	הָיָה Qal Imperf. 3rd pers. Masc. Sing.	Then (at that point in time), every wild bush of the open field had not yet been on the land	CNC

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[280] Niccacci. *The Syntax*, 200. § 26.
Verse 4[b] is an introductory formula that is common in many creation stories across the ancient Near East and the world. This formula is used to express a transformative "moment when an event is taking place in which the present state is in a process of becoming; the event starts from a not yet…". In the Enuma Elish, it appears as "when on high the heaven had not been made… One version of the creation of the world by Marduk begins by enumerating in nine lines everything that was 'not yet' and concludes in line 10 with the words: 'all the lands were sea'; then in line 12 the work of creation begins: 'Then Eridue was made, Esagila was built…'. The same type of introduction occurs in Gen 2:4b". Westerman. *Genesis*, 43.

While she fails to separate verse 4 into two clauses, Catherine McDowell concludes the "tolᵊdot notices are not simply transitional devices between related blocks of narrative or genealogical materials. They have a specific Janus function in that they work in two directions simultaneously". Hence, she argues that Gen 2:4 "was intended both as an introduction to the Eden story in Gen 2:5-3:24 and as a summary of the creation account in Gen 1:1-2:3".

Furthermore, she mentions the tolᵊdot in Gen 10:32 "is a summary of Gen 10:1-31". *The Image of God In The Garden Of Eden: The Creation Of Humankind In Genesis 2:5-3:24 In Light Of The mis pi pit pi And wpt-r Rituals Of Mesopotamia And Ancient Egypt*. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 33.
[281] Alviero Niccacci, "Analysis of Biblical Narrative," in Biblical Hebrew and Discourse Linguistics (ed. Robert Dale Bergen; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 181.

וְכָל־עֵ֣שֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶ֔ה טֶ֖רֶם יִצְמָ֑ח 5b	(background)	↑	Waw-x-YIQTOL	צָמַח Qal Impf. 3rd P. Masc. Sing.	and every cultivated herbage of the open field had not yet sprung up	CNC
כִּ֚י לֹ֣א הִמְטִ֗יר יְהוָ֤ה אֱלֹהִים֙ עַל־הָאָ֔רֶץ 5c	(background)	↑	x-QATAL	מָטַר Hifil 3rd P. Masc. Sing.	because the divinity Yahweh had not caused to rain upon the land	CNC
וְאָדָ֣ם אַ֔יִן לַֽעֲבֹ֖ד אֶת־הָֽאֲדָמָֽה: 5d	(background)	↑			and a grounder, nonexistent (with the intent) to service the ground	
וְאֵ֖ד יַֽעֲלֶ֣ה מִן־הָאָ֑רֶץ 6a	(background)	↑	Waw-x-YIQTOL	עָלָה Qal Impf. 3rd P. Masc. Sing.	But high water would (continually) ascend from the land	CNC
וְהִשְׁקָ֖ה אֶֽת־כָּל־פְּנֵֽי־הָֽאֲדָמָֽה: 6b		↑	weQATAL	שׁקה Hifil Perf. 3rd P. Msc. Sing	And caused to drink all the surface of the ground	CNC
וַיִּיצֶר֩ יְהוָֹ֨ה אֱלֹהִ֜ים אֶת־הָֽאָדָ֗ם עָפָר֙ מִן־הָ֣אֲדָמָ֔ה 7a		Ө	WAYYIQTOL	יָצַר Qal 3rd P. Masc. Sing.	So, Yahweh Elohim molded the grounder dust from the ground	VC
וַיִּפַּ֥ח בְּאַפָּ֖יו נִשְׁמַ֣ת חַיִּ֑ים 7b		Ө	WAYYIQTOL	נָפַח Qal, Imperf. 3rd Pers. Masc. Sing.	breathed in his nostrils breath of lives (lifetime)	VC
וַיְהִ֥י הָֽאָדָ֖ם		Ө	WAYYIQTOL	הָיָה Qal	and the grounder became (into) a	VC

לְנֶ֥פֶשׁ חַיָּֽה׃ [7c]				3rd Pers. Imperf. Masc. Sing.	*breathing sentient being/life form*	
וַיִּטַּ֞ע יְהוָ֧ה אֱלֹהִ֛ים גַּן־בְּעֵ֖דֶן מִקֶּ֑דֶם [8a]		Θ	WAYYIQTOL	נָטַע Qal Imperf. 3rd Pers. Masc. sing.	accordingly, the divinity Yahweh planted a garden in Eden from the east	VC
וַיָּ֣שֶׂם שָׁ֔ם [8b]		Θ	WAYYIQTOL	שִׂים Qal Imperf. 3rd pers. Masc. sing.	And he set there	VC
אֶת־הָֽאָדָ֖ם אֲשֶׁ֥ר יָצָֽר׃ [8c]	(background info subordinate to 8b)	↑	x-QATAL Qal perf. 3rd Pers. Masc. sing.		The grounder that he had molded	CNC

4.1.3 Molding of a Grounder

Catherine L. McDowell suggests that the making of the grounder in verse 7 recalls the *mis pi pit pi* and *wpt-r* rituals of creating divine images in Mesopotamia and Egypt.[282] These ceremonies were meant to prepare an image to function in its purpose. *Mis pi* reportedly stands for the mouth-washing ceremony performed as a "purification rite which prepared" a chosen "object/person for contact with the divine."[283] There is evidence of the *mis pi* present in Babylon "as early as the third millennium."[284]

Pit pi, or the mouth-opening ceremony, was performed to "consecrate, activate, and/or enliven the object in preparation for cultic use."[285] The rituals are purported to have occurred in

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[282] In Egypt, it can be concluded with archaeological support that the *wpt-r* and *wn-r* rituals lasted "from the Old Kingdom to the Late Period". *The Image*, 12.
She noticed many differences between the *mis pit pi*, *wpt-r* and Genesis 2−3 texts. However, the commonalities are numerous. For instance, the texts share the motifs of "a temple garden, the animation of the image and specifically its sensory organs, the installation of the image in sacred space (a temple, shrine, or garden-temple), the feeding of the image, and especially the opening of the eyes as a means to divine likeness". Furthermore, "the general sequence of events and overall purpose" mirror each other. *The Image*, 207.

[283] McDowell, *The Image*, 44.
[284] McDowell, *The Image*, 11.
[285] McDowell, *The Image*, 44.

four locations: "the city, the countryside, an orchard, and the temple."[286] She emphasizes that in a copy of the texts from Nineveh recounting the rituals, the word *seru* used to denote the countryside "refers to the fields, open country or steppe located beyond the city walls." The *seru* was where wild animals and outcasts (brigands) resided. It was also the location of the "threshold to the underworld."[287]

Through these observations, she concludes that the author(s) of the Eden narrative must have been aware of the rituals. She posits that this author incorporated concepts drawn from the rituals to devise "a new framework for understanding the human-divine relationship."[288] This relationship, she argues, is characterized by the Hebrew terminology *ṣelem* and *dəmũt* as described in Genesis 1:26–27, where Adam is depicted as an image of the divine. The study of this idea is beyond the purview of this thesis paper. Still, the insight to be drawn from it is that McDowell "determined that *ṣelem* was used to describe the creation of humanity because unlike *ben* (son) or *melek* (king), *ṣelem*" it was better suited to convey three foundational features of the P source's anthropography.[289]

Those three aspects are: "(1) humans, unlike other created beings, were designed to be in filial relationship with God, (2) humans were created to rule over creation, and (3) humans, rather than statues, are the 'images' who were created to dwell in the divine presence."[290] Although the terms *ṣelem* and *dəmũt* are not explicitly mentioned in the garden narrative, she argues that "the idea of man as created *beṣelem ĕlōhîm*" (in the image of God) is intrinsic to the theme of Genesis 2:5–3:24.[291] The way the author achieves this is by weaving elements of "the divine statue animation" into the text.[292] Thus, Yahweh's placing of the garden in Genesis 2:8–14, his settling of the grounder in it (Gen 2:15), the grounder and his woman's nudity in Genesis 2:25 contrasted with "their crowning in Ps 8:5" and "the opening of their eyes in Gen 3:5-7" are affirmed as evincing the Egyptian and Mesopotamian rituals of the Washing of the Mouth and Opening the Mouth.[293]

While McDowell's hypothesis cannot yet be proven, her research provides more insight into the cultural milieu that gave rise to the Eden narrative. The motifs of the *mis pi pit pi* and *wpt-r* further corroborate the extent to which rivers, gardens, mountains, and trees had semiotic relevance across the ancient Near East. It is not far-fetched to suppose that the author(s) of the Eden narrative would have used these symbols and arranged them in a form that would have elicited the imagery of a divine enchanted realm in the minds of the intended audience.[294]

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[286] McDowell, *The Image*, 54.

[287] *Ibid*.

[288] McDowell, *The Image*, 208.

[289] McDowell, *The Image*, 141.

[290] *Ibid*.

[291] *Ibid*.

[292] *Ibid*.

[293] McDowell, *The Image*, 142.

[294] This is also the view of Howard N. Wallace who argues that "the Yahwistic work contains traditional material, and the theme of the garden of God has been used in Gen 2-3". Moreover, he states, confidently, "the garden of Eden contains many motifs used in the description of divine

4.2   The River

Textual analysis reveals that the geography section 2:10–14 consists of nominal clauses Niccacci interprets as conveying antecedent information preceding the WAYYIQTOLs "in 2:15ff"[295]. Therefore, he translates יצא (*yasa*) from 2:10ª into the simple past English phrasal verb "came out" in a conjugated form, semantically making the participle express a completed action.[296] However, the verb is a Qal participle, masculine singular in the *qotel* form. As such, it has an active fientive voice, which means it should denote the subject engaging in habitual, progressive activity that is temporally indefinite. However, it should also not be translated into the present past, for that is not the aspect or perspective being conveyed. Some grammarians explain that a participle in the absolute state such as this has "a more verbal character and may govern nouns."[297] This is probably the reasoning behind Niccacci's choice of translation. Still, an active participle "more often describes…continuous action." In the case of 2:10ª, it functions as a predicate, a verbal adjective describing the continual activity of the river at that moment.[298]

This participle in the absolute state governs the prepositional phrase '*to cause to drink (irrigated) the garden*.' Syntactically, simple nominal clauses are used to describe "contemporaneous action."[299] When they follow a WAW, this is meant to depict the mode of action in "a simultaneous circumstance."[300] Moreover, using text linguistic analysis, when the linguistic attitude is narration, the purpose of the SNC is to give background information while the story pauses. The series of nominal clauses in Gen 2:10-14 is commentary relaying information to complement what was told about the garden in verse 8: that the divinity planted it, set a grounder there, and caused it to produce vegetation. Consequently, the purpose is to show how the divinity used this river to sustain the garden and enable trees to come forth.[301]

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dwellings in Mesopotamian, Canaanite and other biblical material. They include the unmediated presence of the deity, the council of the heavenly beings, the issuing of divine decrees, the source of the subterranean life-giving waters which supply the whole earth, abundant fertility and trees of supernatural qualities and great beauty" *The Eden*, 1985, 83.

[295] Analysis of Biblical Narrative, 187.

[296] Niccacci, *Syntax*, §19, 39.

[297] Waltke & O'Connor. *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, §37.1d, 613.

[298] Waltke & O'Connor. *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*. §37.6d, 625.
Van der Merwe and Naudé states that "the prototypical semantic value of the participle in Classical Biblical Hebrew is that of continuous action that takes place simultaneously with the reference time of an event". It can also "refer to habitual events with or without הָיָה". *Biblical Hebrew Reference*. §20.3.3, 187.

[299] Niccacci, *Syntax*. § 33, 54.
Waltke & O'Connor reports "the participle in the *absolute state* can govern an accusative object, an adverbial accusative, or a prepositional phrase; such a participle may be an active fientive participle…with prepositional phrases." *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*. § 37.3b, 616.

[300] Niccacci, *Syntax*. § 43, 65.

[301] "The tense shift WAYYIQTOL→ WAW- simple noun clause, which normally belongs to prominence (§86) is classed under linguistic attitude in cases where instead of single noun clause (circumstance or background to the preceding WAYYIQTOL) a series of simple (and

Thus, Genesis 2:10ᵃ expresses how the river would continually go forth from Eden to water the garden, resulting in *sui generis* trees sprouting from its ground. Hence, the author uses the SNC so the audience can envision the conditions during this event. He describes this same river as the watercourse, which sourced four essential rivers connected to areas in the ancient Near East (specifically Mesopotamia) that appear to have been common knowledge. This serves to accentuate the importance of the river to the narrative. The author, most likely, deemed it necessary to include this detail in the story to historicize the mythic feature of the traditions, which are the fabric of the text.[302] The goal is not to divulge the actual location of Eden. All these elements, ultimately, are employed to make this Garden another representation, among others, of the archetypal divine enchanted realm where heaven and earth meet.

4.3   The Snake

4.3.1   Enter the Snake

The pericope of Genesis 3:1−5, wherein the snake, the fourth character of the Eden narrative, is introduced, is crucial for making sense of the story. Themes of divine authority, knowledge/wisdom, immortality, and mortality are addressed in the dialogue between the snake and the woman. The author did not write these themes into the narrative as trivial gap-fillers but as vital components in the conceptualization of divinity that he sought to construct. The snake character is the instrument he chose to catalyze this operation. Thus, in the quest to interpret the narrative, some preliminary, though not expansive, explications must be given about the identity and role of the snake.[303]

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occasionally complex) nominal clauses occurs, descriptive in function. In such text there is, in fact, an abrupt switch from narrative to comment. We can term the *comment in the guise of narrative*". Niccacci. *The Syntax*, 112. §83.

[302] Van Seters explains "the historicization of myth is a process of rationalization of myths or mythical elements by the use of historical categories of arrangement or explanation, such as the imposition of genealogical or chronological succession on myths and legends. It does not change fancy into fact but transposes a story from one narrative genre to another, reflecting a certain mode of interpretation. This often transforms the individual myth from a traditional story into part of a continuous ordered narration with a larger view of the past". *Prologue*, 25.

It seems "the Hebrew term *miqedem* in Genesis 2:8 is a geographical description, wishing to indicate that the garden was located in the east, or towards the east of Palestine", a place far away at the end of the world. For example, it is reported that the eponymous "Gilgamesh travelled to the eastern horizon (or *terra incognita*) in search of immortality". The eastern horizon was the location of the garden of the gods and was "pictured to be a place of abundance where plants grew to fantastical heights." Furthermore, the Euphrates and Tigris rivers were associated with the cosmic river, a river with magical properties. Van Dyk, "In Search of Eden," *OTE* 27/2 (2014):651-665.

[303] Cunha reports "important for an understanding of the depiction of the *nāḥāš* in the narrative

First things first, the snake in the Garden is not the Devil.[304] There is no particular indication of animosity between the snake and the deity in the story. Evidently, the snake can be understood as an antagonist from a literary standpoint. The same can be said about Eve, the woman. However, neither of them is a true villain. Their presence partly simulates conflict or tension that causes the story to unfold. Serpents in the ancient Near East were seen as representative of immortality. Karen Randolph Joines states, "Both in Mesopotamia and in Egypt, the serpent was a figure of life and immortality."[305] In certain ancient Egyptian Pyramid texts, the serpent is designated a kinsman of the gods.[306] According to Nissim Amzallag, the serpent may have also been a symbol of the "archaic pre-Israelite cult of YHWH," which he defines "as *primeval Yahwism.*"[307]

Nevertheless, the idea of immortality was not the only item that the serpent as a signifier could index. Wilson D. Cunha asserts that evidence from the ANE affirms "the serpent is a multidimensional symbol" shifting between positive and negative semantic poles.[308] As an ambivalent ideological emblem, it was associated with life and death and protecting sacred and

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of Gen 2-3 is the dialogue section between the woman and the *nāḥāš* in Gen 3:1-6 and the woman's evaluation of what happened in Gen 3:13". De Angelo Cunha, Wilson. "The *nāḥāš* in the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:4b-3:24): Malevolent or Benevolent?" *Revista de Cultura Teológica* 89 (January-June 2017), 18.

[304] "The serpent of Gen 3 is no satan; it itself is a cunning creature with no need of a superhuman force". Joines, Karen Randolph. "The Serpent in Gen 3" *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, vol. 87, no. 1, 1975, pp. 1-11, 8. https://doi.org/10.1515/zatw.1975.87.1.1
 "Early Jewish and Christian commentators identified the snake with Satan or the devil, but since there is no other trace of a personal devil in early parts of the OT, modern writers doubt whether this is the view of our narrator". Wenham, *Word*, 72. N. Amzallag notes that "nothing in Genesis 3 promotes the association of the serpent with the evil. The connotations are rather of wisdom, protection, and knowledge". "The Serpent as a Symbol of Primeval Yahwism," *Semitica*, vol. 58, 2016, pp. 207-36, 213.

[305] Joines, *The Serpent*, 3.
"With reference to West Semitic16 beliefs, the snake has been interpreted as a phallic animal associated with fertility cults.17 The basis for such assumptions are images of naked or semi-naked goddesses of fertility accompanied by snakes. The goddesses
hold the snakes in their hands, or the snakes entwine about them. Such images come from Ugarit, from Egyptian art in depictions of the Semitic goddesses, and from Canaan." Münnich, Maciej, and מסיאי מיוניך. "פולחן נחשי ארד בכנען ובישראל / The Cult of Bronze Serpents in Ancient Canaan and Israel." *Iggud: Selected Essays in Jewish Studies / איגוד: מבחר מאמרים במדעי היהדות*, vol. 2005, יד, 42. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/23531298.

[306] Joines, *The Serpent*, 5.
[307] Amzallag, *The Serpent*, 210.
[308] De Angelo Cunha, *The nāḥāš*, 18.
In Peircean semiotic theory, there are three "kinds of signs human beings use to represent the world." These are "icons, indexes (indices), and symbols." Nevertheless, they are not "mutually exclusive" since "signs can, for instance, be partially iconic and symbolic: e.g. the cross in Christian religions stands both for the actual shape of the 'cross' on which Christ was crucified (iconic sign) and 'Christianity' (symbolic sign)." Danesi, *Messages*, 25.

private spaces. It may have also symbolized chaos and destruction.[309] Still, despite this apparent dualism, some exegetes' (because of viewing the snake in Gen 2–3 as a mere deceiver) assumption is that "the Yahwist has used the figure of the serpent to *objectify* chaos," though not quite as a means of personification.[310] Considering the duplicitous essence of this character in the story, they conclude, "it uses its association with life and wisdom to realize" a devious scheme of destroying humanity.[311] A traditional suspicion of the snake rooted in a hermeneutics informed by the Christian doctrine that presupposes the snake is a fallen angel named Satan embodying the principle of Evil will inadvertently lead to a reading of the serpent episode as outlining a motif of good versus evil.

Duane E. Smith suggests a semantic correlation or "a possible linguistic association between the most common Hebrew noun for snake, נָחָשׁ, and the verb נָחַשׁ, "practice divination," along with its nominal reflex נַחַשׁ (divination)" or fortune-telling.[312] Divination, in antiquity, could be defined as the magical "art of discovering what the gods intentionally hide from mortals concerning destiny."[313] The gods were thought to possess knowledge about reality, which transcended the breadth of human cognition. Thus, one would engage in certain magical rituals to gain foresight and insight into the divine plan for the cosmos and the possible ramifications for the seeker. Assuredly, the serpent in the ANE was associated with the divine, and it probably was a symbol of a Canaanite deity in the cult of the proto-Israelites. Yet, since there is currently no explicit literary or archaeological attestation that can aid in confirming the identity of the

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[309] That snakes had religious or cultic importance in Late Bronze Age Canaan and possibly ancient Israel is not even contested. Results from excavations across modern Israel attest to this. As late as 2005 there were "seven, or if one adds unconfirmed finds in Shechem, nine bronze serpents. Nearly all of them were found in areas with sacral functions". Münnich, *The Cult*, 41. Hezekiah's iconoclasm in 2 Kings 18:4 also proves the presence of a bronze snake in the cult of the Israelites. The snake as an ambivalent or ambiguous figure that could denote both destruction and regeneration principle is evident in the Bible. As an illustration, "the Book of Numbers describes the rebellious Hebrews, who—as punishment—are exposed by YHWH to poisonous snakes. The sinners then acknowledge their guilt and request Moses to intercede for them. "And the Lord said to Moses: 'Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.' And Moses made a bronze serpent (נחש נחשת) and set it on a pole; and if a serpent bit any man, he would look at the bronze serpent and live" (Num 21:8–9)". Münnich, *The Cult*, 43. Moreover, Münnich et al. also posit that "throughout the entire Near East the snake was considered a symbol of health and even immortality. This was usually connected with snakes shedding their skins, which made a semblance of rebirth into eternity; cf. *Gilgamesh Epic* 11:287–289, where a snake eats the herb of life and immediately rejuvenates, shedding its skin". *The Cult*, 44.
[310] Joines, *The Serpent*, 8.
[311] Joines, *The Serpent*, 9.
[312] Duane E. Smith. "The Divining Snake: Reading Genesis 3 in the Context of Mesopotamian Ophiomancy." *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. 134 no.1, 2015, pp. 31-49. *JSTOR*, 45. https://doi.org/10.15699/jbl.1341.2015.2757.
[313] Amzallag, *The Serpent*, 222.

deity that the symbol represented, what has been stated thus far, though illuminating, remains conjectural.[314]

One aspect of the figure of the snake is that he is said to be cunning. However, the *cunning and shrewd* translations do not tell the whole story. David M. Carr observed:

Numerous interpreters have noted the wordplay between the snake's superlative 'cleverness' (עָרוּם) asserted here and the first human couple's nakedness (עֵירֻמִּם) in the previous verse. What it less often noted is the reputation that snakes–with their scaly, changing skins–have in the ancient world for being furless (in a sense 'naked') when compared to other animals, a characteristic that they share with humans[315].

For this reason, to capture the aesthetics of the wordplay between עָרוּם and עֵירֻמִּם, this paper has translated the singular absolute adjective עָרוּם into *baldest* or *slickest* and the masculine absolute plural adjective עֵירֻמִּם into *bare skin* or *naked*. Bald, in English, means lacking hair and the connotation of basic or plain, not needing further explanation, as in '*that was such a bald statement.*' In colloquial English, there is also a semantic relation between bald and *slick*, which indicates that someone is either positively or negatively cunning, that is, having street smarts or common sense. These English words best convey the image being portrayed by the Hebrew.

However, the issue of deciding what kind of information the text is trying to convey remains. Verse 3:1ᵃ is a CNC, WAW-x-QATAL grammatical construction with a narrative linguistic attitude.[316] This type of clause is normally dependent on a narrative WAYYIQTOL. There is one in 2:25ᵃ and another in 3:1ᵈ. Niccacci suggests this construction is part of a recurring "syntactic pattern (antecedent + beginning of narrative)" in the Hebrew Bible.[317] This would be the means the author uses to "separate the different levels of the narrative: the retrospective level," which in certain cases may provide "the prelude to the narrative" proper.[318] He opted to see 3:1ᵃ as being "connected with the following *wayyiqtol*" of 3:1ᵈ because a new

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[314] "These observations, taken together, suggest the existence of a pre-Israelite worship of YHWH in Canaan, one that found privileged expression through the serpent symbol. They even suggest that in Canaan, exactly as in Israel, YHWH was acknowledged, in his primeval worship as the master of holiness and of all powers express through the serpent (vitality, healing, fertility, protection, magical powers, mysteries, secret knowledge, and so on)". Amzallag, *The Serpent*, 235.
[315] *The Formation*, 43.
[316] "The WAW-x-QATAL construction does not comprise a verb clause; it is, instead, a compound noun clause. The information it communicates belongs neither to degree zero nor to the foreground. Depending on where it is in relation to the narrative WAYYIQTOL the WAW-x-QATAL can be: (1) initial, when it precedes the narrative form, (2) non-initial when it follows. In the first case it communicates recovered information (antecedent, §3, 3), in the second, peripheral information (background, §3, 2)". Niccacci. *The Syntax*. §15, 35.
[317] *The Syntax*. §19, 38.
[318] *The Syntax*. §19, 40. The thesis posits it functions more as an interlude

episode revealing a new character begins[319]. He emphasizes the new character being introduced, but the same event narrated continues and is simply interrupted for added information.

Gen 2:25[a]

וַיִּהְיֽוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם֙ עֲרוּמִּ֔ים

now they were the two of them bare skin [naked] (unvarnished)

Gen 3:1[a-c]

וְהַנָּחָשׁ֙ הָיָ֣ה עָר֔וּם

מִכֹּל֙ חַיַּ֣ת הַשָּׂדֶ֔ה

אֲשֶׁ֥ר עָשָׂ֖ה יְהוָ֣ה אֱלֹהִ֑ים

Meanwhile/whereas the snake was [the] slickest-baldest

Out of the whole of the living thing of the arable land

That the divinity Yahweh made

Gen 3:7[b, c]

וַיֵּ֣דְע֔וּ

כִּ֥י עֵֽירֻמִּ֖ם הֵ֑ם ·

And they knew

That they bare skin

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[319] *Analysis*. 189.

This WAW-x-QATAL, as noted by Niccacci himself, is not "initial in the absolute meaning of the term," though he concludes it may function as such[320]. However, the literary structure is akin to an epilogue for the previous episode about the making of the land, the garden, the grounder, and his woman. It follows and provides background information to the WAYYIQTOL of 25ª, a continuation of all the WAYYIQTOLs in chapter two. So, beyond the single paragraph unit, the writer emphasizes the condition of the humans' nakedness in contrast to that of the snake. The information that the humans were naked is given first with the WAYYIQTOL וַיִּהְיוּ of 2:25ª, and then the contrast is expressed with the QATAL הָיָה of 3:1ª. Both verbs stem from the same root הָיָה.[321] It is not exactly a comment but "a background WAW-x-QATAL."[322]

How does this description of serpent symbolism in the ancient Near East and other biblical texts relate to that of the snake in the Eden narrative? Well, the snake is introduced in the third chapter as shrewd. He seems to be informed on matters for which humans are clueless. He is very much acquainted with divinity, though the author wants the reader or audience to see him as merely one of the animals of the open field.[323] Could this be a direct response to the common ANE perception and conception of serpents as divine creatures? Perhaps a macro syntactic reexamination of the pericope can provide answers.

4.3.2   Snake Lingo

As is often purported, the snake does not begin his discourse in verse 1ᵉ of the third chapter with an explicit question; rather, he is distorting a fact.[324] Niccacci's observation that the conjunctive adverb "'אַף כִּי …is found as second member of a rhetoric remark (Deut. 31:27 and 1

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[320] *The Syntax*. §20, 40.
[321] "The transition from the WAYYIQTOL of v. 20b ותהי הארץ to the WAW-x-QATAL of v. 21 (ואת העם העביר) specifies what happened to each of the 'subjects', the land and the people, mentioned as a pair in vv. 18–19; its function, therefore, is to mark a contrast (§42)". Niccacci. *The Syntax*. §49, 69. The contrast between WAYYIQTOL and x-QATAL (§9) is particularly clear in this example where the two verb forms have the same root and refer to the same event. Niccacci. *The Syntax*. §48, 70. "the transition from WAYYIQTOL → x-QATAL takes place with the same intention of placing the emphasis on the element 'x'". *Ibid*.
[322] Niccacci. *The Syntax*. §86, 116.
[323] The author selected a serpent to play this role because of its reputation as shapeshifter, a symbol that can be interpreted in many ways. This ambiguous feature makes it the perfect candidate for the role of the snake character. If the Yahwist's goal is to promote Yahweh and provoke the audience to conceptualize the divine differently than the milieu that they grounded in, he must make the snake cunning like "Socrates feigned ignorance to pull knowledge out of his interlocutors or to expose errors in their thinking". For the procedure to be effective, "it is important that a veil" of pretense "not be lifted". The audience or reader must see the snake for what he is not. Kreuz, Roger J. *Irony and Sarcasm*. (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2020). 56.
[324] "The serpent begins by asking an apparently innocent question". Wenham. *Word*, 73. "The serpent engages the woman in conversation with a subtle and seemingly innocent question". Arnold. *Genesis*, 65.

Sam 14:30, 21:6)" seems more probable an explanation in this case, when syntax and narrative context are considered.[325] Notably, Van der Merwe et al. state that "אַף often marks the entity immediately following it (its syntactic domain) as noteworthy addition (also, even, moreover, what's more, or what's worse)."[326]

Furthermore, they assert "אַף signals that the information referred to in a sentence or sentences *y* needs to be considered. In addition to information referred to in an immediately preceding sentence (or sentences) *x*."[327] Thus, this thesis argues that translating that phrase into '*it could be that a divinity has even said…*' is more appropriate. Viewed from this perspective, it is a rhetorical phrase to make plain the snake's shrewdness. Technically, it should not read as: *Did Elohim say, 'You shall not eat from all the trees in the garden?'*. The idea behind the snake's statement is suggestive. It implies curiosity without being invasive.[328]

Interestingly, in Gen 3: 4[b] and 5 (refer to Table 6 below for a macro syntactic assessment and explanation), the snake's discourse at the level of linguistic perspective is anticipated information, seemingly foreseeing and foreshadowing possible events in an undetermined future. Hence, the grammatical construction with the negative particle here would be to express epistemic or propositional modality (the likelihood of the truth of a proposition). This is meant to convey the snake's apparent distrust of the woman's understanding of the meaning of Yahweh's initial statement in Gen. 2:16-17.[329] Conversely, this seeming declaration by Yahweh is at linguistic perspective degree 0 with emphasis foreground. The point is that when he spoke, his

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[325] Niccacci. *Analysis*, 192.

[326] Van der Merwe, Naudé, Kroeze. *A Biblical Hebrew*, §40.14, 394.

[327] *Ibid*.

[328] Even though. The interrogative sense which is generally assumed for Heb. ʾap kī in this single passage would be without parallel; some critics emend accordingly to haʾap kī. But the corresponding gam kī is used for "although," cf. Ps 23:4, and the meaning suits the context admirably (Ehrl.). The serpent is not asking a question; he is deliberately distorting a fact. Speiser, E. A. *Genesis: Introduction, Translation, and Notes Vol. 1* (New York: Yale University Press 2008), 23.

[329] An elaborate discussion on this question is available in section 4.3.3.1

Genesis 2:16-17:

וַיְצַו֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהִ֔ים עַל־הָֽאָדָ֖ם לֵאמֹ֑ר מִכֹּ֥ל עֵֽץ־הַגָּ֖ן אָכֹ֥ל תֹּאכֵֽל׃

וּמֵעֵ֗ץ הַדַּ֨עַת֙ ט֣וֹב וָרָ֔ע לֹ֥א תֹאכַ֖ל מִמֶּ֑נּוּ כִּ֗י בְּי֛וֹם אֲכׇלְךָ֥ מִמֶּ֖נּוּ מ֥וֹת תָּמֽוּת׃

16a) Thus the divinity Yahweh directed/ordered (laying charge)

16b) upon the grounder saying:

16c) "From any tree in the garden, to eat you can eat (*indicative YIQTOL expressing deontic modality, referring to desirability of event*)

17a) but from the tree of the cognition of good and bad

17b) You must not eat from it (*indicative YIQTOL with prohibitive sense expressing deontic modality*).

17c) because right on the day of you eating from it,

17d) to die! you will die" (*Qal infinitive absolute*; *indicative YIQTOL expressing epistemic modality which has to do with the degree of knowledge, credence or belief in a proposition*).

statement was made in the actuality of the narrative flow, the present. This may be designed to insinuate the facticity of his claim or, as will be discussed further in the paper, its probability.

Genesis 3: 4[b] also starts with an adverb of negation, and "when a Hebrew sentence begins with a noun or an adverb the predicate is not identical with the verb" but with the noun or adverb.[330] The element *x* in the first position "becomes the predicate of the clause,"[331] which in this case is the adverb 'לֹא' (negative particle) plus the infinitive absolute 'מוֹת' (to die). Predicates assert information about a subject. The syntax of the grammatical construction for complex nominal clauses has "the finite verb in second position within the clause."[332] It emphasizes the element 'x' before the finite verb. Infinitive absolutes like 'מוֹת,' in this verse, are used to

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[330] Niccacci. *The Syntax*, 29. §6
[331] Niccacci. *The Syntax*, 28. §6
[332] Niccacci. *The Syntax*, 28. §6

intensify a verb,"[333] and they usually serve to create word plays or puns with the finite verb.[334] In this case, the snake affirms his skepticism about death resulting from eating the fruit from the tree. The implication is that the woman either misunderstood what was said or that Yahweh is withholding information. Furthermore, the use of the negative particle לֹא confirms that the imperfect verb form is an indicative future without volitional nuance.[335]

Verse 5ᵃ is a causal clause with a participle for which "the usual syntactic structure" is nominal.[336] Yet, at times, it can function with "verbal character."[337] Notwithstanding, as a noun clause, its role is to specify "the subject of the action," which in this case is *'elohim*.[338] Here, it is prepositive and corresponds to the English present participle with an active voice; its aspect is

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[333] Waltke, O'Connor. *An Introduction*, 581. § 35.2.1a. Moreover, "by bracketing the paronomastic infinitive with the verb, the verbal idea is intensified. The effect of the infinitive refers to the entire clause…the infinitive usually emphasizes not the meaning denoted by the verb's root but the force of the verb in context. When the verb makes an assertion, whatever its aspect, the notion of certainty is reinforced by the infinitive (e.g., with affirmation, contrast, concession, climax). By contrast, if the verb in context is irreal, the sense of irreality (e.g., dubiety, supposition, modality, or volition) becomes more forceful. Both verbal conjugations may express either assertion or irreality. Usually, the intensifying infinitive with the perfective conjugation forcefully presents the certainty of a completed event… with the non-perfective conjugation the infinitive absolute often emphasizes that a situation was, or is, or will take place. Since the non-perfective is used for irreality and volition, the infinitive absolute can intensify the sense of irreality in connection with that conjugation" Waltke, O'Connor. *An Introduction*, 584. § 35.3.1b

[334] See Waltke, O'Connor. *An Introduction*, 582. §35.2.1c.
T. Muraoka specifies "We would rather think that the infinitival repetition can be emphatic because of its paronomastic construction. Then the emphasis does not derive from the use of the inf. abs. as such, but from repetition of the same verbal idea" … he quotes Jouon in stating "that very often the emphasis is not placed upon the verbal action itself, but upon a modality, which is thus reinforced." These modalities or "nuances" can be: "Affirmation Gn 2.17, pressing request, absolute obligation, opposition or antithesis, condition, and rhetorical question". *Emphatic Words and Structures in Biblical Hebrew*. (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1985), 86-87.

[335] See Niccacci, §55 p. 76 "Another criterion for telling apart the two forms of YIQTOL (indicative or volitional) is the corresponding negative construction, which is לֹא + long form of YIQTOL (imperfect form) for the indicative". See Niccaci, *The Syntax,* §55 p. 76.
"In Biblical Hebrew the *yiqtol/imperfect* is used with לֹא to express an (absolute) prohibition (you *must* not…). By contrast, אל is typically used with the jussive to express the nuance of a temporally binding prohibition (you *should* not…). Cristol H.J. van der Merwe and Jacobus A. Naudé. *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar*. (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark,2017), 163. §19.3.5.1.

[336] Waltke, O'Connor. *An Introduction*, 624. §37.6b

[337] Waltke, O'Connor. *An Introduction*, 624. §37.6b. NB. "The participle does not function in Biblical Hebrew as a finite verb with a distinct time reference…More often, the participle describes an ongoing state of affairs, involving repeated, or continuous action" Waltke, O'Connor. *An Introduction*, 624-625. §37.6c, d

[338] Niccacci. *The Syntax*, 25. §6

continuous. It is thus translated postpositively into the English reduced relative clause (*'elohim is knowing/ one who is knowing*). In short, the snake tells the woman that the divinity is more than aware of the true outcome of eating from the tree. The tree of knowledge is not mentioned directly to keep the sense of ambiguity intact.

Verse 5[b] is a temporal clause, "the most common infinitive clauses."[339] The infinitive construct in this clause is working with the preposition בְּ (because, yea, although, indeed, verily).[340] Infinitive construct, in Biblical Hebrew grammar, "is a verbal noun used in the ways that English uses its infinitive ('to go') and gerund ('going')."[341]

In verse 5[c,] the verb stem is in Niphal, which is "related according to its meaning mostly to the Qal."[342] Niphal usually has a passive or reflexive sense. In other words, as passive, it indicates someone or something is affected and effected by another's influence.[343] It is reflexive if it indicates a subject acting on self. Here, it has the passive sense.[344] It is also a weQATAL grammatical construction, "the continuation form of an initial x-YIQTOL construction," verse 4b. Thus, it is translated as a simple future.[345]

Verse 5[d], like clause 5[c], is a weQATAL indicating the result of the humans' eyes being opened. 4[b] and verse 5 highlight the foreground with linguistic perspective anticipated information, implying that it is an event that has not yet happened.

Verse 5[e] is a participle in the construct state.[346] Some of the characteristics of "the participle when construed as a verb expresses a single and comparatively transitory act, or relates to particular cases, historical facts, and the like."[347] But when the participle in the construct state is nominalized, the actions or circumstances it points to are more permanent.[348] Like 5[a], it is

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[339] Waltke, O'Connor. *An Introduction*, 604. §36.2.2b

[340] "The infinitive occurs often in the genitive with prepositions". Waltke, O'Connor. *An Introduction*, 600. §36.1.2a. Moreover, when accompanied by the preposition בְּ it denotes "more specifically the more immediately preceding time". Waltke, O'Connor. *An Introduction*, 604. §36.2.2b

[341] Waltke, O'Connor. *An Introduction*, 599. §36.1.1a

[342] Waltke, O'Connor. *An Introduction*, 379. §23.1d

[343] "*Niphal* normally functions as a counterpart of the *Qal* rather than any of the causation stems, but sometimes it becomes confused with values normally attributed to the *Qal* itself or serves as a medio-reflexive counterpart to a causation stem. The *Niphal's* functions depend on the verb's meaning and its context. Hebrew, as we shall see, groups together the three senses of 'move' in the sentences, Ruth moved'. Ruth was moved'. and 'Ruth moved herself'. All these would be *Niphals*" … Waltke, O'Connor. *An Introduction*, 380. §23.1i, j

[344] "The passive sense of the *Niphal* is arguably the most common. By "passive" we mean that the subject is in the *state* of being acted upon or of suffering the effects of an action by an implicit or explicit agent" Waltke, O'Connor. *An Introduction*, 382. §23.2.2a

[345] Niccacci. *The Syntax*, 77. §55

[346] "In the construct state, a participle governs an object or some other specification in the genitive" Waltke, O'Connor. *An Introduction*, 616. §37.3c

[347] Waltke, O'Connor. *An Introduction*, 619. §37.3e

[348] Waltke and O'Connor state this "indicates repeated, enduring, or commonly occurring acts, occupations, and thoughts". *An Introduction*, 619. §37.3e

prepositive and corresponds to the English present participle with an active voice. Its aspect is continuous and conveyed as background information. Therefore, this clause demonstrates how humans' status and reality would have been permanently modified.

Table 6. Genesis 3:4[b],5

Verse	Grammatical construction	Hebrew	Verb form	English translation
4b	x-Yiqtol	לֹא־מֹות תְּמֻתוּן׃	Qal, infinitive absolute. Qal imperfect, 2nd Pers masculine, plural (CNC)	Not to die y'all will die.[349]
5a	SNC	כִּי יֹדֵעַ אֱלֹהִים	Qal participle, masculine singular, absolute 0 degree	For the divinity is one cognizing
5b	SNC	כִּי בְּיֹום אֲכָלְכֶם מִמֶּנּוּ	Qal infinitive construct, 2nd person, masculine plural 0 degree	Right on the day of y'all eating from it
5c	weQATAL	וְנִפְקְחוּ עֵינֵיכֶם	NIPHAL inverted perfect, 3rd person plural.	Then both of your eyes, they will open
5d	weQATAL	וִהְיִיתֶם כֵּאלֹהִים	Qal inverted perfect, 2nd person, masculine plural	Thus, y'all will come to be like divinities
5e	SNC	יֹדְעֵי טֹוב וָרָע׃	Qal participle, masculine, plural, construct Bg.	(Ones) cognizing of good and bad

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[349] This is a problematic clause because "the infinitive absolute is not normally negated; a negative particle, where needed, is normally before the finite verb". *Biblical Hebrew*, §35.2.2e, 583. Word Biblical Commentary points out that "it is usual for the negative לֹא to come between the inf. abs. and the finite verb, not before both inf and verb as here. The only other examples of this word order are Amos 9:8; Ps 49:8. It is probably to echo 2:17 (*GKC*, 113v). Cassuto (1:146) suggests that it is the antithesis of v 4 to v 3 that prompts this word order here".
It could be a scribal error, or it was purposefully arranged this way to amplify the image of the snake as duplicitous or ambiguous.

4.3.3   The Lot of the Snake

The author/redactor of this text has completely demythologized the image of the snake. He has stripped him of any vestige of divinity and reduced him to the realm of the animal kingdom. Serpents in the ANE, as discussed previously, were associated with the divine; ancient Israel was no exception. A נחש הנחשת *bronze serpent* cult in ancient Israel is documented in Numbers 21. This cult probably predates the presence of the Israelites in Canaan. Yet, according to 2 Kings 18:4, it came to an end because of King Hezekiah's reform[350]. Genesis 2-3 may even be a further testament to this aniconic turn in the history of the belief system.

Notwithstanding the prohibition of iconic representations of divinity and considering the Eden authors' divestment of the serpent of this dimension of its symbolic function, the anthropomorphic feature of the narrative seems absurd. If the divine is ineffable and transcendent, and if the snake signifier as it stands is meant to signify wickedness and negate the possibility of other deities, why allow the narrative to retain its current shape? It seems counterintuitive.[351] As will become evident, this reflects the binary opposition paradigm that permeates the narrative, which has the dual purpose, as apparatus, of demythologization and re-mythologizing for Yahweh's sake.

The pericope of Gen 3:14,15 begins with an x-QATAL in discourse preceded by a WAYYIQTOL. The narrative flow is not interrupted in this case. Clauses 14[bcd] form a 2SC (two-member syntactic construction) protasis-apodosis construction.[352] Syntactically, clause 14[b] is hypotaxis in the speech unit, which means it is subordinate to the main clause consisting of

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[350] "This cult is firmly attested in archaeological data, but its interpretation is still unclear". Furthermore, Maciej Münnich points out the "condemnation of bronze serpents in the monotheistic (at the present state) text, with its prohibition of any cultic images" is no surprise. "The Cult of the Bronze Serpents in Ancient Canaan and Israel", in: Iggud. Selected Essays in Jewish Studies, vol. I: The Bible and Its World, Rabbinic Literature and Jewish Law, and Jewish Thought, B. J. Schwartz, A. Melamed, A. Shemesh (eds.), Jerusalem 2008, 39.

[351] As seen in the following quote, this has become the general view about the snake: "When one adds to this the obvious point that the serpent in Gen. 3 is deliberately undermining human obedience to God, there are clearly no grounds for the reader to regard the serpent as anything but a natural enemy". Moberly, R. W. L. "DID THE SERPENT GET IT RIGHT?" *The Journal of Theological Studies*, vol. 39, no. 1, 1988, 13.

[352] כִּי + finite verb is one of the "constructions in the protasis". Niccacci. *The Syntax*, §111, 140. Additionally, Niccacci states "since in the protasis adverbial and nominal constructions are equivalent, the conclusion has to be that all first members of the 2SC must be analysed as 'casus pendens' or extra-positional constructions". *The Syntax*. §120, 146. Furthermore, "they are equivalent to (and for the most part identical with) constructions expressing a circumstance of time". *The Syntax*, §127, 157. "The apodosis, therefore, comprises the main sentence of the paragraph but it is not syntactically independent because it could not exist without the protasis (syntactic hypotaxis)". Niccacci. *The Syntax*, §126, 152.

phrases 3:14ᶜ&ᵈ. These phrases are in the prominence foreground. This means they make manifest the present temporal axis.[353]

The x-QATAL כִּי עָשִׂיתָ זֹּאת (3:14ᵇ) conveys background information in retrospect, etiological in nature, explaining how the snake came to be in the condition that it was currently in. As a CNC, normally, its purpose would be to emphasize the element x, which is, in this case, the conjunction כִּי preceding the finite verb.[354] It would also fulfill the role of predicating the clause.[355] Since it functions as the protasis in the 2SC, it acquires the value of the element x:

"x-QATAL= x; first position=protasis."[356] The protasis should be analyzed as casus pendens.[357]

Thus, the three clauses in verse 14 are one speech unit expressing "the circumstance of time."[358] They include the protasis, which usually stands for the condition in conditional clauses. In this case, it gains this function only due to syntax. Verse 14 also consists of the apodosis, which is the conclusion or consequent of conditional clauses.

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[353] "The apodosis, therefore, comprises the main sentence of the paragraph but it is not syntactically independent because it could not exist without the protasis". *The Syntax*, §126, 152. So, these types of sentences are grammatically parataxis but in terms of syntax are hypotaxis. WAYYIQTOL in narrative linguistic attitude is grammatically and syntactically parataxis.
[354] "כִּי is primarily a conjunction. It is used both as a subordinating and coordinating conjunction. It is also used as a modal adverb and discourse marker…it introduces as subordinating conjunction the protasis of a condition and may be translated *when* or *if*…כִּי normally introduces the general conditions…functions as a subordinating conjunction to introduce a temporal clause that refers to a process occurring simultaneously with the main clause. In such cases כִּי may be translated 'when'. The distinction between a temporal clause and a conditional clause is sometimes vague…introduces as subordinating conjunction the cause of a condition or process." *A Biblical Hebrew Reference*. §40.29.1, 433.
[355] *The Syntax*. §6, 28.
[356] *The Syntax*. § 126, 153. "The CNC becomes a nominal construction in extra-position ('casus pendens', §119) and so any hint of emphasis within the individual clause vanishes". *Ibid*.
[357] 'Casus pendens' is a noun or noun equivalent freed from the position it would occupy within a normal clause and placed at the head of the sentence. It does not really occupy the first position of the clause but is placed outside it ('extra-position') and reference to it is usually made by an anaphoric or resumptive pronoun. Its function is not to place the emphasis on the nominal part of the sentence now placed at the beginning but to mark off the topic to be considered. *The Syntax*. §123, 148. Christo H. van der Merwe, Jacobus A. Naudé, Jan H. Kroeze uses the term 'left dislocation' to describe casus pendens. It is defined as a case when "a constituent is referred to in the clause by another element (called the resumptive) e.g. *That big house*, I am still going to buy *it* for us. They suggest "a dislocated construction may be preceded by conjunctions" such as כִּי. *A Biblical Hebrew Reference*. §48, 510.
The Syntax. §127, 157.

> Genesis 3:14
>
> The divinity Yahweh said to the snake: (as for) *this*, ever since you produced *it*, despicable/alienating (are being) you from all the livestock and from all living thing in the arable land.

Classical interpretations of this text have often depicted the snake as cursed by God.[359] Considering the translation presented here, this depiction may be tenuous. The root ʾrr appears sixty-eight times in the Old Testament: "in the qal 55x (40x in the form of the pass. ptcp. ʾārûr), in the pi. 7x, in the ni. 1x (Mal 3:9, ptcp.); the noun m^eʾērâ occurs 5x."[360] The NRSV Bible, for example, translates most of these forms into a seemingly simple past, 'cursed.' Niccacci calls to attention that the absence of the verb הָיָה 'be' in verse 14ᶜ "means that the sentence is an affirmation rather than a command."[361] It would then seem that the deity is not doing the

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[359]David M. Carr, for example, takes for granted that "the snake is now more cursed (אָרוּר) than all the other animals, whether domesticated or of the field. God then gives the snake a punishment fitting his role in the humans' eating of the forbidden fruit". *The Formation*, 44.

[360] Jenni, E., & Westermann, C. (1997). *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (p. 179). Hendrickson Publishers.

[361] *Analysis*,194.
This participle here stems from an intransitive Qal form. ʾrr is a stative verb which means it describes a state or circumstance. The state or circumstance can be physical or mental(psychological). As participle it is not conjugated. Semantically, it appears to have the same denotation as a psychological factitive Piel. This factitive Piel "refers to a subjective event. The salient feature of that event is open to discussion. Jenni refers to such verbs as declarative-estimative, by which he means that the state described is attained by a declaration (i.e., 'to declare someone to be in a state') or as a result of an estimation (i.e., 'to esteem someone as being in a state'). Delbert Hillers prefers to call the so-called declarative verbs "delocutive verbs." He correctly notes that with some of these verbs the Piel usage is based on a locution rather than on an adjectival or even a verbal use. Waltke & O'Connor. *An introduction to Biblical Hebrew*. §24.2f, 402-403.
Genesis 5:29
is an example of this Piel for which the translation should be a delocutive/declarative: מִן־הָאֲדָמָ֗ה אֲשֶׁ֤ר אֵרְרָ֖הּ יְהוָֽה
From the ground that Yahweh pronounced or esteemed [she-being] unresponsive (indifferent) alluding to "a prior subjective judgment" in Gen 3:17ᶠ. *An introduction to Biblical Hebrew*. §24.2g.7b, 403. The NRSV seems to translate it as a Piel factitive from "the class of verbs with the basic profile (*Qal* intransitive) …in the *Piel* of this class of verbs, the basic sense of the *Qal* is transformed: the *Piel* designates an effected state and governs an object. This class of verbs includes chiefly *Qal* intransitives (verbs that do not govern a direct object) most of them

'cursing' of the snake. He bears witness to a phenomenon that has been occurring for some time: a transformation of the snake with respect to its environment. אָרוּר is a passive participle; van der Merwe et al. state this participle's "prototypical semantic value in Classical Biblical Hebrew is that of continuous action" which happens at the same time of a specified event.[362] Waltke and O'Connor explain that "the passive participle, too, tends to describe a situation not implying progressive activity but resulting from some earlier action." Furthermore, they posit that "the passive participle *qatul* has an inchoative sense, that is, it focuses on the coming of the subject into a modified state."[363]

This thesis translated the passive participle אָרוּר into 'alienating' with the auxiliary '*are being*' bracketed to indicate the occurrence is in the present continuous as a demonstration of the snake becoming an ʾārûr. The term, here, is being used metonymically. The snake embodies the curse altogether. The accrued meaning, then, is from the context that the accursed entity was "in a subordinate relationship to the one who had uttered the curse and had been expelled from a community relationship where he had enjoyed security, justice, and success."[364] However, the utterance of the curse formula does not need to be a speech act of wishing or summoning malediction on another. In certain contexts, it is merely the stating of the facts about the inevitable outcome of a transgression, as exemplified in 3:14. Yet, the curse can also entail "the opposite of a *bārûk*, and is thus one stricken by misfortune and afflicted, whose existence is disastrous and whose presence brings misfortune."[365]

In consensus with E.A. Speiser, this thesis affirms that, in Genesis 3:14, "the ʾarur has in mind the exclusion of a person from the community, the tribe, or the people who stand under the blessing."[366] The snake is becoming alienated and isolated from himself and is losing allure

statives". *An introduction to Biblical Hebrew*. §24.2a-b, 400-401. "*Out of the ground that the LORD* **has cursed** *this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the toil of our hands*" implying Yahweh caused the curse. Delbert Hillers "Another Hebrew verb, בֵּרֵךְ ("to bless"), suggests itself for consideration as possibly delocutive, in view of the very common locution בָּרוּךְ פ ("Blessed be so-and-so"). The writer of this thesis paper estimates ארר to be added on this list of words to be considered as delocutive along with words like בֵּרֵךְ. "Delocutive Verbs in Biblical Hebrew." *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. 86, no. 3, 1967, 324.

[362] *A Biblical Hebrew Reference*. §20.3.3, 187.

[363] *Biblical Hebrew*, §37.4e, 620.

[364] Scharbert, J. (1977). ארר. In G. J. Botterweck & H. Ringgren (Eds.), & J. T. Willis (Trans.), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Revised Edition, Vol. 1, pp. 408–409). William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

[365] Jenni, E., & Westermann, C. (1997). In *Theological lexicon of the Old Testament* (p. 180). Hendrickson Publishers.

[366] Scharbert, J. (1977). ארר. In G. J. Botterweck & H. Ringgren (Eds.), & J. T. Willis (Trans.), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Revised Edition, Vol. 1, p. 409). William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

"Banned. The Heb. stem ʾrr is regularly translated as 'to curse', but this sense is seldom appropriate on closer examination. With the preposition mi(n), here and in vs. 17, such a

among his peers. He has turned despicable; soon, he will be persona non grata. This is the implication of the assertion in 3:14; it is not an imprecation. There must have been a bond between the snake and the woman. The narrative does not give details on the nature of this relationship, but there are some indications.[367] For example, the use of minimal pairs to create binary oppositions.[368]

Hence, the snake is said to have produced (עָשִׂיתָ) a controversy that somehow will have repercussions far beyond the Garden. In contrast, Yahweh will impose or set (אָשִׁית) inimical boundary between him and the woman. As the deity foretells coming consequences, in verse 15ᵃ, homophones are used to juxtapose this 'hostile intention or enmity' that he will set as אֵיבָה (*boundary*) with the Hebrew חַוָּה that the grounder chooses as a name for the woman. The current text associates this word with life, but there may be an archaic semantic link to the notion of unwalled villages and another to that of divine serpents.[369]

Since 2:22ᶜ, when Yahweh caused the woman to come to the grounder, this is the only record of the deity intervening directly in the affairs of the Garden. What is it exactly that the snake produced that warrants such intervention? The answer is not that obvious. The deity's words in this regard are simply that '...you produced *this*'; no further explication is given. The reader is forced to figure out what the pronoun *this*, as a signifier, is pointing to. Is it what the snake said, what he omitted to say, what was intended by what he said, or how he said it?

Strangely, the snake does not identify Yahweh when talking to the woman. He speaks as though he is ignorant about which divinity would have spoken the prohibition (see Table 7). Even more peculiar is the woman's answer to the snake: '...but fruit of the tree amid the Garden *a divinity/deity* said...'. She responds to the snake as if she, too, is unaware that Yahweh is the

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meaning is altogether out of place: 'cursed from the ground' (ibid.) only serves to misdirect, and 'cursed above all cattle and all the beasts of the field' (present instance) would imply that the animal world shared the serpent's guilt. The basic meaning of ʾrr is 'to restrain (by magic), bind (by a spell)'; see JAOS 80 (1960), 198 ff. With mi(n) the sense is 'to hold off, ban' (by similar means)". Speiser, E. A. *Genesis*, 24.

[367] R.W.L. Moberly would have had similar reading, except he excludes the snake from the equation. He writes "What we see is a degree of alienation and fear between the man and God, and the man and his wife, which did not exist previously". "DID THE SERPENT GET IT RIGHT?" *The Journal of Theological Studies*, vol. 39, no. 1, 1988, 17.

[368] Minimal pairs are two words that differ in only one sound: bit and beat

[369] "Tent settlement, i.e., an unwalled village of a nomadic peoples, as a more or less permanent population center (Nu 32:41a+), note: 'tent' as an element of meaning for this lexeme may be lost, and 'unwalled village' may be its meaning". Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Hebrew (Old Testament)* (electronic ed.). Logos Research Systems, Inc.

"Following some leads suggested by Lidzbarski, he suggested that there may have been a connection with the Phoenician goddess Ḥavat, whom Lidzbarski considered a serpent-goddess and a goddess of the Underworld. The form of the name ḥwt explains the Hebrew form chavvāh more easily than does chēvyā'". Kapelrud, A. S. (1980). חַוָּה. In G. J. Botterweck & H. Ringgren (Eds.), & D. E. Green (Trans.), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Revised Edition, Vol. 4, pp. 257–258). William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

deity in question and/or that she believes the snake is truly ignorant of the circumstances. One wonders whether she was even present when this initial event happened. This much is insinuated by the grammatical construction used for her response, "the report QATAL."[370]

The truth is most likely hidden in some parts of the text's ambiguous structure, but the nature of the snake's wrongdoing is still unclear. The authors probably left it to the audience to appraise the narrative and determine whether the snake has done good or bad or good and bad.[371] What he may have produced was the possibility for discord and disharmony in the Garden and Gen 3:17[f] אֲרוּרָה הָאֲדָמָה בַּעֲבוּרֶךָ '*uncaring (indifferent or unresponsive) [is being-she]) the ground for the sake of you*' attests that even the ground from which he was made suffered the consequence of the transgression on account of the grounder listening to his woman.[372] Everything in the Garden becomes in disarray, and every relationship is distorted. The woman's answer to Yahweh in 3:13[b] is telling. She blames the snake. Yet, she takes partial responsibility. She reports the event as she perceives it, not quite like it happened. The deity Yahweh appears to agree with her.

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[370] "When the event is related in narrative the WAYYIQTOL is used; but when the same event is reported in discourse, after verbs of saying, telling, hearing, (report), QATAL is used… QATAL is rendered by the present perfect, a tense which belongs to the realm of comment. This is further proof QATAL is not narrative verbal form". *The Syntax*. §22, 41.
"The report QATAL never heads a sentence but can be preceded by a particle…It must be stressed that the use of QATAL described in the two preceding paragraphs is intrinsically linked with the setting as 'report', the announcement of information which the addressee does not yet know. What happens is that when known events are reported the verb form used is WAYYIQTOL, not QATAL". *The Syntax*. §23-24, 43.
[371] On this problem of ambiguity Umberto Eco states "when we find an ambiguous sentence or a small textual portion isolated from any co-text or circumstance of utterance, we cannot disambiguate it without resorting to a presupposed 'aboutness' of the co-text, usually labeled as the textual topic. It is usually detected by formulating a *question*." Pertinent questions to enable the parsing of the text. He warns "it is imprudent to speak of *one* textual topic. In fact, a text can function on the basis of various embedded topics." He lists: "*sentence* topics; *discursive* topics at the level of short sentences can rule the understanding of microstructural elements, while *narrative* topics can rule the comprehension of the text at higher levels". Finally, he states "topics are not always explicit. Sometimes these questions are manifested at the first level, and the reader simply cooperates by reducing the frames and by blowing up the semantic properties he needs. Sometimes there are topic-markers such as titles. But many times the reader has to guess where the real topic is hidden". *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 1984), 25-26.
[372] At variance with Speiser who suggests "in vs. 17 the required nuance is 'condemned'". This thesis proposes the ground is unproductive. Whereas its output would initially accord with the grounder's labor input, she (the ground) is now withholding her produce. Here too, the occurrence is in the present continuous to demonstrate that the ground, like the snake is being an ʾārûr, alienating. The semantic value is in continuity with the idea of relationality which seems to be a constant of the narrative. *Genesis*, 24.

The text is an x-QATAL grammatical construction, the verbal stem is in Hiphil, and the linguistic attitude is narrative discourse.[373] The author purposefully designed this to illustrate the snake's complicity, as if he wants him to be culpable. Alas, the woman decries: "The snake—he (is) (the one)—(who) motivated me *to hope in vain*," thereby transgressing divine directive.[374] Deception seems to be the lexical meaning intended by הִשִּׁיאָנִי. It is reported that "Umberto Eco defines semiotics as the discipline studying everything which can be used in order to lie." Additionally, Eco's definition "implies that we have the capacity to represent the world in any way we want through signs, even in misleading and deceitful ways."[375] By manipulating signs with the intent of misleading, "we can get people to act erroneously and at their peril."[376] Based on what is said in the narrative and, more importantly, what is negated, Eco's insight on semiotics may accurately describe the meaning behind the snake's action.[377]

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[373] "Occasionally a text which can be classified as speech includes a narrative section when the speaker wishes to report certain events he considers important for the actual situation. I use the term 'narrative discourse' for this type of narrative in which the events are not reported in a detached way, as in a historian's account, but from the speaker's point of view. Naturally, verbal forms in the first and second person predominate. Understood in this way, 'discourse' is the opposite of pure 'narration'". Niccacci. *The Syntax*. §74, 102.

[374] "Hebrew grammars traditionally represent the Hiphil stem as the causative of the Qal stem…". Both Piel and Hiphil imply causality but with nuances. "According to Jenni, the Piel signifies to bring about a state, and the Hiphil, to cause an event. His distinction involves two contrasting ideas: state versus event, and to bring about versus to cause actively… The former is rigid, a non-activity, the latter an activity, a movement, a happening, a deed… in the verbal sentences he regards the predicate as closely joined together with the subject and as established in one situation (an analytic judgment) … The Piel can often be translated by an adjectival construction: an adjective (with stative verbs), a passive past participle (with fientive verbs). Superficially considered, the relationship between subject and object in both Piel and Hiphil stems is often that of a transitive making or causing which proceeds from the subject to the object" Waltke & O' Connor relates that the object in the Piel suffers the effect of the idea implied by the verb but "With the Hiphil, however, the object participates in the event expressed by the verbal root"… the Piel represents the subject as transposing an object into the state or condition corresponding to the notion expressed by the verbal root, the Hiphil represents the subject as causing an object to participate indirectly as a second subject in the notion expressed by the verbal root… The Hiphil stem's characteristic h preformative, derived from a third person personal pronoun, reflects a designation of a second subject's participation in the action. In E. A. Speiser's view the Hiphil originally signified: 'X (the subject) caused that Y (the second subject) be or do something". Waltke, B. K., & O'Connor. *An introduction*. §27.1, 433-435.

[375] Danesi, M. *Messages and Meanings: An Introduction to Semiotics*. (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press Inc., 1994), 4.

[376] *Ibid*.

[377] The construction of the snake's statement seems to depict ambiguity. It can look like the snake is being emphatic if the woman views the snake as a figure of authority, but it can also connote one who is being suggestive if the woman sees the snake as an inferior "Indicative YIQTOL with its corresponding negative with לֹא express obligations (and so come close to the function of the

Table 7. Genesis 3:14-15

וַיֹּ֨אמֶר יְהֹוָ֧ה אֱלֹהִ֛ים׀ אֶל־הַנָּחָשׁ֒ 14a			Θ	WAYYIQTOL 3P. Msc. Sing		Thus, the divinity Yahweh said to the snake	VC
	כִּי עָשִׂ֣יתָ זֹּאת֒ 14b		↑	x-QATAL 2P. Msc. Sing. (PROTASIS)	Qal	Ever since you produced this	CNC
	אָר֤וּר אַתָּה֙ a		Θ	Passive Participle 2P. Sing. (APODOSIS)	Qal Absolute	Alienating/despicable[378] (are	SNC

jussive)". 77 §55. "The sense of a jussive in simple discourse usually follows from the status relations of the speaker and addressee. When a superior uses the jussive with reference to an inferior the volitional force may be command (human; divine), exhortation, counsel, or invitation or permission. Sometimes the jussive qualifies or circumscribes an imperative. A second-person jussive may have the sense of an order. When an inferior uses the jussive with reference to a superior, it may denote an urgent request, prayer, request for permission" Waltke and O'Connor, §34.3b, 568. Additionally, "negative commands are expressed by לֹא + long YIQTOL (imperfect form)". It suggests "timeless prohibitions". Christo H.J. van der Merwe and Jacob A. Naudé § 19.5.2.1, 170.

[378] "The passive participle too tends to describe a situation not implying progressive activity but resulting from some earlier action." Walke and O'Connor. *Biblical Hebrew*, §37.1e, 614. Also, "the passive participle *qatul* has an inchoative sense, that is, it focuses on the coming of the subject into a modified state." Walke and O'Connor. *Biblical Hebrew*, §37.4e, 620. "The participle of the reflexive or passive stems, especially the *Niphal*, correspond occasionally to an English -ible/-able term." Walke and O'Connor. *Biblical Hebrew*, §37.4d, 620.

The ʾarur-formula:
"But the relevant passages in the OT show that the person who was smitten by a curse was in a subordinate relationship to the one who had uttered the curse and had been expelled from a community relationship where he had enjoyed security, justice, and success. Thus, according to Gen. 4:11, after Cain had murdered his brother, he was denied close fellowship with God and was driven away from the fruitful land; and according to 3:14, God deprived the serpent of his former place in the animal community… in reality the ʾarur has in mind the exclusion of a person from the community, the tribe, or the people who stand under the blessing… The ʾarur-formula was also used when the intention was to discourage someone from transgressing a commandment, a commonly accepted responsibility, or a far-reaching legal or ethical demand. In this case, the curse formula is the most severe means of separating the community from the evildoer. It is significant that the only ones who pronounce such a curse in the OT are God, the king, those in positions of authority, or the whole assembly of the people. This sort of curse is

	מִכָּל־ הַבְּהֵמָ֔ה 14c				being) you from all the livestock	
	וּמִכֹּ֖ל[a] חַיַּ֣ת הַשָּׂדֶ֑ה 14d			Common noun construct Fem. Sing (APODOSIS)	And from all living thing of the arable land	SNC
	עַל־גְּחֹנְךָ֣ תֵלֵ֔ךְ 14e		↓	x-YIQTOL 2P. Msc. Sing.	Qal	Upon your belly you will walk	CNC
	וְעָפָ֥ר תֹּאכַ֖ל כָּל־יְמֵ֥י חַיֶּֽיךָ׃ 14f		↓	x-YIQTOL 2P. msc. Sing.	Qal	And dust you will eat all the days of your lifetime	CNC
	וְאֵיבָ֣ה אָשִׁ֗ית בֵּֽינְךָ֙ וּבֵ֣ין הָֽאִשָּׁ֔ה 15a		↓	x-YIQTOL 1P. Sing.	Qal	Enmity I will set tween you and between the woman	CNC
	וּבֵ֥ין זַרְעֲךָ֖ וּבֵ֣ין זַרְעָ֑הּ 15b				construct	And between your seed and tween her seed	SNC
	ה֚וּא יְשׁוּפְךָ֣ רֹ֔אשׁ 15c		↓	x-YIQTOL 3P. Msc. Sing.	Qal	He will crush your head	CNC
	וְאַתָּ֖ה תְּשׁוּפֶ֥נּוּ עָקֵֽב׃		↓	x-YIQTOL 2P. Msc. Sing.	Qal	And you will crush his heel	CNC

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always conditional, and thus takes effect only when the situation it is intended to prevent exists. This situation that makes a curse effective can be expressed in two different ways: (a) by a participial construction, or (b) by a relative clause." [378] Scharbert, J. (1977). ארר. In G. J. Botterweck & H. Ringgren (Eds.), & J. T. Willis (Trans.), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Revised Edition, Vol. 1, pp. 408–410). William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

	15d						

4.4   To Die or Not to Die: A Question of Hermeneutics

The snake is purported to have deceived the woman, with Yahweh seemingly endorsing this claim. Karen Randolph Joines has proposed that implicit in the snake's rhetoric is a disparagement of Yahweh's reputation. She writes:

> The serpent accuses God of the capriciousness, adamancy, and deceitfulness characteristic of the ancient Near Eastern pantheons. In the Babylonian "Creation of Man by the Mother Goddess", man is created to be nothing more than slaves for the gods (ANET 99ff.). Ea, the Babylonian god of wisdom, cheats Adapa of immortality by blatant deception (ANET l01ff.). In "The Creation Epic" man is formed only to be taskmasters for the gods (ANET 60ff.). The point is that these gods felt no compunction either in deceiving man, in manipulating him, or in destroying him.[379]

It is uncertain if this quote from Joines fully captures the significance of the snake's statement. It reflects the general view of divinity in the literary world from which the Eden narrative might have emerged. This outlook would have been an element in the signifying system that allowed the early audience to make inferences about the gods. However, one may question if this interpretation is a bit of a stretch at the synchronic level. Could it be a testament to residual ideas from Mesopotamian myths that the author used to create the story, or does it reveal the intended significance of the snake by the writer/author(s)? Furthermore, how reflective is it of the Hebrew adaptation of those motifs?[380]

This thesis paper will continue to demonstrate how macro syntactic analysis augmented by semiotics can enable exegetes to identify techniques that the author(s) employed to fabricate meaning. In turn, it will illumine aspects of the text that otherwise might have gotten lost in translation. It cannot be stressed enough how awareness of the cultural matrix that produced these texts is mandatory. Ergo, relevant comparative data should always be available to orient oneself to a mode, hermeneutically speaking, that will be the propitious precondition for more plausible interpretations.[381]

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[379] *The Serpent*. 4.

[380] This critic is informed by insights from semiotic theories on interpretation which posit that "No text is read independently of the reader's experiences of other texts. Intertextual knowledge can be considered a special case of overcoding and establishes its own intertextual frames (frequently to be identified with genre rules) …intertextual knowledge (the extreme periphery of a semantic encyclopedia) encompasses all the semiotic systems with which the reader is familiar". Moreover, there are moments when "a textual riddle [that] can be disambiguated only by means of intertextual information". This is probably not one of these instances. Eco, *The Role of the Reader*, 21.

[381] Comparative data is important because "You can only understand the significance of the body

After conducting a syntactic analysis of Gen 3:4[b], it was concluded that the snake expressed doubt about death as the actual consequence of eating the fruit of the tree. The text contains an adverb of negation associated with an infinitive absolute. One of the semantic-pragmatic functions of infinitive absolutes in biblical Hebrew is to confirm the factuality of an event, especially when a speaker doubts the factuality of an event or a state of affairs.[382]

The thesis suggests that the implications behind 3:4[b] might be that the woman either misunderstood what Yahweh said or that he was withholding information. In either case, the snake is playing on the woman's incertitude. Another perspective is that the author's motive in creating these tensions between the discourses is to produce irony as a literary and rhetorical device. This hypothesis will be explored in the following pages.

Steve Kempf has taken a somewhat similar position and argued that Genesis 3:22 should be read as irony[383]. He argues that Yahweh is being ironic with the pronouncement in that verse. He explains that "The Lord God echoes the serpent's words in order to emphasize the *incongruity of what the serpent promised and the actual*"[384] Though indebted to his insight into the evidence of irony in the text, this thesis paper goes a step further than his conclusion. Instead, it proposes that the narrative is one laden with irony, not just in Genesis 3:22. The writer of this thesis postulates that the story comprises Socratic and situational ironies and should probably be read as a work of cosmic irony.

4.4.1 Irony

Irony, or specifically, verbal irony, is roughly defined as speaking "to mimic or mock those one disagrees with, fictionally to assert what they do or might assert." Furthermore, it is characterized as sarcasm. The act whereby "one shows what it is like to make certain claims, hoping thereby to demonstrate how absurd or ridiculous it is to do so."[385] Roger J. Kreuz, by way of "literary critic Wayne Booth, distinguished between ironies that are stable and those that are unstable."[386] Stable ironies are purposefully designed and are coherently intelligible. Unstable ironies are opaque, "the author's intent is unclear."[387]

To parse a stable irony and "reconstruct the intended meaning," Kreuz suggests a reader must first acknowledge that a speaker/author employs figurative speech to make such statements. Then, she should evaluate the speaker's level of awareness about the facts, the speaker's response

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of work of an author by placing it in context with the work of the author's contemporaries". Vial. *Schleiermacher*, 50.

[382] Cristol H.J. van der Merwe and Jacobus A. Naudé. *A Biblical Hebrew Reference*. §20.2.2.2, 179.

[383] Kempf, Stephen. "Who Told the Truth," *Notes on Translation* 14(1) (2000), 34-46.

[384] *Who Told*, 13.

[385] Popa-Wyatt, Mihaela. "Pretence and Echo: Towards an Integrated Account of Verbal Irony", International Review of Pragmatics 6, (2014): 140, Doi: https://doi.org/10.1163/18773109-00601007

[386] *Irony and Sarcasm*, 40.

[387] *Irony and Sarcasm*, 41.

to that fact, and the amount of credulity afforded to the situation.[388] Unstable ironies are usually ambiguous because an author and a reader or two speakers may "lack knowledge about each other that would help them determine ironic intent." It is also likely the irony may have been constructed without "behavioral cues that are commonly used to signal nonliteral intent."[389]

4.4.2   Sarcasm

Sarcasm, as stated above, is also an element that can signal verbal irony. It is "a form of humor that can inflict pain by pointing out the faults and foibles of others."[390] Kreuz notes five functions of sarcasm from the appraisal of research by sociologist Lori Ducharme. He reports it can express "humorous aggression, take social control, declaration of allegiance, establishing solidarity and social distance." Alternately, "sarcasm can also be used to vent frustration, as when we thank someone who is being uncooperative."[391] These all equate to social stratification. One of the purposes of verbal irony and sarcasm appears to be the validation of cultural norms. It helps delimit who is in from who is out. The interpreter of verbal irony usually shares common ground with the ironist. Common ground may consist of the values they share, which enable understanding.[392]

4.4.3   Pretense

Pretense is another trait that can indicate an instance of irony. Although it is not a prerequisite for every variety. A self-irony, for example, would not need it. Kreuz posits that "the verbal ironist pretends to possess attitudes and beliefs that she does not, in truth, hold."[393] Irony, in this case, is only dramatization. In Socratic irony, actors pretend to be ignorant to educate, and the act must be convincing.[394] Yet, for verbal irony to be effective, it must be obvious to the

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[388] *Irony and Sarcasm*, 40.

[389] *Ibid*.

[390] *Irony and Sarcasm*, 57.

[391] *Irony and Sarcasm*, 44.

[392] Both parties know things about each other (and when their partners know they know these things), then this body of shared knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs can be exploited in the service of their interactions. *Irony and Sarcasm,* 52. H.W. Fowler explains the function of irony in similar terms, noting "its motive or aim is "exclusiveness." It is accomplished through the statement of facts. The method or means is mystification, and the ironist's audience is "an inner circle." *Irony and Sarcasm*, 57.

[393] *Irony and Sarcasm*, 56.

[394] to pull knowledge out of his interlocutors or to expose errors in their thinking. For the Socratic ironist, it is important that this veil not be lifted. *Ibid*.

intended audience that the actor's attitude is not real. Failing to recognize pretense puts the interpreter at risk of being counted among the victims of the irony.[395]

Popa-Wyatt suggests that "pretence alone is not enough to yield irony." There needs to be a target, "the expression of a critical judgment or hostile attitude, such as contempt, indignation, or derision."[396] The target is usually something the speaker deems unbelievable, like a type of hubris that provokes a response of astonishment (a *wow* moment). The person who dared to conceive this is the direct "*object* of the ironic attitude."[397] There is a "variety of meanings that irony might target apart from what is said."[398] It may be what is uttered, what the utterance implicates, a word, or a phrase in the utterance. There may also be ironic understatements where a speaker's remark about a person or situation is true to mock some other victim's disposition and relation to the situation or the person.[399]

Popa-Wyatt proposes the target of an ironic remark is evoked by pretence and echo, not by either one exclusively. She distinguishes two categories: "F—the vehicle of irony, and G—the target of the ironic attitude."[400] In theory, for a remark to be considered ironic, under this distinction, there would have to be no correspondence between the vehicle of the ironic utterance and its speaker's true thoughts and beliefs. There also needs to be an explicit indication that the speaker holds in contempt the idea or perspective that is the target of the utterance. The speaker does not have to be the source of the target of the attitude. Thus far, the focus on the theories of irony has mainly been on the roles of pretense and sarcasm. However, there is echo theory, which also accounts for irony.

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[395] Fowler's "inner circle"—imagine two types of victims: the benighted person the ironist is pretending to be, and listeners who would be credulous enough to take the ironist's words at face value. *Irony and Sarcasm*, 58.

[396] Popa-Wyatt, "*Pretence and Echo*," 135.

[397] Popa-Wyatt, "*Pretence and Echo*," 136. As Sperber (1984: 131) notes, "the absurdity, or even the mere inappropriateness, of human thoughts […] is often worth remarking on, making fun of, being ironic about". *Ibid*.

[398] Popa-Wyatt, "*Pretence and Echo*,", 132.

[399] See Popa-Wyatt's example of the remark about Tim Henman "The speaker's point is not to convey the opposite of what she says—that Tim Henman is the most charismatic tennis player in the world—nor to claim what the utterance would be taken to claim if uttered literally". "*Pretence and Echo*,"133.

[400] think of the vehicle as taking the form of public acts such as speech-acts, gestures, facial expressions, and the like, which the speaker uses to indicate that the thought/perspective she's putting forward by the utterance—call it F—is not a (current) thought of her own. In other words, by expressing F in uttering *S* the speaker tacitly indicates that she *dissociates* herself from F. However, the purpose of so doing is to *evoke* a suitably related thought/perspective, G, which she in fact wants to present as an object of ridicule. G may include private or public acts such as thoughts or perspectives that a person might have, which one might express by performing a speech-act or making a gesture, but which might not be expressed at all. Popa-Wyatt, "*Pretence and Echo*," 136.

4.4.4 Echo Theory

In echo theory, a speaker reiterates someone else's thought or utterance and "wants to convey her own attitude about it."[401] Popa-Wyatt states that the meaning denoted by the utterance must be reflected in the echo, "the thought that is thus represented can be attributed (implicitly or explicitly) to someone other than the speaker (or her past self)."[402] When the speaker agrees with the idea targeted by the utterance echoed by the speaker, the goal is the endorsement of the source. When she disagrees, the goal is disapproval of the targeted idea implied by the utterance and its source. Thus, dissociation may happen and "take the form of various shades of doubt, scepticism, or disbelief" along with an ironic attitude from the echoed remark that may range "from scorn, contempt, outrage to ridicule and mockery."[403]

4.4.5 Integrated Hybrid Theory

Negative assessments of both pretence and echo theories of irony abound.[404] However, these remarks have no bearing on the development of this thesis paper. Popa-Wyatt remains convinced both "pretence and echo are essential to and jointly sufficient for all cases of irony."[405] She states they "are employed to achieve the same goal−namely, identifying the thought targeted by the ironic attitude."[406] She suggests that together they form a strong integrated hybrid theory which has the common features of:

(a) *dissociation from F*−which explains that the thought/perspective which the utterance evokes is not a current thought of the speaker; (b) *similarity* between F and the targeted thought/perspective G−which identifies the target of the ironic attitude; (c) *implicit attribution of G* to a specific or type of person, or to people in general−which identifies the source of the

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[401] Popa-Wyatt, "*Pretence and Echo*," 148.

[402] *Ibid*.

[403] In terms of our terminology, F corresponds to using S (or a part of it) echoically with a view to targeting a thought, speech, or perspective G, the content of which is similar to the content of the thought expressed by the utterance, F. Thus, F is able to evoke G in virtue of their resemblance in content—with their similarity varying dependent on the amount of logical and contextual implications they share. For example, F may be a paraphrase or summary of G, or may pick out implications that the speaker regards as relevant, or may even be an exaggeration with respect to G. As Wilson (2009: 203) puts it, F may be "a proposition that was only a constituent of the original [G]." What matters for echoing is that the speaker aims to provide a "faithful enough interpretation" of the (original) speech/thought, G. This allows a loose resemblance between F and G— Popa-Wyatt, "*Pretence and Echo*," 149.

[404] See Popa-Wyatt. "*Pretence and Echo*," 142,150.

[405] Popa-Wyatt, "*Pretence and Echo*,"155.

[406] Popa-Wyatt, "*Pretence and Echo*,"161.

targeted thought/perspective; and (d) *implicit expression of a dissociative attitude towards G* and the kinds of people that are likely to entertain G.[407]

She asserts any points of divergence between pretence and echo serve as complementary features that interact to ignite "the core-structure of the integrated mechanism."[408] The mechanism includes functionalities from both theories, which, for example, facilitate the identification of "the vehicle and the target of irony."[409]

4.4.6 Preliminary Conclusion

There had to be a proper layout of the theoretical procedure that can direct the discernment of irony in the Hebrew text to establish that the proposition argued in this thesis was not the outcome of some arbitrary decision. Certainly, the notion of irony in the Eden story is no novelty. Steve Kempf's abovementioned article documents several "older commentators" who advanced this idea. He also cites "Phyllis Trible (1978: 136)" among contemporary voices interpreting 3:22 as a case of irony.[410] As stated, Kempf intuitively posits the divine utterance in 3:22ᵃ as ironic. Yet, as he points out, "no modern English version clearly presents God's statement as ironic."[411] Therefore, he turned to Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson's Relevance Theory to seek "clues in the biblical text that can help us better predict and explain overlooked but intended ironies."[412] Nonetheless, for the purpose of this thesis, the analysis process can begin now that the theoretical foundations have been set.

4.5 Irony in Translation

This thesis paper seeks to contribute the option of a translation and explanation of the Hebrew text, which faithfully represents how the source writer's grammar, syntax, lexicon, and idioms are used to render the story ironic. For Kempf observably concedes:

> The translation of irony poses a particular challenge for the Bible translator. This is especially so when one is translating into a language where people do not usually speak

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[407] *Ibid*. in uttering *S*, U pretends to adopt a viewpoint F (which she does not endorse), and in so doing U also echoes a similar viewpoint G, we thus have the connection that allows us to identify the targeted perspective G, which in fact U wants to criticize. Popa-Wyatt, "*Pretence and Echo*,"162.

[408] *Ibid*.

[409] Popa-Wyatt, "*Pretence and Echo*,"163. Thus, she resumes the Strong Integrated Hybrid View: In uttering *S*, U is ironic iff U *pretends* to have a limited/defective perspective/thought *F*, and by doing so she *echoes* a real/conceivable perspective/thought *G*, which is *similar* to *F*, thereby implying that *G* is similarly limited/defective, and thus mocking those who are likely to entertain *G*. *Ibid*.

[410] *Who Told*, 11.

[411] *Ibid*.

[412] *Who Told*, 4.

this way or when irony is only signaled by the tone of one's voice. Moreover, the power of irony as a literary device is its subtlety; the contrast is usually left implicit in the text. Once the translator attempts to make the speaker's attitude of disapproval or rejection explicit in a translation, the irony disappears and much of its effect is lost.[413]

The thesis paper will alternately employ the theories herein discussed to locate irony and sarcasm in the narrative. Consequently, interpret the message the author tries to convey in applying them.

In '*Who Told the Truth*,' Kempf assesses that Yahweh could be mocking the target audience about how foolish they (the snake, the couple, and the reader who presumes to identify with the humans and the words of the snake) are to assume that the humans have attained god-likeness while yet displaying the limitations of mortals.[414] He argues that "The Lord God echoes the serpent's words in order to emphasize the incongruity of what the serpent promised and the actual."[415] Furthermore, as for the speaker's attitude, he affirms that Yahweh is expressing sarcasm in echoing "the serpent's promise and disapproves of the first couple's attempt to follow the serpent's advice."[416]

Even with the syntactic, lexical, and morphological similarities (for example, both consist of 1 CNC and 1 SNC grammatical construction), he denies any convergence of meaning between the two utterances. He states that:

> An ironical utterance does not necessarily have to mean the opposite of the literal meaning. It can simply communicate something different from the literal sense of the utterance. It has the function of placing distance between the view of the speaker and the view of the one he echoes. The speaker repeats what someone said in such a way as to make clear that he rejects it as ludicrously false, inappropriate, or irrelevant.[417]

What he described here is correct. However, there are no explicit textual or grammatical markers in the English versions by which the reader can discern the difference in attitude and connotation between the serpent's utterance in 3:5 and what the deity is communicating in 3:22.[418] Thus, it is

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[413] *Who Told*, 16. Roger Kreuz states, "In written language, verbal irony and sarcasm are frequently misinterpreted because an ironist cannot use the rich repertoire of vocal and gestural cues." *Irony and Sarcasm*, 139.

[414] It should be noted that "the target of the irony is not the absurdity per se but rather the fact that the absurdity or foolishness can be actually/conceivably entertained by someone, and thus can be attributed to such a person." Popa-Wyatt, "*Pretence and Echo*," 136. The interpreter/reader is also mocked in 3:22. The interpreter who identifies with the humans is ironically included in the '*us.*'

[415] *Who Told*, 13.

[416] *Who Told*,14

[417] *Who Told*, 13.

[418] Kreuz explicates that pretense may be absent but "verbal irony may be signaled by any significant discrepancy between what is said and what has occurred". *Irony and Sarcasm*, 60.
"For Grice, irony involves the communication of attitudes, feelings, or evaluations, and when such statements are combined with a suitable tone of voice, "the listener should be able to infer the speaker's nonliteral intent". As a resolution, he states via Searle "that if the literal meaning of an utterance is "defective" in some way, then the listener must hunt for a different Interpretation".77

quite acceptable to deduce, as it is often done, from a plain reading of the verses that Yahweh indirectly corroborates the snake's forecast. There is a way of translating the irony while showcasing the cues in the Hebrew text without ruining the punchline through macro syntax analysis. The following pages are dedicated to this end.

Genesis 3:22[b] begins a new discourse section in the story. Regarding arrangement, it comes after the conflict and climax when Yahweh probes each culprit. It is part of the resolution of the Eden drama. Its grammatical construction is x-QATAL. The linguistic attitude, as already stated, is discourse. It is a CNC. So, at the micro level, it would "communicate a piece of information that serves as background."[419] The QATAL corresponds to the English "present perfect, a tense which belongs to the 'realm of comment'" and is subordinated to the previous WAYYIQTOL of 22[a].[420] In normal circumstances, Niccacci would not consider this an interruption in the flow of the narrative "but only a pause."[421]

However, there are exceptions, such as "when the writer's holding up of the story in order to recall a piece of information given previously and now necessary to the understanding of the next phase of the narrative." This would be recovered information in the linguistic attitude of narrative discourse, but in the current case, 3:22[b] is a "report form."[422] It must be repeated that the report QATAL grammatical form occurs strictly in discourse following "verbs of saying, telling, hearing."[423] It "never heads a sentence" because it may be "preceded by a particle, by the subject or the object." [424] It conveys "information which the addressee does not know" about an event initially narrated with WAYYIQTOL.[425] The linguistic perspective is at degree zero, meaning the story is in motion.

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[419] Niccacci, *Analysis*, 179. "QATAL in discourse has retrospective force as in narrative". *The Syntax*, §25, 44.

[420] Niccacci, *The Syntax*, §22, 42. The present perfect tense expresses past events or actions that effect the present. The

[421] Niccacci, *Analysis*, 180. Niccacci states "background information is much more rare in direct speech than it is in narrative. *Ibid*.

[422]Niccacci, *The Syntax*, §135, 169. Additionally, Niccacci notes that "even in this form x-QATAL comprises a VC (not a CNC) because it corresponds to the simple QATAL". *VC= verbal clause.

[423] Niccacci, *The Syntax*. §22, 43.

[424] Niccacci, *The Syntax*. §23, 43. Yet, as a simple QATAL, it takes first position in the clause (see Niccacci. *The Syntax*. §8, 30). Usually, the QATAL is translated into the English present perfect.

[425] Niccacci, *The Syntax*. §24, 43. See also *The Syntax*. §22, 41. The function of the x (circumstance/subject)- QATAL construction to place the emphasis on the element 'x'. *The Syntax*. §25, 45. In a narrative unit the CNC marks the action as antecedent circumstance (antecedent) or concomitant circumstance (background) to the principal action (degree zero or foreground. *The Syntax*. §134,167.

Gen 3:5

5c וְנִפְקְח֖וּ עֵֽינֵיכֶ֑ם

Then (them) both of your eyes, they will open

5d וִהְיִיתֶם֙ כֵּֽאלֹהִ֔ים

Thus, you all will come to be like divinities

5e יֹדְעֵ֖י ט֥וֹב וָרָֽע׃

Ones cognizing of good and bad

Gen 3:22

22b הֵ֤ן הָֽאָדָם֙ הָיָה֙ כְּאַחַ֣ד מִמֶּ֔נּוּ

well, lookie here! The grounder has come to be like one out of us

22c לָדַ֖עַת ט֥וֹב וָרָ֑ע

Toward the knowing of good and bad

The macro syntactic marker וְעַתָּה is pivotal for identifying and translating the irony in 3:22.[426] One of its uses is to indicate or introduce a verdict in judicial texts. It is usually applied in the pronouncement of fatal judgments and capital punishments. However, the construction and formulation of clause 22^d is peculiar in this regard and deviates from the pattern. Laurentin notes another kind of "construction particulière" using וְעַתָּה with אַף כִּי in judicial sentences[427]. He is exploring the dynamics of the relationship between the pair, whether they are "indépendants ou se répondent-ils dans la phrase"[428]? He states that they communicate accusations in question form, juxtaposing a declarative and interrogative statement.

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[426] Macro-syntactic markers are "elements which mark the relationships among segments of the text. The main indicator of narrative is *wayehi*; *wehinneh* chiefly marks discourse but also functions in narrative, while *we'atta* is exclusive to discourse". *The Syntax*. §12, 33.

[427] André Laurentin. "We'attah - Kai Nun. Formule Caractéristique Des Textes Juridiques et Liturgiques (à Propos de Jean 17,5)." *Biblica* 45, (1964): 180. http://www.jstor.org/stable/42640763.

[428] *Ibid*.

The two statements create a strong opposition, each denoting assuredness. He affirms "la proposition commandée par וְעַתָּה prend toute sa force de celle qu'introduit אַף כִּי."[429] He cites 2 Sam 4:11 and Job 6:27–28 as examples. Each case is devised as "accusation sous forme de question," but one that stands out is 2 Chr 32:15, in which Sennacherib uses irony instead to taunt Hezekiah; the formulation is different.[430] It is rather difficult for Laurentin to translate as he inquires whether "la double affirmative et le rapport des deux conjonctions peuvent être rendus tout en gardant l'interrogation exprimée par « si enfin » (אַף כִּי)."[431] As already affirmed on page 100 of this paper, along with Niccacci, this conjunctive adverb is often a sign of "rhetoric remark such as *if it is so with this, how will it be with that*!".[432] Therefore, it should not always be translated literally. Its function at every level of a text must determine its meaning.[433]

The peculiarity of 22[d] lies in the fact that אַף, which is often paired with the demonstrative particle כִּי, is both omitted and then replaced by the subordinating conjunction פֶּן that accompanies the macro syntactic marker וְעַתָּה in the clause. In contrast, it would make more sense if each occupied its distinct syntactic category or part of speech. Another reason that makes 22[d] a special case is that וְעַתָּה would typically govern "un imperatif ou un jussif" in the 2nd person, occasionally a cohortative 1st person.[434] However, 3:22[d] is one of the rare exceptions where וְעַתָּה seems to rule the 3rd person. These quirky syntaxes and "cette désharmonie des personnes verbales est parfaitement compatible avec le génie sémitique" but in English, this amounts to grammatical errors.[435] Nevertheless, Laurentin asserts that cases of the macro syntactic marker agreeing with the 3rd person are possible "avec ellipse de l'adresse." [436] In other words, the addressee is dropped but implied.

In this episode, it is suggested that Yahweh is discussing with his divine council near the mountain of God, where the garden is believed to have been located, about what to do with the transgressors. As detailed in section 3.2 of this thesis, the Mesopotamian Epic of Gilgamesh provides evidence of traditions surrounding this cosmic mountain, where a divine garden thrives. It is probably there "in the distance, at the mouth of the rivers" that Utnapishtim and his wife attained eternal life by "decree of the divine assembly."[437]

This thesis suggests that from Gen 3:9–24, the writer has been incorporating elements from the motif of the divine mount, "the place of judgment and interrogation," comparable to the

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[429] *Ibid.*

[430] *Ibid.*

[431] *Ibid.*

[432] Niccacci, *Analysis*, 192.

[433] "The criterion should always be the function first, the tense of translation afterwards. In other words, syntactic analysis should always guide the interpretation". *Analysis*, 182. This rule applied for verbs, stands the same for other words.
This particle "can be employed in a rhetorical question which, in accordance with its nature, often expresses something unexpected, unbelievable, or an exaggerated, extreme case". *Emphatic Words*.141.

[434] Laurentin, "We'attah - Kai Nun," 171.

[435] Laurentin, "We'attah - Kai Nun," 180.

[436] Laurentin, "We'attah - Kai Nun," 172.

[437] Mullen, *The Divine Council*, 153.

Ugarit gate of the Underworld at the foot of the mountain.[438] The purpose is to indicate a trial occurring at the cosmic garden. The assembly of 'elohim is gathered, and Yahweh serves as both judge and prosecutor/accuser. Verse 22 concludes this trial by inquisition that began in verse 9.

The construction of 22[d] appears to be how the writer formulated a rhetorical statement. He appropriates the *we'attah-kai nun* sign that often introduces legal pronouncements, and which Laurentin states, "se présente toujours comme une articulation du discours," pairs it with כֵּן to set up Yahweh's closing argument.[439] The linguistic perspective of 22[d] is degree zero instead of anticipated information, in prominence foreground looking toward the future.[440] The clause starts with the macro syntactic marker וְעַתָּה, changed into an English adverbial phrase.[441] It is

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[438] Mullen, *The Divine Council*, 132-133.

[439] Laurentin, "We'attah - Kai Nun," 171.
Generally, כֵּן precedes "a *yiqtol/imperfect* form of the verb. The clause or clauses governed by כֵּן usually follow their matrix clause…in more than 60% of the instances, the subject (s) of the matrix and כֵּן clauses differ…כֵּן indicates the negative purpose of a matrix clause, i.e. the prevention of a possible event. It nearly can be translated as lest or so that not. In most cases, a directive speech act is suggested in the matrix clause in or to prevent an undesirable event from happening. *A Biblical Hebrew Reference*. §41.11, 467,468.

[440] Niccacci reports that "it is a fact that indicative YIQTOL is never first position in a sentence…in the light of the present discussion, though, quite the opposite is true". He says that "the only possible way of expressing the simple future (indicative) at the beginning of a discourse in Hebrew is to use precisely the x-YIQTOL construction. Whereas simple YIQTOL in first position would be a jussive the weQATAL can only open a speech but not continue one". This may indicate that "for the ancient Hebrews the simple future was always a result of something prior, a 'second position in the sentence'". *The Syntax*. §135, 170.
This construction is quite a challenge. It seems to have a modal sense; "modality refers to (the orientation of a speaker concerning) the actuality and/or actualization process." The indicative is one type of modality. It "refers to a fact in the form of a statement or question. This is regarded as the unmarked (or neutral) form". Van der Merwe, Naudé and Kroeze. *A Biblical Hebrew*, §11.1.3, 51. However, "Biblical Hebrew does not have modal auxiliary verbs such as can/could, shall, would, will, may, etc." the sense of the verb (YIQTOL/imperfect) will determine the modality whether it expresses directives, desirability of events. Van der Merwe, Naudé and Kroeze. *A Biblical Hebrew*, § 19.3.5, 163. Furthermore, to make this point more explicit, "the indicative refers to a certain reality (factual event…the subjunctive and optative, by contrast, refer to non-real events. An event is non-real if a speaker is not sure about the actuality of events referred to. This is usually indicated by the YIQTOL (long form). it is used with certain particles to express "the sense of possibility…probability and contingency… also conveying the notion of contingency are instances where the particles… כֵּן are used to mark the possible purpose of what is said in a matrix clause". Van der Merwe, Naudé and Kroeze. *A Biblical Hebrew*, § 19.3.5.3, 164-165.

[441] עתה(ו) (more often with, but sometimes without ו) only occurs in speech. It is an important particle which introduces the result arising or the conclusion to be drawn concerning the present action from an event or topic dealt with beforehand. Its force, therefore, is as an adverbial expression of time with logical force. *The Syntax*. §73, 101.
Important for the interpretation in this thesis is André Laurentin's examples of *we'attah* usage in

dependent and connected to the main clause with the subordinating conjunctions פֶּן that is translated here into *what if*. The proposed translation of 22[d] would thus be as follows: '*As of now, what if–he would extend his hand?*'. As opposed to the literal '*and now, lest/so that not–he should stretch forth his hand …*' which lacks cohesion and sounds awkward.

Clause units 22[e, f] and [g] are a "series of WEQATALS introducing each single action (or detail of an action) to be carried out."[442] They are all in the prominence foreground of linguistic attitude discourse. According to Niccacci, they are verbal clauses, not complex nominal clauses.[443] They are the typical grammatical construction used to continue an x-YIQTOL, 22[d]. They denote the future "with a nuance of succession or conclusion."[444] They are on the level of direct speech, while the following WAYYIQTOL of 23[a] is at degree zero on the narrative's mainline.[445] This thesis has translated the three WeQATALs into '*So should take as well from the tree of ultimate life and should eat and live onto everlasting!?*'

The author structures the text so that Yahweh's message "looks both forward and back."[446] The report QATAL in 22[b] recalls the event described with the series of WAYYIQTOL constructions in 3:6-7, as well as to the direct speech in x-YIQTOL of 3:4[b], the weQATALs in 5[c, d], and the SNC in 5[e]. It also looks ahead with the indicative x-YIQTOL in 22[d], anticipating the possibility of a further violation by the grounder. 22[d, e, f], and [g] form one grammatical unit, becoming a rhetorical question *viz.* "*as of now, what if–he would extend his hand and should take as well from the tree of ultimate life and should eat, and so should live onto everlasting?!*". Subsequently, the writer shifts linguistic level→ from the "speech chain of weQATAL."[447] Now, the change is not to 'narrative discourse' since the WAYYIQTOL is initial, while it is also not a continuation of any other initial form; 23[a] is "pure narrative."[448] It signals the beginning of the end of the narration of the story.

Some Bible translations, such as the Authorized King James Version, seem to interpret 23[a] as a continuation of the speech in verse 22, where it is written: "The Lord God said, Behold the man has become like one of us, and now lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of

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judicial formula. See "We'attah - Kai Nun. Formule Caractéristique Des Textes Juridiques et Liturgiques (à Propos de Jean 17,5)." *Biblica* 45, (1964): 168–97. http://www.jstor.org/stable/42640763.

[442] Niccacci, *The Syntax*. §57, 83.

[443] weQATAL is an initial form in the single sentence but not in a narrative unit or in the narrative to which it belongs. For this reason it behaves, syntactically lie the (WAW-)x-YIQTOL.

[444] Niccacci, *The Syntax*. §156, 182.

[445] "The term 'narrative' presents no problem: it denotes a detached ('historical') account of events…the term discourse, however, needs some clarification. 'Discourse' also includes the 'comment' sometimes found within a narrative, when the writer holds up the story in order to relate his reflection on the events narrated or to define them in some way". Discourse also refers to direct speech "when the text addresses the listener directly, i.e. in discourse proper, dialogue, prayer, etc. Niccacci, *The Syntax*. §13, 33.

[446] Niccacci, *The Syntax*. §52, 74.

[447] Niccacci, *The Syntax*. §80, 112.

[448] Niccacci, *The Syntax*. §76, 107.

Eden…"[449] In fact, besides maybe Louis Segond, versions such as the CEV, CJB, OJB, and La Bible Semeur give the impression that the two verses have an immediate causal relation.[450] This thesis, without denying that the humans were banned from the Garden after their disobedience, understands clause 23ᵃ as resumptive from the perspective of text linguistics. It picks up the narrative again from 22a, where the narrator pauses to allow the expression of Yahweh's direct speech. The current translations do not seem to reflect that accurately.

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22 The Lord said, "They now know the difference between right and wrong, just as we do. But they must not be allowed to eat fruit from the tree that lets them live forever." 23 So the Lord God sent them out of the Garden of Eden (**Contemporary English Version**)

22 *Adonai,* God, said, "See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil. Now, to prevent his putting out his hand and taking also from the tree of life, eating, and living forever —" 23 therefore *Adonai,* God, sent him out of the garden of 'Eden (**Complete Jewish Bible**)

22 And Hashem Elohim said, See, HaAdam is become like one of Us, knowing tov v'rah; and now, lest he put forth his yad, and take also of HaEtz HaChayyim, and eat, and chai l'olam (live forever); 23 Therefore Hashem Elohim sent him forth from the Gan Eden, (**Orthodox Jewish Bible**)

22 Puis il dit: Voici que l'homme est devenu comme l'un de nous pour décider du bien et du mal. Maintenant il ne faudrait pas qu'il tende la main pour cueillir aussi du fruit de l'arbre de la vie, qu'il en mange et qu'il vive éternellement. 23 Alors l'Éternel Dieu le chassa du jardin d'Eden (**La Bible du Semeur**)

22 L'Éternel Dieu dit: Voici, l'homme est devenu comme l'un de nous, pour la connaissance du bien et du mal. Empêchons-le maintenant d'avancer sa main, de prendre de l'arbre de vie, d'en manger, et de vivre éternellement. 23 Et l'Éternel Dieu le chassa du jardin d'Éden (**Louis Segond**)

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[449] World Bible Publishers: Iowa Falls, 1989
[450] As noted by Niccacci, some nominal clauses do not "actually break the narrative chain because it communicates a piece of information that serves as a background to the preceding information occupying the foreground.…a piece of information is presented not as an independent item but rather in subordination to a preceding one. The two are not successive pieces of information all on the same level as links of the same chain, as they would if conveyed with *wayyiqtol* verb forms. They are rather organized in a close relationship to one another." Niccacci, *Analysis*, 179.

At times, the analysis may appear to be going around in circles. Rest assured; this is not the case. The intratextual nature of the text obligates this way of proceeding back and forth as prompted by grammar and syntax. Suppose the exegete wants to produce a coherent translation. In that case, she/he must identify and decipher the connections between various text sections, dissect the source language, and then put the coherent pieces back together in the target language like a jigsaw puzzle.[451] Thus, 22 [e, f, g] are independent at "the level of individual clause (grammar)" and constitute the main clause unit on which 22[d] depends. Together, they form a narrative unit with clauses 22[b] and [c] syntactically dependent on the WAYYIQTOLs of 21[a]–22[a].[452] They result from a change in the author's attitude signaled by a tense shift from narrative WAYYIQTOL → to x-QATAL in discourse. They communicate background information, at the macro syntactic level, "given previously and now necessary to the understanding of the next phase of the narrative," another event, the ejection and ban of the grounder from Eden.[453]

This segment of the thesis set out to demonstrate how Genesis 3:22 was designed to convey irony and how, through the correct translation, it was possible to make this apparent. The author achieved this through the manipulation of grammar and syntax. He employed a well-known literary technique in the Hebrew Bible using the macro syntactic marker וְעַתָּה with the conjunctive adverb אַף כִּי to construct a discursive formula often applied in intercessory prayers, covenantal, liturgical, and judicial contexts. Our premise is that the context of 3:22 was judicial and "dans les textes d'allure judiciaire" the we'attah formula was necessary "soit pour convoquer l'accusé, soit pour notifier la sentence".[454] As already proposed in this thesis, 3:22 suggests that Yahweh convened the *beni 'elohim* to bear witness as he prosecuted the serpent, the woman, and the grounder.

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[451] Albrecht Neubert describes the process of translation as characterized by hybridity. For in translating, the translator necessarily moves in and between two worlds. One is the source language, and the other is the target. Neubert explains, "This ambiguity is reflected in the psychological reality of the translation process itself. In fact, it pervades the translator's mind. Grappling with the source text and coping with the challenge of rephrasing it in terms of the target text involves a constant fluctuation, formal as well as semantic, between source and target shapes and meanings. The craft of translation is, therefore, for ever bound up with being at home in two texts and in two cultures, the one the original is at home with and the new one the translation wants to enter. And the translator's mindset is geared to handle two different codes for expressing what is, if only functionally, the 'same thing.'" "Some Implications of Regarding Translations as Hybrid Texts." Across Languages and Cultures, vol. 2, no. 2, 2001, p. 181.
[452] Niccacci, *The Syntax*. §95.4.1b, 126. Clauses 22[d, e, f, g] are "parataxis of different construction which have the same tense… indicative x-YIQTOL→ weQATAL" meaning they are grammatically and syntactically independent as a paragraph. *Ibid*. N.B., Niccacci cautions "the verb forms that signal an interruption in narrative are those in the nominal clauses, either simple or compound. They have the same function in direct speech, too… It is of paramount importance for the analyst of biblical narrative to remember that verb forms of interruption are dependent from a syntactic point of view, and from a textlinguistic point of view they express a subsidiary level of communication." Niccacci, *Analysis*, 177-178.
[453] Niccacci, *Analysis*, 181.
[454] Laurentin, "We'attah - Kai Nun," 178.

Since the formula was used in the pronouncement of capital punishment, its presence at this stage in the story, where it is expected that Yahweh will utter the first couple's death sentence, is not surprising. However, the Genesis author does not implement the אַף כִּי plus וְעַתָּה formulation that entails the opposition of "une interrogative à une déclarative," which Laurentin asserts is meant to state the facts of the accusation to validate and affirm the ensuing condemnation.[455] Instead, he innovates by juxtaposing the הֵן particle of 22[b] with וְעַתָּה in 22[d,] which resulted in a rhetorical question[456]. The point of this construction is to create sarcasm and irony. From these observations, it is now possible to illustrate the literary mechanism used to construct the snake's and Yahweh's irony by applying a strong integrated hybrid theory.

Genesis 3:22

Well, lookie here! The grounder has come to be like one out of us toward the cognizing of good and bad. As of now, what if–he would extend his hand, and should take as well from the tree of ultimate life and should eat and so should live onto everlasting!

Two types of irony will be considered here: verbal and situational irony. Furthermore, two classes of verbal ironies appear to interact in the Eden narrative. In the dialogue with the woman, the snake adopts an ironic attitude of sarcasm with a proclivity for the Socratic rhetorical method. Conversely, Yahweh appeals to verbal irony using "the rhetorical device of antiphrasis," whereby a speaker's utterance means the opposite of what is stated.[457] Kreuz points out how the complexity of verbal ironies' morphology can make it difficult to classify them. Therefore, he suggests a theory of the categories of stable and unstable irony to identify the pragmatics of verbal irony and determine its intended meaning.[458]

One of the purposes of verbal irony is "to create social boundaries."[459] It affirms a sense of belonging in its partakers. Verbal irony uses different methods, humor or derision, to forge

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[455] Laurentin, "We'attah - Kai Nun," 180.

[456] According to Muraoka "the particles *hen* and *hinne* are employed for the purpose of emphasis in that they serve to call the special attention of the hearer or reader to a certain statement as a whole or to a single word out of a statement." *Emphatic Words*, 140.
Since "la proposition commandée par וְעַתָּה prend toute sa force de celle qu'introduit אַף כִּי," but is absent in the text, this thesis proposes that the הֵן particle of 22[b] with וְעַתָּה in 22[d] function in the same way and is meant to formulate a rhetorical question which has "une forme emphatique des décisions irrévocables" further conveying the seriousness of the matter. Laurentin, "We'attah - Kai Nun," 180.

[457] *Irony and Sarcasm*, 39.

[458] He states, "It appears, therefore, that the two most common definitions for verbal irony are either under or overspecified." Thus, he proposes that "the reader must first reject the literal meaning and then try out alternative possibilities" when facing stable irony. Moreover, this will guarantee that "the reader arrives at an interpretation by taking into account the knowledge and beliefs of the author. Unstable irony, on the other hand, refers to situations in which the author's intent is unclear" because the speaker and listener may be unfamiliar with each other and do not share language even if they may use the same tongue. *Irony and Sarcasm*, 40-41.

[459] *Irony and Sarcasm*, 121.

relationships. As social beings, humans naturally desire approbation and validation from others to construct and maintain identity. Nevertheless, one rarely seeks approval from strangers. It is in the familiarity of the group (the family, tribe, or the community) that one develops a sense of self. In group relations, trust is acquired through shared experiences among members. This trust breeds intimacy, creating "a sense of exclusivity."[460]

Kreuz argues, based on H.W. Fowler, that "the motive of irony is exclusiveness," and the esoteric property of verbal irony makes it the cloak par excellence to hide one's true intent in discourse.[461] Like a double-edged sword, this coded language has the capacity for concealment and disclosure, thus its efficacy in creating social boundaries. In speaking ironically, the ironist calls forward a "double audience."[462] An "out-group" and members from an "inner circle" who are deemed to possess the gnosis to decode the ironic utterance.[463] The speaker/author of the irony and the inner circle are bound "through previous interactions" and share "common ground," which is a set of "knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs" that they refer to for understanding. [464]

The use of irony in the Eden narrative is a deliberate tool to shape and maintain an early Jewish or Judahite identity. This thesis argues that establishing Yahwism as a worldview and Yahweh as the supreme creator god, as opposed to other ancient Near Eastern deities like Marduk, is the driving force behind the communication of ideas to promote this agenda. Consequently, the author, possibly the Yahwist, portrays the snake as a symbol of the traditions, values, beliefs, practices, rituals, customs, and ideology he seeks to undermine. Yet, there are redeemable components from these cultural elements that he wishes to integrate into his system. Thus, he employs the ambiguous symbolism of the snake to create this ironic figure, which can be shaped hermeneutically into anything because of its plasticity.

4.5.1 The Snake's Sarcasm

Here is an analysis of the snake's discourse through integrated strong hybrid theory showing how the irony is made. First, the snake engages in unstable verbal irony. According to Kreuz, unstable irony "refers to situations in which the author's intent is unclear."[465] There is no sign whereby the woman can look to interpret the snake's "nonliteral intent."[466] However, a Hebrew reading analyst with trained eyes will quickly notice that certain keywords and phrases,

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[460] *Ibid*.
[461] *Ibid*.
[462] *Irony and Sarcasm*, 58.
[463] *Irony and Sarcasm*, 121. Kreuz asserts, "this out-group might only be an imagined one, conjured in the minds of the speaker and his audience, who may be inwardly amused by contemplating those who are incapable of understanding the true meaning of the ironist's statement. In other cases, the out-group might be a real group of people who are not physically present." *Ibid*.
[464] *Irony and Sarcasm*, 52.
[465] Kreuz, *Irony and Sarcasm*, 41.
[466] *Ibid*.

plus "exaggeration and understatement," are employed to this effect.[467] The analysis will refer to the formula from Popa-Wyatt, "integrating the following ingredients from both theories" (pretense and echo): (a) *pretence of F* (as described by pretence theorists), (b) *attribution of G* (as described by echoic theorists), and (c) that the resemblance between the *pretend F* and G be a relation of *echoing*.[468]

The snake pretends to be ignorant and uncertain about Yahweh's instructions to the humans. So, he states, 'It could be that a divinity has said: You all must not eat from any tree in the garden.' Following the woman's misquoting of Yahweh's utterance, he responds to her verbatim in 3:4[b]–5: "*Not to die! Y'all will die.* Instead, the divinity is one, cognizing that right on the day of y'all eating from it, then (them) both of your eyes (they) will open. Thus, y'all will come to be like divinities, ones cognizing good and bad".

The siglum F in the above formula designates "the vehicle of irony, and G—the target of the ironic attitude."[469] The vehicle can be expressed in various forms, but in this context, it is a speech act that the snake performs to distance himself from the possible implications of the utterance. The snake pretends to endorse F, the connotated idea in uttering 3:4[b]. The pretense indicates that he *dissociates* himself from 3:4[b] because he believes it is limited and defective. He means something other than what he said. The utterance 3:4[b] "echoes a similar viewpoint G." G, in this case, is Gen 2:17.[470] Furthermore, G stands for an imagined or "unreasonable pretend thought" concealed by the utterance of 3:3[c-e]. It is the true target of mockery or derision because it is also believed to be defective and limited.[471] In uttering F to echo G, the snake replicates the literal form of G, except in negative terms, to expose the covert meaning (the content) it aims to ridicule.[472]

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[467] Kreuz, *Irony and Sarcasm*,135.

[468] Popa-Wyatt, "Pretence and Echo," 162.

[469] Popa-Wyatt, "Pretence and Echo," 136.

[470] Popa-Wyatt, "Pretence and Echo," 162. the pretence of F brings about an echo to a real/possible thought/perspective G so that (i) G is similar to the pretend F both in content and form; and (ii) G may (though it need not) be tacitly attributed to specific people, or people in general.

[471] Popa-Wyatt, "Pretence and Echo," 139.

[472] For pretense to be ironic, it does not have to echo another targeted utterance verbatim. The context (common ground) in which utterances occur will determine what and how the pretend utterance is aiming to critique. Hence, Popa's assertion, "whether the pretense is applied to thoughts or speech-acts, it involves the adoption of a perspective the content of which can put us in the mind of a related thought/perspective G." Popa-Wyatt, "Pretence and Echo," 145.

Genesis 2:17^{c-d} → Genesis 2:17[c-d]

Genesis 2:17[c-d]

For right on the day of you eating from it

To die, you will die

Genesis 3:3[c-e]

You all must not eat from it

plus, you all must not touch on this

Or you must die

Genesis 3:4[b]–5[a, b]

Not to die, y'all will die.

Instead, the divinity is one cognizing

that right on the day of you all eating from it…

The snake did not offer any advice, nor did he promise anything to the woman. In Genesis 3:4[b]–5, his response to her statement is more sophisticated than appears to the naked eye. Grammatically, 3:4[b] is a problematic clause because "the infinitive absolute is not normally negated; a negative particle, where needed, is normally before the finite verb," תְּמֻתוּן in this instance[473]. Word Biblical Commentary states, "It is usual for the negative לֹא to come between the inf. abs. and the finite verb, not before both inf and verb as here. The only other examples of this word order are Amos 9:8; Ps 49:8." The commentary assumes this ordering is "to echo 2:17 (*GKC*, 113v). Cassuto (1:146) suggests that it is the antithesis of v 4 to v 3 that prompts this word order here."[474]

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[473] *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, §35.2.2e, 583.

[474] Wenham, *Genesis 1−15*, 74.
T. Muraoka notes "it is only rarely that the inf. abs. is employed to intensify the verbal idea as such". Citing Jouon, he asserts "that very often the emphasis is not placed upon the verbal action itself, but upon a modality, which is thus reinforced". Among the modalities, he points out as examples: *affirmation* like in "Gen 2:17 *mot tamut*, 3:16 *harba 'arbe*"; *pressing request*, *Opposition or antithesis*, *Rhetorical question*, and *Condition. Emphatic Words and Structures in Biblical Hebrew*. (Jerusalem: Magness Press, 2005), 86.

It is possible that there was a scribal error, or perhaps it was purposefully arranged this way to amplify the image of the snake as duplicitous or ambiguous. He did not lie, nor did he reveal the whole truth. The writer probably wanted to portray the snake as speaking non-literally, like the language used in a General Mills Trix cereal commercial from the late 1980s, which this thesis writer remembers from his youth. The commercial depicted an anthropomorphized rabbit who deceived little children, manipulating them into sharing the colorful edible treat. Now, he often succeeded, but as soon as he was about to eat, the children discovered his quirky schemes, took back the bowl of cereal, and rebuked him, saying: 'Silly rabbit, *Trix* are for kids!' The TV advertisement used figurative language by making a pun with the cereal's brand name, Trix, to suggest the infantile ruses that the rabbit plays but also to send a message to the targeted core audience, which consists of children.

Similarly, this paper proposes that 3:4ᵇ is idiomatic, syntactically. Idioms are often unintelligible on the surface, but they intrinsically carry "a culture's history, values, and social norms."[475] The literal translation 'Not to die y'all will die' should be interpreted as stating: '*y'all will not (literally, likely) meet death, silly mortal*.' This is no anomaly; there are analogous idioms in contemporary Afro-American vernacular English with similar forms and purposes. Let us explain by way of illustration. Imagine a babysitter who, as the time draws near for their parents' return, is telling some unruly children: '*Ooh! Ya mama gon' kill y'all*.' The children may skeptically dismiss the admonition, saying: '*Sure, we "really" gon' die*'. In rebuttal, the sitter may reply: '*dead ass!*' to impress the children with the seriousness of the matter. Such utterances are non-literal; their meanings are pragmatic and are inferred from their broader discursive function per the interlocutors and the audience's shared knowledge of the language and culture.[476]

4.5.2   Yahweh's Mockery

The next verbal irony to be discussed is from Yahweh in Genesis 3:22. Its characteristic seems to be of the stable type. Stable irony "involves intentional use and unambiguous meaning."[477] As mentioned previously, in his "Who Told the Truth" article, Steve Kempf expressed a similar viewpoint regarding the text. He argues that Yahweh was being ironic with the pronouncement in that verse. He explains that "The Lord God echoes the serpent's words in order to emphasize the *incongruity of what the serpent promised and the actual*."[478] Although informed by his insight, this thesis contends that his analysis was weakened methodologically since he insinuated that his procedure for identifying irony in the Hebrew text was rather arbitrary, merely relying on intuition. The above pages demonstrate how macro-syntactic

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[475] O'Brien, Elizabeth. "Idiomatic Expressions". *Grammar Revolution*, https://www.english-grammar-revolution.com/idiomatic-expressions.html. Accessed 17 September 2024.
[476] "Pragmatic aspects of comprehension include the use of context as well as social factors to make sense of potentially ambiguous statements." *Irony and Sarcasm*, 69.
[477] *Irony and Sarcasm*, 41. Kreuz proposes that "to reconstruct the intended meaning…the reader must first reject the literal meaning and then try out alternative possibilities. The reader arrives at an interpretation by taking into account the knowledge and beliefs of the author." *Ibid*.
[478] *Who Told*, 13.

analysis can aid in creating a more accurate translation that highlights the presence of irony. The examination of Yahweh's verbal irony will continue in this context.

Though the mode of production is through pretense and echo, Yahweh's use of irony is stable. One clue to this irony is that he turns to hyperbolic language. His utterance shows a significant "contrast between the statement and reality."[479] This indicates his language is non-literal. The exegete will find that the writer of 3:22 made this intent obvious by employing the grammatical construction of an x-QATAL of reporting while implementing a technical literary device that juxtaposes the particle הֵן of 22[b] with וְעַתָּה in 22[d] to make a rhetorical or ironic question of the verse[480]. The goal is to formulate an utterance that generates sarcasm.

Kreuz asserts that "sarcasm is seen as a specific means for mocking the mistakes of others."[481] The writer of the Eden narrative uses the report QATAL to enable Yahweh to pretend to take on the perspective behind the utterance of 3:22, which "brings about an echo to a real/possible thought/perspective G."[482] This perspective resembles 3:22, "in content and form."[483] The integrated strong hybrid theory explains that "G may (though it need not) be tacitly attributed to… people in general."[484]

In this case, the general attribution is to the grounder, the woman, and readers who may entertain this point of view. Specifically, G is the echo of a point of view implied by the snake's utterance of 3:5; the necessity of targeting this perspective is "to express an opinion about it."[485] The utterance 3:22 is a replica of 3:4[b]–5, which it targets as defective and deserving of derision. What is the perspective behind 3:22 echoed in 3:5? What is the defect in this perspective that Yahweh judges should be ridiculed?

4.5.3   The End of Irony

It has been shown above that the snake's response to the woman in 3:5 should be interpreted as an idiomatic statement, '*Y'all will not (literally, likely) die, silly mortals*,' or '*Y'all*

Irony and Sarcasm, 136.

[480] According to Muraoka "the particles *hen* and *hinne* are employed for the purpose of emphasis in that they serve to call the special attention of the hearer or reader to a certain statement as a whole or to a single word out of a statement." *Emphatic Words*, 140.

Since "la proposition commandée par וְעַתָּה prend toute sa force de celle qu'introduit אַף כִּי," but is absent in the text, this thesis proposes that the הֵן particle of 22[b] with וְעַתָּה in 22[d] function in the same way and is meant to formulate a rhetorical question which has "une forme emphatique des décisions irrévocables" further conveying the seriousness of the matter. Laurentin, "We'attah - Kai Nun," 180.

[481] *Irony and Sarcasm*, 74.

[482] Popa-Wyatt, "Pretence and Echo," 162.

[483] *Ibid*.

[484] *Ibid*.

[485] *Irony and Sarcasm*, 79. Popa-Wyatt affirms, "the pretense involved in indirect reports amounts to adopting the reporter's viewpoint and reporting its content and correlative attitude." "Pretence and Echo," 157.

will not (literally) meet death, silly mortals.' Moreover, he added, '*instead, the divinity is one cognizing that right on the day of you all eating from it, then (them) both of your eyes, they will open. Thus, you all will come to be like divinities, ones cognizing of good and bad.*' Although, he did not promise anything, nor did he advise the woman on what course of action to take. It can be inferred from his statement that there was no harm in eating fruit from the tree while knowing some negative result would occur. Thus, he was misleading. Still, must the snake be held responsible for how the woman interpreted his utterance?

There is much to be said about the woman's cognitive psychology, but this will be for a later discussion. Earlier in the paper, the question was posed about the meaning of כִּי עָשִׂיתָ זֹּאת 'ever since you produced *this*' that Yahweh referred to in 3:14[b]. It seems that deception with the intent to make a mockery of the couple, particularly the woman is the *this* that is the target of Yahweh's verbal irony. However, the grounder and readers who may share the perspective echoed by the utterance are also, by association, victims of the ironic attitude. It is not the case that the snake necessarily made a false statement because the couple will attain a new "*divine*" like level of cognition. The snake's utterance was probably injurious to the deity's reputation, and he took offense to it.

In pretending to believe the utterance, '*Y'all will not meet death, silly mortals...*,' the snake echoes the counterfactual thoughts of the woman, who in 3:6 imagines things as how they could have been or could be if only some sets of conditions were different; he lays bare her aspiration. The snake does not endorse 3:4[b]–5; he most likely thinks it defective since its utterance echoes the woman's true thought behind 3:2[b]–3, which he believes is unreasonable and ridiculous. He views her as naïve for her ambition of becoming divine and gullible for taking Yahweh's utterance in 2:17 at face value. Hence the object of his mockery. Eventually, the scoffing and defamation will cause the dissolution of divine order in the garden.

Thus, Yahweh's verdict of the grounder at the end of the judgment in 3:22 targets what he evaluates as insolence behind the snake's mockery in 3:4[b]–5. Perhaps it signified hubris, insubordination on the snake's part, a transgression of the limit of his position in the pecking order. Since the snake is known to possess great insight, the story makes Yahweh's cognitive abilities unrivaled altogether. So, in pretending, *Well, lookie here! The grounder has come to be like one out of us toward the cognizing of good and bad;* Yahweh, by his wisdom, disassociates himself from such perspective and replicates the mockery and insolence behind the utterance 3:4[b]–5 "presenting it as epistemically limited" therefore worthy of derision.[486] Kreuz posits, "the purpose of verbal irony is to remind listeners of either general expectations or specific predictions made by potential victims" and not just to echo.[487] In the utterance 3:22, Yahweh "means the opposite of what he says."[488] Instead of confirming the couple's deification, he may be sarcastically remarking, 'I thought he said the grounder would become like the gods…' or 'did he not say the grounder would become like the gods' to remind the potential victims of the failed divination, the incongruence of what was expected with what is.

Ergo, it can be concluded that the Eden episode also depicts situational irony, defined as "an incongruity between expectations and outcomes, such as when a result differs from what was

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[486] Popa-Wyatt, "Pretence and Echo," 138.
[487] *Irony and Sarcasm*, 80.
[488] *Irony and Sarcasm*, 39.

intended…the outcome may be cruelly, humorously, or strangely at odds with assumptions or expectations."[489] An example of situational irony in the narrative could be the humans wanting to gain divine insight in 3:6. Instead, they realized they were naked in 3:7 and became self-conscious. They gained knowledge of what appeared to them to be inadequacies in their being but lost sight of their existential meaning: self-understanding.

In hindsight, by 3:22, the snake's presumed prognostication in 3:4[b] was precise. The humans did not die. They went on to live in 3:16–20, knowing they would bear the burden of managing the external world like the gods they aspired to be like, which is ironic. This type of situational irony is classified as "double outcomes: someone experiences two related losses, or a win and a loss."[490] Sure, paradoxically, they attained knowledge but lost access to life. The divinity did not deceive them; the life they once knew no longer was and would never be. In one sense, they died. After the Eden fiasco, the grounder was a dead man walking.

A noteworthy point about the snake's deception is that he acts out his nature. He is authentic. He feigned ignorance to draw knowledge from the woman and expose errors in her reasoning, like Socratic irony.[491] He is often painted as malevolent, but his motivation might be amoral. He is a trickster; he cannot help but be himself. He foresaw that the woman would make a fool of herself, but it was not by necessity. It could have been otherwise since the woman could have chosen differently. Yet, the snake is mischievous; this whole ordeal is probably a case of a joke that went too far and turned bad.[492] As the adult and authority figure, Yahweh, represented as king of the cosmos by the author, is compelled to act as he does in the narrative. The utterance in 3:22 is him ending the mockery, saying, '*joke's on you*' to the snake. However, the grounder, the woman, and the readers who entertained this mise en scène are also victims of the verbal irony.

4.6   Regarding Death Threats and Capital Punishment.

While relevant, questions of whether the snake or Yahweh lied and the assessment of the moral or immoral nature of the characters may not be the most pivotal factors to prioritize at this juncture of the inquiry.[493] As demonstrated thus far, it is perhaps better to reevaluate the divine statement in 2:17[d], considering the text linguistics approach favored by this thesis paper, and see

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[489] *Irony and Sarcasm*, 25.

[490] *Irony and Sarcasm*, 26.

[491] *Irony and Sarcasm*, 56.

[492] Vawter noted, "the figure of the serpent here is not so much one of a force of evil as of mischief, troublemaking: he is a trickster, or, in the biblical phrase, "cunning." *On Genesis: A New Reading*. (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1977), 77.

[493] The textual analyst might find it advantageous to take a more agnostic approach and keep some distance between the self and the text. Terms like true and untrue can be misleading because they are loaded with content that may not be suitable for the exegetical project. To borrow a statement from F.R. Palmer in a study on grammatical typology, it is "wise to avoid…explanations in terms of true and untrue in view of their logical connotations." *Mood and Modality*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 3.

what is revealed. So, applying the macro syntactic analysis shows the author arranged 2:16^b–17 to contain three complex nominal clauses and two SNCs. The two clause types are in the degree zero linguistic perspective, meaning they are at "the level of the story itself," highlighting the foreground.[494]

Normally, as clausal units, the CNCs' function would be to "emphasize the element 'x' which precedes the finite verb." However, as in the current context, they gain "a new and superior function" at the level of the paragraph unit.[495] They indicate that "the whole construction is not the main construction but circumstantial to the main clause (two-member syntactic construction)."[496] They are used to create the apodosis, the second part of the 2SC syntactic construction.

Clause 16^b is an indicative YIQTOL construction with the modal force of an imperative because syntactically, it is first in the paragraph unit with a doubling of the verb 'eat' and the Qal infinitive. However, it is not first in the clause. It is a second-person imperative that "seems to have a jussive function"; jussives express volition, that is, wish or desire.[497] It is not a command, as such. It expresses a conditional desire (*if you will, you may eat*).[498] This way, the language is tempered to decrease the degree of certitude and obligation to suit the context, in this case, hospitality.

The first part of the clause consists of two components: a complex "prepositional phrase" (*of every tree*) comprising the header and a second adjunct preposition (*in the garden*) as its complement.[499] They stand for the *x* element in the x-YIQTOL. While 16^d is placed ahead, it is not considered the "first position" in the unit. It is a casus pendens, a "noun equivalent" element placed external to the paragraph to which it belongs.[500] Still, "from the aspect of syntax, it comprises the protasis."[501] It is used to determine "the topic" to be discussed.[502] Namely, the grounder's source of nourishment.

x-YIQTOL, as per Niccacci, is "the only possible way of expressing the simple future (indicative) at the beginning of a discourse in Hebrew."[503] The continuation verb form for the initial x-YIQTOL is weQATAL, which would also be translated into the simple future. The construction of 16^b–17 is atypical in that regard. Verses 17^a and ^{c} each function as protasis in the paragraph. A protasis is the condition or antecedent clause of a conditional sentence. Verse 17 is not an explicit if/then conditional statement. Niccacci uses the terms protasis-apodosis to establish the two parts of a two-member syntactic construction.[504] Both 17^a and ^{c} are simple noun

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[494] *The Syntax*. §3, 20.
[495] *The Syntax*. §6, 28.
[496] *The Syntax*. §135, 167.
[497] *The Syntax*. §55.2, 78.
[498] *Analysis*, 186.
[499] *Ibid*.
[500] Casus pendens is a focus device
[501] *The Syntax*. §126.2, 152.
[502] *The Syntax*. §123, 148.
[503] *The Syntax*. §135.5, 170.
[504] For convenience the first element of the 2SC can be called the 'protasis' and the second the

clauses which, in discourse, are "equivalent to the present (foreground), whereas, in N, it is equivalent to contemporaneous action (background)."[505] So, clauses 17[a] and [c] are subordinate or dependent on 17[b] and [d], respectively.

Clause 17[b] is formed with the particle לֹא + indicative YIQTOL, which Niccacci states marks a 'prohibitive' or negative imperative.[506] The indicative YIQTOL is joined to a "preposition with a resumptive pronoun."[507] It is a complex nominal clause that serves as an apodosis to 17[a] while emphasizing the *x* element לֹא. An apodosis is a conditional sentence's result, consequent, or conclusion.

The other CNC, also an apodosis, is clause 17[d,] which consists of the infinitive absolute מֹות and the conjugated verb תָּמוּת. They are both in the bare Hebrew Qal stem[508]. Qal verbs are either stative, meaning they express a state or a condition, or fientive, meaning they are dynamic in that they express continued actions, sensations, or processes. Waltke and O'Connor point out that "some verbs, especially those denoting a mental perception or an emotional state, exhibit both stative and fientive characteristics" simultaneously."[509]

Infinitive absolutes are "verbal nouns." They "denote the bare verbal action or state in the abstract."[510] They usually precede the finite verb, but the inverse may also occur. Infinitive absolutes generally function as amplifiers of the finite verb. Paronomasia is a prominent feature of infinitive absolutes which means that they are used to make wordplays or puns with the finite verb they accompany. The infinitive does not highlight the sense indicated by the verbal root

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'apodosis' even though they do not refer exclusively to the conditional clause. *The Syntax*. §96, 128.

[505] Niccacci, *The Syntax*. §126.1, 152.

[506] Niccacci, The *Syntax*. §55, 76. "Indicative YIQTOL with its corresponding negative with לֹא express obligations (and so come close to the function of the jussive)". 77 §55. "The sense of a jussive in simple discourse usually follows from the status relations of the speaker and addressee. When a superior uses the jussive with reference to an inferior the volitional force may be command (human; divine), exhortation, counsel, or invitation or permission. Sometimes the jussive qualifies or circumscribes an imperative. A second-person jussive may have the sense of an order. When an inferior uses the jussive with reference to a superior, it may denote an urgent request, prayer, request for permission" Waltke and O'Connor, §34.3b, 568. Additionally, "negative commands are expressed by לֹא + long YIQTOL (imperfect form)". It suggests "timeless prohibitions". Christo H.J. van der Merwe and Jacob A. Naudé § 19.5.2.1, 170.

[507] Niccacci, *Analysis*, 186.

[508] Qal has "no element of causation in its predication." *Biblical Hebrew*. §22.2a, 362.

[509] *Biblical Hebrew*. §22.2.3b, 366.

[510] Waltke & O'Connor. *Biblical Hebrew syntax* §35.2.2a, 582. Abstract nouns express *things* that cannot be perceived through sensory experiences. *Thing* is used, here, ontologically because the objects of abstract nouns are immaterial such as ideas, emotions, personality traits, and concepts. The denotation of these words is usually imprecise because of their broadness. Thus, they can be subjective and left to the interpretation of their beholder. It is fitting that the author chooses this infinitive absolute for Yahweh's utterance with no concrete point of reference for the reader to understand the intended meaning. It seems the author wants the reader to wrestle with the notion as Yahweh seems to want to frustrate the first couple's reasoning capacity.

"but the force of the verb in context."[511] According to Muraoka, paronomasia isolates and highlights the indeterminate "verbal idea" with "various nuances."[512] This way, the writer signals the reader to focus attentively on how this apparatus operates in the text to realize the conveyed meaning.

Preliminarily, verse 17 should be translated as:

> *Concerning nourishment: From every* (edible) *tree* (fit to eat) *in the garden, you can eat* (it is **possible** *for* you to eat)*. Except for the tree of the cognizing of good and bad, you must not eat from it* (it is **necessary** *for* you not to eat)*. For right on the day of you eating from it, you're most likely to die/ you will most likely die.*
>
> i.e., you could die (it is **possible** *that* you die). Idiomatically, 'you will meet your demise,' 'you will miss out on life' or 'you will be a living dead', 'you will wish you were dead.'

Yahweh is not declaring the imminent death of the grounder, which is consequent to his disobedience. This is not a statement about the inevitability of this event but one of contingency, supposing that the grounder would one day eat. Then, if that were to happen, some unforeseeable circumstances would provoke unknown and unpredictable effects that could result in him losing the life he leads. Verse 17 is a paragraph of conditionals. This is made apparent by the presence of the 2SC constructions. The verse expresses Yahweh's desire. It is thus volitive.

In popular Bibles like the New International Version and New English Translation, clause 17[d] is usually translated as a zero conditional or real conditional expressing a statement of fact, interpreted as a declarative. An event that will certainly come to pass.[513] However, when Yahweh made the utterance, nothing happened yet. There was not enough data or evidence for him to assert a high degree of probability. The situation was not real or actual. Perhaps that is why the author uses linguistic attitude degree zero, prominence foreground with the imperfect conjugation indicating the irreality of the present utterance.

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[511] the effect of the infinitive refers to the entire clause… if the verb context is irreal, the sense of irreality (e.g. dubiety, supposition, modality, or volition) becomes more forceful…with the non-perfective conjugation the infinitive absolute often emphasizes that a situation was, or is, or will take place…since the non-perfective is used for irreality and volition, the infinitive absolute can intensify the sense of irreality in connection with that conjugation. There is, however, no precise match between the infinitive's force or the finite verb's conjugation. Both conjugations may represent a situation as real or irreal and therefore the infinitive may emphasize either sense with either conjugation. §35.3.1b, 584.

[512] *Emphatic Words*, 92.

[513] See footnotes from the NET that explain the analysis of the clause that resulted in the translation of verse 17.

> but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die. **NIV**
>
> but[a] you must not eat[b] from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when[c] you eat from it you will surely die." [d] **NET** (see footnote 494 for explications)

Employing the indicative YIQTOL—jussive coupled with the infinitive absolute in 17[d] enables the formulation and assertion of conditional probability. It allows a speaker to take a dubitative or speculative attitude "to the truth-value or factual status of the proposition" and make predictions.[514] This grammatical form limits a discussion to hypotheticals, to what could be true. This construction suggests that the divinity was not sure the grounder would eat, nor could he have expressed epistemic certitude about his death. For this to happen, Yahweh seems to imply that certain conditions only he is aware of would have to be met first. At the time of the utterance, this dimension of reality was concealed from the grounder, the woman, the snake, or the reader. Thus, this thesis suggests the modal past auxiliary '*could*' will best illustrate the strength of this epistemic modality.[515]

Waltke & O'Connor note that perfect and imperfect "verbal conjugations may express either assertion or irreality" and that "usually the intensifying infinitive with the perfective conjugation forcefully presents the certainty of a completed event."[516] The imperfect conjugation, on the other hand, expresses probabilistic outcomes. Syntax, grammar, and purpose in the text will determine their semantic values. The three CNCs in 16[b]–17 are all imperfect conjugations in the Qal stem functioning as jussives that equate to the expression of propositional and event modality.[517] Modality, specifically of the epistemic type, indicates the kind of assessment a speaker is making about "the propositional content of his utterance" based on her mental state.[518] Modality, in that sense, communicates a speaker's perspective.

Based on this analysis, neither Yahweh nor the snake lied. As shown above, Yahweh did not affirm or declare the grounder's death. He did not commit himself to ensuring this circumstance became true or actualized. He suggested the grounder could die if he ate from the tree of knowledge of good and bad. Yahweh's utterance was an illocutionary speech act intended as a threat/deterrence with the perlocutionary aim of provoking the grounder to make a choice,

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[514] *Mood and Modality*. §2, 24.

[515] Waltke & O'Connor attest to this observation, except they do not consider Gen 2:17 to meet the criteria for conditionals, nor do they esteem that it denotes dubiety or low probability. see *Biblical Hebrew*. §35.3.1g, 587.

[516] *Biblical Hebrew.* §35.3.1b, 584.

[517] "The non-perfective is used for irreality and volition, the infinitive absolute can intensify the sense of irreality in connection with that conjugation." *Biblical Hebrew*. §35.3.1b, 584.

[518] Klinge, Alex and Muller, Henrik Hoeg, eds., *Modality: Studies in Form and Function*, 1st ed. (London: Oxford Publishing Ltd., 2005), 39.

desiring that he would intend to comply or act per divine will.[519] Therefore, וַיְצַו in 16ᵃ should be translated as something approximating '...*bequeathed/enjoined upon the grounder* (*procedures*)' instead of '*commanded to*' because Yahweh does not order the grounder. The ensuing utterance should be categorized between the directive and exercitive illocutionary act types. In speech act theory, a proposition fits the category directive if it is "concerned with guiding the behavior of others." Exercitive types "are verbal exercises of authority, verbal ways of altering the 'social status' of something."[520] With a degree of force somewhat stronger than a request, Yahweh authorizes the grounder with recommendations that compel him to either obey or to "be prepared to give an acceptable reason for not doing so."[521]

Furthermore, the verb צוה in verse 16ᵃ, translated as 'command,' is a stative, transitive finite verb with an active voice in the *Piel* stem. It is stative in that it describes a circumstance or a state (external, physical, psychological, or perceptual). Transitivity means it requires a subject and an object. The effects of the action expressed by the verb transfer from the subject to the object (though the *Piel* does not focus on action, but on result), hence its active voice.[522] Waltke & O'Connor note that "the subject is only indirectly involved in the bringing about of the action" or state.[523] The object is a surrogate for the subject to cause the intended result. They also specify that "If the *Piel* describes an irreal version of the action of the *Qal*, the *Piel* may be *metaphorical* or may signify indirect action."[524]

The subject of verse 16ᵃ is Yahweh, and the object is the grounder. The linguistic attitude is narrative, and the grammatical construction is WAYYIQTOL, degree zero, Prominence foreground. Nothing is unusual here; it is just the standard narration construction indicating the story was developing in the present temporal axis when the divinity caused the grounder to settle in the garden. This was when Yahweh uttered guidelines about nourishment, urging the grounder to abide by them. He sought the grounder's obedience but wanted it to be actualized through reasonable mental processes, not compulsion.

As such, the x-YIQTOL indicative grammatical construction מוֹת תָּמוּת of 2:17ᵈ has a dual semantic function. It can denote death as the "inescapable lot of human beings" and is thus used in death sentences but also connotes other meanings figuratively depending on its pragmatic use.[525] It is used here idiomatically as an extra incentive to stimulate the grounder's obedience or

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[519] For a detailed explanation on a perlocutionary act see: William P. Alston, *Illocutionary Acts and Sentence Meaning*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 37.

[520] Alston, *Illocutionary Acts*. 34.

[521] Alston, *Illocutionary Acts*. 100.

[522] Waltke & O'Connor assert, "With Qal transitive verbs, the Piel is resultative: it designates the bringing about of the outcome of the action designated by the base root, which action can be expressed in terms of an adjective, and without regard to the actual process of the event." *Biblical Hebrew*. §24.1h, 400.

[523] *Biblical Hebrew*. §24.3.2d, 408.

[524] *Biblical Hebrew*. §24.3.2a, 407.

[525] *Theological Dictionary*, 190. Moreover, the *Theological Dictionary* proposes "the paronomastic expression môṯ tāmûṯ can be used to refer both to threats and to proclamations of a death sentence.", 200.

perhaps to frustrate him, intellectually. It is figurative language that can be decoded synchronically by inference from analyzing the utterance's implicatures. Remember, the realm of occurrence of the utterance is articulated in the 'irrealis mood.' This technical term "portrays situations as purely within the realm of thought, knowable only through imagination." In contrast, its opposite, "the realis portrays situations as actualized, as having occurred or actually occurring, knowable through direct perception."[526]

Suppose, then, that the figurative form of 2:16ª–17 is: *As for food, feel free to eat from every tree fit to eat, except the tree of the cognizing of good and bad. If I were you, I would not eat from it because on the day you would have done otherwise (I fear), you could meet your demise/death*, *you could miss out on life*, *you would wish you were dea*d, or *you would lose the life you lead*. Subjunctives indicate the irrealis mood of the Hebrew. This is intended to express the subjectivity of the divine perspective with respect to the proposition. This is clear: Yahweh alone was cognizant of the conditions that would make this event actualized. He must have had exclusive insight into the propositional implicatures because the woman seemed not to appreciate the signification of his utterance.

Consider the grounder and the woman: they may not have fully understood the profound metaphysical implications of death before eating the fruit. Even the serpent likely had a limited perspective. Yahweh and the humans are, in a sense, talking past each other since they do not share the same linguistic conventions. There is no genuine conversation; the narrative presents Yahweh as delivering a monologue. Though it does not excuse her, this may partially explain why the woman misconstrued the deity's words.

This interpretation, if correct, sets the stage for a narrative that challenges our understanding of divinity and morality. Hence, 17ᶜ, ᵈ could implicate that once the grounder eats the fruit, he will be exposed (aware, cognizant) to his mortality, he will know that he is set to die (dying), he will be conscious of decaying, he will come to discover/learn of mortality, he will be deprived of his current lifestyle, and he will regret his decision.[527] The narrative is not an exercise in dogmatism. It is open. Through the text, every reader is invited to converse with the divine and be acquainted with divinity anew.

4.7   Of Trees

The focus of this thesis does not allow for a detailed analysis of the motif of the tree of the knowledge of good and bad. However, its significance in the story suggests that its fruit grants the consumer an epistemic potential that can rival the gods. The terms "good" and "bad"

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[526] *Mood and Modality*, 1.

[527] Wenham affirms, "Most commentators have taken the curse as confirmation of the death-threat announced in 2:17 on those who eat of the forbidden tree..." Nevertheless, he states scholars such as Skinner and Westermann, Gunkel, and Jacob "have disputed this." *Genesis 1–15*, 83.

(טֹוב וָרֶע, *tov wa ra*) may serve as a merism, which means "the art of expressing a totality by mentioning the parts, usually the two extremes, concerning a given idea, quality or quantity."[528]

The tree itself is neither good nor bad, but its fruit has the potential to yield both and opens the possibility for differentiation. Thus, good and bad may not strictly refer to morality but to an enhanced cognitive ability to perceive and assess ultimate reality. Gaining this knowledge is empowering and, therefore, entails great responsibility. Mastering this new ability would logically take a lifetime. It is fitting that the author places the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge at the center of the garden, as together, they symbolize the unified properties that constitute divinity.

5. CONCLUSION

Throughout this paper, the goal has been to investigate the nature of the conception of divinity depicted in Genesis 3:22, given the plural pronoun *us* enunciated by the deity Yahweh. Presumably, at the time referenced in the story, Yahweh was supposed to be the unique god, incomparable to any other who was to be worshipped by the ancient Israelites. Why, then, was he, in this passage, using this inclusive pronoun denoting kinship to address anonymous figures in the narrative?

This paper explored the theological implications of verse 22 for those who adhere to a traditional monotheistic understanding of divinity. Through a historical-critical analysis of the Eden narrative, it was posited that the final version of the text was a compilation of elements from various traditions. It was suggested that an earlier version may have been part of the source material, potentially presenting a different perspective on divinity. The question that lingers is: what other factors might explain the diverse voices that contribute to this overall harmony?

The scarcity of extra-biblical sources guiding researchers on ancient Israelite beliefs meant this project would primarily be exegetical. This investigation needed to engage with the text as it exists today. However, this approach alone would be insufficient, as the questions posed are inherently historical. Consequently, the methodology required appropriate tools for the task. Comparative analysis offered the supplementary resources necessary to reconstruct a clearer understanding of the ideas prevalent in ancient Israelite history relevant to this inquiry. A concise study of a word like אֱלֹהִים (*'elohim*) queries into the notion of the Divine plural, the concept of the Divine council, literary motifs such as the mountain of God, and the Garden, plus an examination of the architecture of the character of the snake within the cultural context of the ancient Near East with the employment of macro-syntactic analysis to the Hebrew text would prove to be advantageous for this attempt at reimagining godliness in the primeval history.

It is almost indisputable that the current text is composite at its core. However, controversy remains about its compositional history, particularly whether "various sources and

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[528] Walter Vogels. "Like One of Us, Knowing tôb and ra` (Gen 3:22)." *Semeia 81* (1998), 150. "In some biblical texts, the expression *"tôb* and *ra"* does not have a disjunctive meaning: good/good as distinct from bad /evil, but a conjunctive sense. The two words in this case connote universality and mean 'everything'". *Ibid*.

traditions of ancient Israel" were arranged by some "pre-exilic" editor.[529] Or, as would be suggested by Van Seters during the exile (perhaps sixth or fifth century B.C.E.), the diasporic intelligentsia produced the Pentateuch and "that the Yahwist played a role in this process."[530] This thesis adopts a dual approach, utilizing both diachronic and synchronic methodologies to elucidate the composition of the examined text.

Evidence indicates that certain traditions, such as a Divine Council theology in the Primeval narrative, would have been incompatible with the collective belief during the late exilic and post-exilic periods. Furthermore, the official Pentateuch, in its current form, would appear chronologically incongruous if placed within the Monarchy era, as specific concepts would either not have emerged or would not have reached maturation during that time.

This thesis stated that Genesis was the preamble to the historiography of ancient Israel, which probably had one form during the pre-exilic period. Yet, it had to be readapted to respond to the crisis of the Exile. The audience for this late version probably was the community in Babylon. The thesis assumed that the Eden narrative was part of a greater pedagogical program intended to regenerate the identity of later Judahites at that moment of identity crisis. It was designed partly to promote Yahweh, Israel's god, as the only creator God who controls history. Before that juncture, Yahweh was most likely understood as a divine council member. Perhaps he was even deemed the chief god presiding over this assembly.

In the pre-exilic period, a creation story patterned after the typical ANE format of such narratives might have existed wherein either an El, Yahweh or a Yahweh-El deity along with his consort and divine ones (*beni 'elohim*) proceeded to undertake this creative project of cosmic proportion. For example, Howard N. Wallace argues that J's *sitz im leben* was during the united monarchy and that he probably composed it in this "new social and religious context with a new interpretation of the tradition before it" and that it "retains elements from earlier renditions of the material."[531] Moreover, he also attests to "the association of Yahweh with El traditions."[532] This has been thoroughly explained in chapter four of this thesis paper.

In Babylon, as this thesis paper argues, this history was being reworked by editors, perhaps even the Yahwist. There, the monarchic creation narrative was probably edited and integrated elements from Marduk's creation story. However, Yahweh remained the leading deity in this version. The plural pronoun '*us*' in Genesis 3:22, along with Genesis 1:26 and Genesis 11:7, as demonstrated through the application of macro syntactic analysis to the Masoretic text, are probably resonance of episodes in the old traditions where the creator deity invited the gods, i.e., the Divine council to participate in this creative initiative.

The Hebrew word אֱלֹהִים *'elohim*, as per Genesius, is a plural that expresses the idea of collectivity and not just notions of quantity. Abstract plurals of this kind, which generally end with -*im* suffixes (*qᵉtulim*, *zequnim…*), "sum up either the conditions or qualities inherent in the idea of the stem or else the various single acts of which an action is composed."[533] Against

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[529] Arnold. *Genesis*, 18.

[530] Van Seters, *Prologue*, 117.

[531] Wallace, *The Eden*, 55.

[532] Wallace, *The Eden*, 65.

[533] E. Katuzsch and A.E. Cowley. *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1909), 397. § 124b.

Wardlaw, who concludes אֱלֹהִים to signify creator, i.e., the one who "spoke the heavens and the earth into existence, established times, created all living plants and creatures" and made humanity[534], this thesis asserts the term is not functioning as a title in the Eden narrative. It seems more accurate instead to understand the singular אֱלֹהִים *'elohim* as a "concretized abstract plural" denoting the idea or concept of divinity.[535]

The thesis also highlighted the requisite for exegetes to be conversant with the concept of the Divine Council cross-culturally as a theoretical precondition for positing anything about the conceptualization of divinity in the Eden narrative. The reason for this is the evidence of the use, by the Genesis authors, of elements from the motifs of this council and that of the mountain of God in the fabrication of the spatiotemporal setting of the garden. By taking this approach, one may discover the story does not depict an inimical opposition of the Israelite religion versus 'paganism' per se. The application of this procedure rather revealed a dialectic of the discourse of the ancient Near East's so-called polytheistic worldview juxtaposed to what Mark S. Smith identifies as a "monistic impulse" within ancient Israel.[536] The result of this xenogamy is a hybrid portrait of divinity in Genesis 2-3 that this paper argues may reflect a shift from henotheism to monolatry.

Consequent to the understanding of אֱלֹהִים *'elohim* as polyvalent 'abstract plural,' this thesis chose to assign the English translation *divinity* when it is a grammatically singular referent for the collectivity of gods, *deity* when it is referring to Yahweh as one from this collective and *divinities* when it denotes quantity. For example, in 2:2ᵃ, "The *divinity* completed on the seventh day." Given the grammatical and narrative context, the thesis assumes the singular *'elohim* refers to the collective of deities at work in creation. Whereas in 2:4ᵇ, the Hebrew identifies the particular *'elohim* in action. So, the translation reads, 'On that day of the making of the land and the skies by the *deity* Yahweh.' Lastly, in 3:5ᵈ 'וִהְיִיתֶם כֵּאלֹהִים' equates to "thus, you all will come to be like *divinities*." N.B., in cases like 3:5ᵈ where the grammar and context imply plurality, *'elohim* may be translated to deities, divinities, or the divinity, with the last denoting the idea of collectivity.

Despite the universality of the Eden narrative, the thesis assumed that the writer's spatial perspective is more local or regional than the cosmological language of popular translations can lead to believe. The Eden narrative is not cosmology like Chapter One. It is rather geographic and centered on the relationship between a national or ancestral deity, a family (a couple), and its home region (a definite portion of the earth's surface). Thus, based on the notion of encyclopedic knowledge as described in the cognitive linguistics approach that was discussed in the fourth chapter's section on Wardlaw, the meaning domain of lexical items such as אֶרֶץ and שָׁמַיִם determine their lexical meanings to be *land* and *skies*, respectively. In this

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[534] Wardlaw. *Conceptualizing words for God,* 100.
[535] Burnett. *A Reassessment*, 22.
[536] Smith. *The Origins*, 51.
In agreement with this, Westerman states that "the biblical narratives are no exception. They must not be taken out of their broader context". Claus Westerman. *Genesis: An Introduction.* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 65.

context, the authors might have been alluding to the land of Israel, specifically the city of Jerusalem.[537] This would also partly explain the anthropomorphic tone of the narrative.

There is interplay, in the Eden narrative, between הָאָדָם and הָאֲדָמָה which the NRSV Bible translates as 'man' and 'ground'. These words are formed from the same three Hebrew root consonants. *Adam* stems from *Adamah*. Therefore, this thesis chose to reproduce the wordplay and meaning of the Hebrew text by using 'ground' for *Adamah* and 'grounder' for *the Adam* (usually appearing with the definite article), except for 2:20[c], where וּלְאָדָם appears to represent the proper name, *Adam*.

The binary opposition paradigm of the fabula is noticeable throughout. Apart from the two trees, there are two humans, two modes of ontological being (humanity/divinity), two aspects of knowledge (good and bad), two seeming types of death, and two seeming types of life. Space is constructed with skies above and land below; life exists in the Garden, and outside of the Garden, there are subterranean waters and waters on the surface. There is the uncultivated, arid condition of the land, and there is workable, arable land. There is the primeval moment when man was made, and there is a time after that event. There seem to be two representatives of divinity present: the deity Yahweh and the snake.[538]

Notwithstanding the apparent decline in the woman's condition resulting from her transgression in 3:16[d] and [e], it cannot be conclusively stated that the male/female opposition in the story endorses the subservience of women. The author appears to provide an etiological account of the observed complementary yet frequently conflictual relationship between the sexes. While the narrative is told from a male perspective, often interpreted as prescriptive, this thesis argues that it is primarily descriptive.[539] It seems to reflect the realities of its social context—possibly during the Exile—while also aspiring toward an ideal way of living projected to the return from exile. מָשַׁל *māšal,* which is generally translated as '*rule*,' should be understood as '*govern*' but not in the sense of domination.[540] This thesis posits that the governance

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[537] "Encyclopedic knowledge is the sum of one's experiences associated with a word, concept, or thing. This includes grammatical valence relations, semantic extension, and usage." Wardlaw, Terrance Randall. "Conceptualizing Words for God within the Pentateuch: A Cognitive-Semantic Investigation in Literary Context." (2008), 34.

[538] This could be described as a binary opposition. See Mary Klages, *Literary Theory.*(date, etc) 14, 16.

[539] Carol Meyers describes the Eden narrative as an origin myth that "helped prescientific people answer the perennial questions about how they fit into the natural and social worlds." She explains that such tales have "archetypal value" meaning they "reveal and define form." They tell of essential modes of existence as opposed to being prototypal in reporting or recounting the first way of being of first beings. Still, she asserts, the story is "cast as prototype" because it is presented as the overture of ancient "Israel's national history". Therefore, by virtue of its complex structure, this text can be deceptive, easily misapprehended. *Discovering Eve.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 80. (you could probably delete this comment.

[540] "…This singular usage also demonstrates that *mšl* includes an element of service, an aspect that is demonstrably present in most texts (in contrast to the usage of *mlk*)". Botterweck, G. J., Ringgren, H., & Fabry, H.-J., eds. In J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, D. E. Green, & D. W. Stott (Trans.), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986), 71.

referenced in 3:16 suggests a form of management, authority, or leadership of relationality. Its purpose is to actualize the inherent potential associated with the role of עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ in 2:18ᶜ.[541]

To truly understand the story requires a careful engagement through artful and nuanced perspectives, moving away from the rigid dogmatism often found in traditional interpretations. The Eden narrative operates as a complex organism, where each literary element, grammatical unit, and syntactical arrangement is intricately connected. Each component plays a vital role and relies on the others to convey meaning. Symbolically, one might view this story, and even the entire book of Genesis, as embodying the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and bad. A narrative that serves as a valuable hermeneutical key for gaining insight and uncovering meaning within the Pentateuch.

Ultimately, the conceptualization of divinity in Eden can be understood as a dual expression, encompassing both immanence and transcendence. The deity Yahweh is portrayed as physically and emotionally active throughout the narrative. He displays intelligence, speech, sight, hearing, mobility, manual dexterity, desire, curiosity, a sense of humor, and the power to create. These characteristics are not only divine but also reflect aspects of humanity. On the other hand, the narrative hints at more abstract, mysterious, and invisible qualities of the divine, such as supreme wisdom, immortality, and superior might.

Furthermore, the structure of divinity is seen as a pluralistic, relational body composed of diverse entities. It resembles a family or community, sharing some characteristics with humanity but remaining distinct. Its governance is theocratic and patriarchal, with authority defined and exercised in line with divine principles. This authority is affirmed through a bilateral covenant, which requires the sovereign and his subjects to adhere to its stipulations.

In this way, divinity functions similarly to a parliamentary monarchy, though it appears to grapple with elements of absolute monarchy. The underlying ideology is Yahwistic royalism, in which Yahweh is regarded as the preferred monarch presiding over the assembly of gods. Divine jurisdiction extends across the cosmos.

This thesis does not advocate for a specific theological position. However, it may exhibit some philosophical traits commonly associated with open theism. Open theism posits that God's love and desire for humanity to willingly respond to His love result in a conditional understanding of His knowledge and plans regarding the future. Although God is omniscient, open theism argues that He does not know the specific choices individuals will make freely in the future. Furthermore, this thesis operates under the assumption of a libertarian view of freedom, suggesting that humans can either align with or oppose divine will.[542]

The theological perspective presupposed by this thesis was shaped by the translation of Genesis 2-3, achieved through a macro syntactic analysis. This method, enhanced by linguistic tools such as semiotics and speech act theory, allowed for identifying specific literary and

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[541] The possibility of a subtle critique of mother-goddess fertility cults or some form of matriarchy should not be dismissed. see: Kapelrud, A. S. (1980). חַוָּה. In G. J. Botterweck & H. Ringgren (Eds.), & D. E. Green (Trans.), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Revised Edition, Vol. 4, p. 258). William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

[542] "Open Theism," by James Rissler, *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ISSN 2161-0002, https://iep.utm.edu/, 2024-10-18.

rhetorical devices the author employed in crafting the text. Irony is one such device utilized in constructing both the snake and Yahweh's discourses, which convey a depth of meaning that otherwise remains unnoticed in the conventional translations.

Some relevant questions for further exploration if the study of the conceptualization of divinity were to be extended throughout the remainder of the Pentateuch include: Do the arguments presented in this thesis remain valid? Are there instances where the "singular *'elohim*" functions as an abstract plural denoting collectivity in the patriarchal narratives or Deuteronomy, for example? How might the thesis' perspectives on divinity inform the analysis of the revelation of God's name, אהיה אשר אחיה, in Exodus 3:14? What insights could speech act theory provide in the exegesis of the stories of Abraham or Joseph? Additionally, does macro-syntactic analysis at the synchronic level yield significant linguistic evidence for dating the composition of the Eden narrative to the Exilic period?

The interpretation offered in this thesis is not intended to be the final word on the subject; rather, it represents an initial version that aims at stimulating scholarly dialogue and will ideally undergo peer review and refinement. Importantly, this thesis challenges the prevailing orthodox theological viewpoint by suggesting that the depiction of God in Genesis 2–3 cannot be strictly categorized as monotheistic. Instead, it proposes a more dynamic understanding of divinity, hinting at the presence of other gods existing alongside Yahweh. This suggests that the context in which this idea was formulated may have been monolatrous, extending beyond the parameters of the traditional doctrine of God as understood within the Abrahamic faiths.

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APPENDIX: MACRO SYNTACTIC ANALYSIS

1. **Genesis 2:1−25**

Linguistic Attitude:			Emphasis/Prominence:		Linguistic Perspective:	Grammatical Construction:	Verb:	Translation:	Clause Type
Narrative	Discourse	Comment	Foreground	Background					
וַיְכֻלּ֛וּ הַשָּׁמַ֥יִם וְהָאָ֖רֶץ וְכָל־צְבָאָֽם׃ ¹			*		Θ	WAYYIQTOL	Pual 3rd P. Msc. pl	So were completed the skies and the land and all of their elements	VC
וַיְכַ֤ל אֱלֹהִים֙ בַּיּ֣וֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִ֔י ²ᵃ			*		Θ	WAYYIQTOL	Piel 3rd P.Msc. Sing.	The divinity completed on the seventh day	VC
מְלַאכְתּ֖וֹ אֲשֶׁ֣ר עָשָׂ֑ה ²ᵇ				*	↑	x-QATAL	3rd. P. Msc. Sing.	The handiwork that he made	CNC
וַיִּשְׁבֹּת֙ בַּיּ֣וֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִ֔י ²ᶜ			*		Θ	WAYYIQTOL	Qal 3rd P. Msc. Sing.	Thus, He sat still on the seventh day	VC
מִכָּל־מְלַאכְתּ֖וֹ אֲשֶׁ֥ר עָשָֽׂה׃ ²ᵈ			*		Θ	x-QATAL	3rd P. Msc. Sing	From all of the handiwork that he made	CNC
וַיְבָ֤רֶךְ אֱלֹהִים֙ אֶת־י֣וֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִ֔י ³ᵃ			*		Θ	WAYYIQTOL	Piel 3rd P. Msc. Sing.	And the divinity favored that seventh day	VC
וַיְקַדֵּ֖שׁ אֹת֑וֹ ³ᵇ			*		Θ	WAYYIQTOL	Piel 3r P. Msc. Sing.	And sacralized it	VC
כִּ֣י ב֤וֹ שָׁבַת֙ מִכָּל־מְלַאכְתּ֔וֹ ³ᶜ				*	↑	x-QATAL	3rd P. Msc. Sing.	Because in it he sat still from all of the handiwork	CNC
אֲשֶׁר־בָּרָ֥א אֱלֹהִ֖ים לַעֲשֽׂוֹת׃ ³ᵈ				*	↑	x-QATAL	3rd P. Msc. Sing.	That the divinity in making produced	CNC
אֵ֣לֶּה תוֹלְד֧וֹת הַשָּׁמַ֛יִם וְהָאָ֖רֶץ בְּהִבָּֽרְאָ֑ם ⁴ᵃ				*	↑	x-QATAL	בְּרָא 3rd pers. Masc. Plur. Niphal	These are the accounts/genealogies about the skies and the land when they	SNC

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Hebrew									
							Infin. construct	were produced	
בְּיוֹם עֲשׂוֹת יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶרֶץ וְשָׁמָיִם: ⁴ᵇ				*	↑	x-QATAL	עָשָׂה QETOL Inf. Const.	On that day of making of the land and the skies by the deity Yahweh	SNC
וְכֹל שִׂיחַ הַשָּׂדֶה טֶרֶם יִהְיֶה בָאָרֶץ ⁵ᵃ				*	↑	Waw-x-YIQTOL	3ʳᵈ P. Masc. Sing.	Then (at that point in time), every bush of the open field had not yet been on the land	CNC
וְכָל־עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה טֶרֶם יִצְמָח ⁵ᵇ				*	↑	Waw-x-YIQTOL	Qal Impf. 3ʳᵈ P. Masc. Sing.	and every herbage of the open field had not yet sprung up	CNC
כִּי לֹא הִמְטִיר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים עַל־הָאָרֶץ ⁵ᶜ				*	↑	x-QATAL	Hifil 3ʳᵈ P. Masc. Sing.	because the deity Yahweh had not caused (it) to rain upon the land	CNC
וְאָדָם אַיִן לַעֲבֹד אֶת־הָאֲדָמָה: ⁵ᵈ				*	↑		Qal Inf. Const.	and a grounder, nonexistent (with the intent) to service the ground	SNC
וְאֵד יַעֲלֶה מִן־הָאָרֶץ ⁶ᵃ				*	↑	Waw-x-YIQTOL	Qal Impf. 3ʳᵈ P. Masc. Sing.	But high water would (nonstop) ascend from the land	CNC
וְהִשְׁקָה אֶת־כָּל־פְּנֵי־הָאֲדָמָה: ⁶ᵇ				*	↑	weQATAL[543]	Hifil Perf. 3ʳᵈ P. Msc. Sing.	And would cause to drink all the surface	CNC

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[543] "The prefix conjugation is used to represent a real situation which arises as a consequence of some other situation. Whereas the suffix conjugation may dramatically represent a future situation as an accidental event, the prefix conjugation represents it as a logical consequence of some expressed or unexpressed situation" … "The (con)sequential *wqtl* usually takes on the sense of the preceding non-perfective, which may be imperfective, modal, legislational, volitional, future, or telic". Bruce Waltke and

								of the ground	
וַיִּ֩יצֶר֩ יְהֹוָ֨ה אֱלֹהִ֜ים אֶת־הָֽאָדָ֗ם עָפָר֙ מִן־הָ֣אֲדָמָ֔ה ⁷ᵃ			*		Θ	WAYYIQTOL	3ʳᵈ P. Msc. Sing.	So, the deity Yahweh molded) the grounder dust from the ground	VC
וַיִּפַּ֥ח בְּאַפָּ֖יו נִשְׁמַ֣ת חַיִּ֑ים ⁷ᵇ			*		Θ	WAYYIQTOL	3ʳᵈ P. Msc. Sing.	breathed in his nostrils breath of lives (lifetime)	VC
וַֽיְהִ֥י הָֽאָדָ֖ם לְנֶ֥פֶשׁ חַיָּֽה: ⁷ᶜ			*		Θ	WAYYIQTOL	3ʳᵈ P Msc. Sing.	and the grounder became (into) a *breathing sentient being/life form*	VC
וַיִּטַּ֞ע יְהֹוָ֧ה אֱלֹהִ֛ים גַּן־בְּעֵ֖דֶן מִקֶּ֑דֶם ⁸ᵃ			*		Θ	WAYYIQTOL	3ʳᵈ P. Msc. Sing.	Accordingly, the deity Yahweh planted a garden in Eden from the east	VC
וַיָּ֣שֶׂם שָׁ֔ם ⁸ᵇ			*		Θ	WAYYIQTOL	3ʳᵈ P. Msc. Sing	And he set there	VC
אֶת־הָֽאָדָ֖ם אֲשֶׁ֥ר יָצָֽר: ⁸ᶜ				*	↑	x-QATAL	Qal Perf. 3ʳᵈ P. Msc. Sing.	The grounder that he had molded	CNC
וַיַּצְמַ֞ח יְהֹוָ֤ה אֱלֹהִים֙ מִן־הָ֣אֲדָמָ֔ה ⁹ᵃ			*		Θ	WAYYIQTOL	Hifil 3ʳᵈ P. Msc. Sing.	the deity Yahweh made germinate from the ground	VC
כָּל־עֵ֛ץ נֶחְמָ֥ד לְמַרְאֶ֖ה וְט֣וֹב לְמַאֲכָ֑ל ⁹ᵇ				*	↑		Nifal Partcp. Sing. Absolute	Every tree appealing in appearance and good for food	SNC
וְעֵ֤ץ הַֽחַיִּים֙ בְּת֣וֹךְ הַגָּ֔ן ⁹ᶜ				*	↑			with the tree of the lifespan in the middle the	SNC

M. O'Connor. *An Introduction to Biblical Syntax*. (Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1990),511 §31.6.1.c, 527 §32.2.1d (6) Even so, "the past customary non-perfective, in contrast to what we call the presemt non-perfective, implies that the situation described no longer holds at the time of the utterance. With active situations the customary non-perfective is essentially a statement of iterativity (i.e., 'he used to do X). 503 §31.2c

								of the garden	
וְעֵ֕ץ הַדַּ֖עַת ט֥וֹב וָרָֽע׃ 9d				*	↑			along with the tree of the cognition of good and bad	SNC
וְנָהָר֙ יֹצֵ֣א מֵעֵ֔דֶן 10a				*	↑		Qal Partcp. Msc. Absolute	While a river exiting from Eden	SNC
לְהַשְׁק֖וֹת אֶת־הַגָּ֑ן 10b				*	↑		Hifil Inf. Const.	To make drink the garden	SNC
וּמִשָּׁם֙ יִפָּרֵ֔ד 10c				*	↑	Waw-x-YIQTOL	Nifal Impf. 3rd P. Msc Sing.	From there it (was) divided	CNC
וְהָיָ֖ה לְאַרְבָּעָ֥ה רָאשִֽׁים׃ 10d				*	↑	weQATAL	Qal Perf. 3rd P. Msc. Sing.	And became into four heads	CNC
שֵׁ֥ם הָֽאֶחָ֖ד פִּישׁ֑וֹן 11a				*	↑			The name of the one Pishon	SNC
ה֣וּא הַסֹּבֵ֗ב אֵ֚ת כָּל־אֶ֣רֶץ הַֽחֲוִילָ֔ה 11b				*	↑		Qal Participle Msc. Sing. Absolute	It was surrounding all of the land of Havilah	SNC
אֲשֶׁר־שָׁ֖ם הַזָּהָֽב׃ 11c				*	↑			That there, gold	SNC
וּֽזֲהַ֛ב הָאָ֥רֶץ הַהִ֖וא ט֑וֹב 12a				*	↑			The gold of the land, the, she good	SNC
שָׁ֥ם הַבְּדֹ֖לַח וְאֶ֥בֶן הַשֹּֽׁהַם׃ 12b				*	↑			there (is) the bdellium and the onyx stone	SNC
וְשֵֽׁם־הַנָּהָ֥ר הַשֵּׁנִ֖י גִּיח֑וֹן 13a				*	↑			The name of the second river Gihon	SNC

הוּא הַסּוֹבֵב אֵת כָּל־אֶרֶץ כּוּשׁ׃ 13b				*	↑		Qal Participle Msc. Sing. Absolute	He was surrounding all of the land of Cush	SNC
וְשֵׁם הַנָּהָר הַשְּׁלִישִׁי חִדֶּקֶל 14a				*				The name of the third Hideqqel (Tigri)	SNC
הוּא הַהֹלֵךְ קִדְמַת אַשּׁוּר 14b				*	↑		Qal Participle Msc. Sing. Absolute	He walking eastern part (front) of Asshur	SNC
וְהַנָּהָר הָרְבִיעִי הוּא פְרָת׃ 14c				*	↑			The fourth river, he Euphrates	SNC
וַיִּקַּח יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם 15a			*		Θ	WAYYIQTOL	3rd Pers. Msc. Sing.	Thus, the deity Yahweh snatched the grounder	VC
וַיַּנִּחֵהוּ בְגַן־עֵדֶן 15b			*		Θ	WAYYIQTOL	Hifil 3rd P. Msc. Sing.	He made him settle in the Garden of Eden	VC
לְעָבְדָהּ 15c				*			Qal Infin. Const. Fem. Sing.	To be in service of her	SNC
וּלְשָׁמְרָהּ׃ 15d				*			Qal Infin. Const. Fem. Sing.	And to be protective of her	SNC
וַיְצַו יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים עַל־הָאָדָם לֵאמֹר 16a			*		Θ	WAYYIQTOL	Piel 3rd P. Msc. Sing.	Then the deity Yahweh directed to the grounder saying	VC
	מִכֹּל עֵץ־הַגָּן אָכֹל תֹּאכֵל׃ 16b		*		Θ	x-YIQTOL indicative, modal sense	Qal Imperf. 2nd P. Msc. Sing.	From every tree in the garden You can eat	CNC
	וּמֵעֵץ הַדַּעַת טוֹב וָרָע 17a		*		Θ	protasis		But of the tree of the cognizing	SNC

							of good and bad	
לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּ֫נּוּ17b			*		Θ	x-YIQTOL deontic modal sense apodosis	Qal Imperf. 2nd P. Msc. Sing.	You must not eat from it [544]	CNC
כִּי בְּי֛וֹם אֲכָלְךָ֥ מִמֶּ֫נּוּ17c			*		Θ	protasis	Qal Infin. Const. 2nd pers. Msc. Sing.	For right on the day of you eating from it	SNC
מוֹת תָּמוּת׃ 17d			*		Θ	x-YIQTOL (Indicative) modal sense apodosis	Qal Imperf. 2nd P. Msc. Sing.	Die, you must die	CNC
וַיֹּ֫אמֶר֙ יְהוָ֣ה אֱלֹהִ֔ים18a			*		Θ	WAYYIQTOL	3rd P. Msc. Sing.	The deity Yahweh then said	VC
לֹא־ט֛וֹב הֱי֥וֹת הָֽאָדָ֖ם לְבַדּ֑וֹ18b			*		Θ		Qal Infin. Constr.	Not good the being of the grounder to himself	SNC
אֶֽעֱשֶׂהּ־לּ֥וֹ עֵ֖זֶר כְּנֶגְדּֽוֹ׃18c			*		↓	YIQTOL 1st position (volitional direct cohortative)	Qal Impf. 1st P. Sing.	I must make for him a companion like his counterpart [545]	VC
וַיִּצֶר֩ יְהוָ֨ה אֱלֹהִ֜ים מִן־הָ֣אֲדָמָ֗ה19a			*		Θ	WAYYIQTOL	3rd P. Msc. Sing.	So, the deity Yahweh formed from the ground	VC
כָּל־חַיַּ֤ת הַשָּׂדֶה֙ וְאֵת֙								Every animal of the field and every	SNC

[544] "Indicative YIQTOL with its corresponding negative with לֹא express obligations (and so come close to the function of the jussive)". 77 §55. "The sense of a jussive in simple discourse usually follows from the status relations of the speaker and addressee. When a superior uses the jussive with reference to an inferior the volitional force may be command (human; divine), exhortation, counsel, or invitation or permission. Sometimes the jussive qualifies or circumscribes an imperative. A second-person jussive may have the sense of an order. When an inferior uses the jussive with reference to a superior, it may denote an urgent request, prayer, request for permission" Waltke and O'Connor, §34.3b, 568. Additionally, "negative commands are expressed by לֹא + long YIQTOL (imperfect form)". It suggests "timeless prohibitions". Christo H.J. van der Merwe and Jacob A. Naude § 19.5.2.1, 170.

[545] The direct cohortative constructions with no object "correspond à la forme impérative qu'un sujet s'adresse à lui-même (ou à eux-mêmes s'il est question d'un groupe). Il s'agit d'un devoir faire qui marque une obligation d'agir » Robert David. *Traduire La Bible Hébraïque : De La Septante à La Nouvelle Bible Segond*. (Montréal : MediaPaul, 2004), 282 § 4.

Hebrew										
כָּל־עֹוף הַשָּׁמַיִם 19b									flying creature of the skies [546]	
וַיָּבֵא אֶל־הָאָדָם 19c				*		Θ		WAYYIQTOL	Hifil 3rd P. Msc. Sing.	He caused to come to the grounder	VC
לִרְאֹות 19d									Qal Infinitive constr.	To see	SNC
מַה־יִּקְרָא־לֹו 19e				*		↑		x-YIQTOL	3rd P. Msc. Sing. Qal Imperf.	What he would call to him	CNC
וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָא־לֹו הָאָדָם נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה 19f				*		↑		Waw-x-YIQTOL (protasis)	Qal Imperf. 3rd P. Msc. Sing.	And all that he would call to him the grounder-breathing sentient being	CNC (Casus pendens)
הוּא שְׁמֹו׃ 19g								(Apodosis)		He name	SNC
וַיִּקְרָא הָאָדָם שֵׁמֹות לְכָל־הַבְּהֵמָה וּלְעֹוף הַשָּׁמַיִם 20a						Θ		WAYYIQTOL	Qal Imperf. 3rd P. Msc. Sing.	So, he called the grounder names to all of the cattle and every flying creature of the skies	VC
וּלְכֹל חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה 20b										And to every living creature of the field	SNC
וּלְאָדָם 20c										However, for Adam	SNC
לֹא־מָצָא עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדֹּו׃ 20d				*		↑		x-QATAL	Qal perf.	Not found a companion as his counterpart	CNC
וַיַּפֵּל יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים 21a						Θ		WAYYIQTOL	Hifil 3rd P. Msc. Sing.	Therefore, the deity Yahweh caused to fall upon	VC

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[546] "The singular noun occurring after cardinal numbers, after כֹּל and other words indicating quantity, refers to a class or a group. Gentilic nouns (names of people or groups) are also often used in the singular". Furthermore, "when כֹּל precedes a singular indefinite noun, the nuance is 'every' or 'each'". Christo H.J. van der Merwe and Jacob A. Naude. *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar*. (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017), 211 §24.3.2 (3).

תַּרְדֵּמָה עַל־הָאָדָם 21a								the grounder a deep sleep	
וַיִּישָׁן 21b					Θ	WAYYIQTOL	3rd P. Msc. Sing.	So he slept	VC
וַיִּקַּח אַחַת מִצַּלְעֹתָיו 21c					Θ	WAYYIQTOL	3rd P. Msc. Sing.	Then he snatched one (feminine) out of his sides (feminine)	VC
וַיִּסְגֹּר בָּשָׂר תַּחְתֶּנָּה: 21d					Θ	WAYYIQTOL	3rd P. Msc. Sing.	Then he closed skin below her	VC
וַיִּבֶן יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים׀ אֶת־הַצֵּלָע 22a					Θ	WAYYIQTOL	3rd P. Msc. Sing.	The deity Yahweh built the side (common)	VC
אֲשֶׁר־לָקַח מִן־הָאָדָם לְאִשָּׁה 22b			*	↑		x-QATAL	3rd P Msc. Sing.	That he snatched from the grounder into a woman	CNC
וַיְבִאֶהָ אֶל־הָאָדָם: 22c					Θ	WAYYIQTOL	Hifil 3rd P Msc. Sing.	And He caused her to come to the grounder	VC
וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָדָם 23a					Θ	WAYYIQTOL	3rd P Msc Sing.	And the grounder said	VC
	זֹאת הַפַּעַם עֶצֶם מֵעֲצָמַי 23b							This, at last Bone of my bones	SNC
	וּבָשָׂר מִבְּשָׂרִי 23c							And skin from my flesh	SNC
	לְזֹאת יִקָּרֵא אִשָּׁה 23d		*	↓		x-YIQTOL	Nifal Imperf 3rd P Msc. Sing.	To this, he will be called woman	CNC
	כִּי מֵאִישׁ לֻקֳחָה־זֹּאת: 23e					x-QATAL	Pual 3rd P. Fem. Sing. Perf.	Because from man she was snatched, this	CNC
עַל־כֵּן יַעֲזָב־אִישׁ 24a			*	↓		x-YIQTOL (Indicative future)	3rd P Msc.	over such (ever since), he	CNC[547]

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[547] Although the grammatical construction denotes indicative future, the modal aspect is

							Sing. Imperf.	will loosen man	
אֶת־אָבִיו וְאֶת־אִמּוֹ 24b								Of his father and of his mother	SNC
וְדָבַק בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ 24c					↑	weQATAL[548]	3rd P Msc. Sing.	would stick with his woman	CNC
וְהָיוּ לְבָשָׂר אֶחָד: 24d					↑	weQATAL	3rd P Msc. Sing.	They would become to flesh one	CNC
וַיִּהְיוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם עֲרוּמִּים 25a					Θ	WAYYIQTOL	3rd P Msc. Sing.	They were the two of them bare skin	VC
הָאָדָם וְאִשְׁתּוֹ 25b								The grounder and his woman	SNC
וְלֹא יִתְבֹּשָׁשׁוּ: 25c						x-YIQTOL	Hitpael 3rd P Msc Plur	but not ashamed were they with each other	CNC

expressing typical, habitual behavior. Thus, the weQATAL is translated using an auxiliary verb, *would*, to show this aspect. Verse 24 is a comment on verses 21-22 expressing the habituality of the act from that moment forward, as in: '*man, he will loosen from his father and mother from then on and would stick with his woman…*'

[548] See Niccacci, 1990, 68 §46.

2. **Genesis 2:25–4:2**

Linguistic Attitude:			Emphasis/Prominence:		Lingu istic Persp ective :	Grammatical Construction:	Verb:	Translation:	Clause Type
Narrative	Discourse	Comme nt	Foreground	ckground					
נַיִּהְיוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם עֲרוּמִּים 25a					Ө	WAYYIQTOL	Qal imperfect 3P Msc Pl	now they were the two of them naked [bare skin] (unvarnis hed)	VC
הָאָדָם וְאִשְׁתֹּו 25b								The grounder and his woman	SNC
וְלֹא יִתְבֹּשָׁשׁוּ: 25c			*		↑	x-YIQTOL 3P Msc. Pl	Hitpolel YIQTOL	yet not ashamed were they with each other	CNC
וְהַנָּחָשׁ הָיָה עָרוּם 1a			*		↑	WAW-x-QATAL 3P Msc sing.	Qal	meanwhil e, the snake was [the] slickest-baldest	CNC
מִכֹּל חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה 1b						Common noun fem. Sing.		Out of the whole of the living thing of the arable land	SNC
אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים 1c			*		↑	x-QATAL 3P Msc. Sing perfect	Qal	That the divinity Yahweh produced	CNC
וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־הָאִשָּׁה 1d			*		Ө	WAYYIQTOL 3P. Msc. Sing	Qal	Wherefor e, he said to the woman	VC

	אַף כִּי־אָמַ֣ר אֱלֹהִ֔ים 1e		*			Θ	x-QATAL 3P Msc. Sing. Perf.	Qal (Report QATAL)	It could be that a divinity has said:	CNC
	לֹ֣א תֹֽאכְל֔וּ מִכֹּ֖ל עֵ֥ץ הַגָּֽן: 1f		*				x-YIQTOL 2P Msc pl.	Indicative YIQTOL	You all must not eat from any tree in the garden	CNC
וַתֹּ֥אמֶר הָֽאִשָּׁ֖ה אֶל־הַנָּחָ֑שׁ 2a						Θ	WAYYIQTOL 3P Fem. Sing.		So, the woman said to the snake	VC
	מִפְּרִ֥י עֵץ־הַגָּ֖ן נֹאכֵֽל: 2b		*			Θ	x-YIQTOL 1P pl. Indicative		From any fruit of the garden, we shall eat	CNC
	וּמִפְּרִ֣י הָעֵץ֮ אֲשֶׁ֣ר בְּתוֹךְ־הַגָּן֒ 3a								But fruit of the tree amid the garden	SNC
	אָמַ֣ר אֱלֹהִ֗ים 3b		*			Θ	QATAL 3P Msc. Sing.	Report QATAL	Elohim (a divinity) said [549]	VC

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[549] Niccacci states " A very important fact concerning the use of QATAL in discourse is that it always comes first in the sentence; this never occurs in narrative…use of QATAL in discourse which we can term the 'QATAL for reporting'…when the event is related in narrative the WAYYIQTOL is used; but when the same event is reported in discourse, after verbs of saying, telling, hearing, (report), QATAL is used… QATAL is rendered by the present perfect, a tense which belongs to the realm of comment. This is further proof QATAL is not narrative verbal form". *The Syntax*. §22, 41.
"The report QATAL never heads a sentence but can be preceded by a particle…It must be stressed that the use of QATAL described in the two preceding paragraphs is intrinsically linked with the setting as 'report', the announcement of information which the addressee does not yet know. What happens is that when known events are reported the verb form used is WAYYIQTOL, not QATAL". *The Syntax*. §23-24, 43.

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לֹא תֹאכְלוּ֙ מִמֶּ֔נּוּ 3c		*		Θ	x-YIQTOL 2P Msc. Pl.	Indicative YIQTOL	You all must not eat from it	CNC
וְלֹ֥א תִגְּע֖וּ בּ֑וֹ 3d		*		Θ	x-YIQTOL 2P. Msc. Pl we-YIQTOL?	Indicative YIQTOL	plus, you all must not touch on this	CNC
פֶּן־תְּמֻתֽוּן: [550]3e		*		Θ	x-YIQTOL 2P. Msc. Pl. Paragogic nun Modal function	Indicative YIQTOL	Or (lest) y'all (should) must die	CNC
וַיֹּ֥אמֶר הַנָּחָ֖שׁ אֶל־הָֽאִשָּׁ֑ה 4a				Θ	WAYYIQTOL 3P. Msc. Sing.		So said the snake to the woman	VC
לֹֽא־מ֖וֹת תְּמֻתֽוּן: 4b		*		↓	x-YIQTOL infin. Absol. Qal 2P. Msc. Pl.	Qal Impf.	Not die! you all will die (experience death)	CNC
כִּ֚י יֹדֵ֣עַ אֱלֹהִ֔ים 5a					2P. Msc. Sing. Absol.	Qal Participle	Rather, the divinity is one cognizing	SNC
כִּ֗י בְּיוֹם֙ אֲכָלְכֶ֣ם מִמֶּ֔נּוּ 5b					2P. Msc. Pl	Qal Infi. construct	That right on the day of you all eating from it	SNC
וְנִפְקְח֖וּ עֵֽינֵיכֶ֑ם 5c		*		↓	weQATAL 3P Pl.	NIPHAL inverted perfect	Then (them) both of your eyes, they will open	CNC

[550] "The telic particles may be positive (לְמַ֫עַן, בַּעֲבוּר, 'so that'; אֲשֶׁר is also so used) or negative (פֶּן, לְבִלְתִּי 'so that not = lest'). In Latin, telic particles are used not with the indicative mood, the mood of certainty, but with the subjunctive, the mood of contingency.   Bruce K. Waltke, M. O'Connor. An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 511. §31.6.1c

Clause (left)	Clause (mid)					Form	Parsing	Translation	Code
	וְהָיִיתֶם כֵּאלֹהִים 5d		*		↓	WeQATAL 2nd P. Msc. Pl.	Qal inverted perfect	Thus, you all will come to be like divinities	CNC
	יְדְעֵי טֹוב וָרָע: 5e					Msc. Pl	Qal Participle construct	Ones cognizing of good and bad	SNC
וַתֵּרֶא הָאִשָּׁה 6a					Θ	WAYYIQTOL 3P. Fem. Sing.	Qal Impf.	And she saw the woman	VC
כִּי טֹוב הָעֵץ לְמַאֲכָל 6b						Common noun Sing.	Absolute	That the tree good for food	SNC
וְכִי תַאֲוָה־הוּא לָעֵינַיִם 6c						Common noun Fem. Sing.	Absolute	And that it (a)darling to the eyes	SNC
וְנֶחְמָד הָעֵץ לְהַשְׂכִּיל 6d						masculine, singular,	Nifʻal, participle, Absolute	And the tree was invaluable to cause to gain insight	SNC
וַתִּקַּח מִפִּרְיֹו 6e			*		Θ	WAYYIQTOL 3P. fem. Sing.	Qal	So she took from the fruit	VC
וַתֹּאכַל 6f			*		Θ	WAYYIQTOL 3P. Fem. Sing	Qal	then she ate	VC
וַתִּתֵּן גַּם־לְאִישָׁה עִמָּהּ 6g			*		Θ	WAYYIQTOL 3P. Fem. Sing.	Qal	And she even gave to her man with her	VC
וַיֹּאכַל: 6h			*		Θ	WAYYIQTOL 3P. Msc, Sing.	Qal	So he ate	VC
וַתִּפָּקַחְנָה עֵינֵי שְׁנֵיהֶם 7a					Θ	WAYYIQTOL 3P. Fem. Pl.	Nifal	Ensuingly were opened the both	VC

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									of their eyes	
7b וַיֵּ֣דְע֔וּ						Θ	WAYYIQTOL 3P. Msc. Pl.	Qal	And they knew	VC
7c כִּ֥י עֵֽירֻמִּ֖ם הֵ֑ם							3P. Msc. Pl	Absolute	That they bare skin	SNC
7d וַֽיִּתְפְּרוּ֙ עֲלֵ֣ה תְאֵנָ֔ה						Θ	WAYYIQTOL 3P. Msc. Pl.	Qal	so they sewed fig tree leafage	VC
7e וַיַּעֲשׂ֥וּ לָהֶ֖ם חֲגֹרֹֽת:						Θ	WAYYIQTOL 3P. Msc. Pl.	Qal	And they made to themselves loin-covering	VC
8a וַֽיִּשְׁמְע֞וּ אֶת־ק֨וֹל יְהוָ֧ה אֱלֹהִ֛ים						Θ	WAYYIQTOL 3P. Msc. Pl.	Qal	Then they heard the sound of Yahweh 'elohim	VC
8b מִתְהַלֵּ֥ךְ בַּגָּ֖ן לְר֣וּחַ הַיּ֑וֹם							Hitpael Participle Msc. Sing.	Absolute	Walking in the garden to the wind of the day	SNC
8c וַיִּתְחַבֵּ֨א הָֽאָדָ֜ם וְאִשְׁתּ֗וֹ מִפְּנֵי֙ יְהוָ֣ה אֱלֹהִ֔ים						Θ	WAYYIQTOL 3P. Msc. Sing.	Hitpael	So he hid himself the man and his woman from the face of the divinity Yahweh	VC
8d בְּת֖וֹךְ עֵ֥ץ הַגָּֽן:									By means of the tree in the garden	SNC
9a וַיִּקְרָ֛א יְהוָ֥ה אֱלֹהִ֖ים אֶל־הָֽאָדָ֑ם						Θ	WAYYIQTOL 3P. Msc. Sing.	Qal	And Yahweh 'elohim called to the grounder	VC

Hebrew								
וַיֹּאמֶר לֹו 9b					Θ	WAYYIQTOL 3P. Msc. Sing.	Qal	And said to him	VC
אַיֶּכָּה: 9c						2P. Msc. Sing.	Interrogative	Where you at	SNC
וַיֹּאמֶר 10a					Θ	WAYYIQTOL 3P. Msc. Sing.		And he said	VC
אֶת־קֹלְךָ שָׁמַעְתִּי בַּגָּן 10b			*			x-QATAL 1P. Sing. (NARRATIVE DISCOURSE) [551]		Sound of you I heard in the garden	CNC
וָאִירָא 10c			*			WAYYIQTOL 1P. Sing.	Qal	I feared	VC
כִּי־עֵירֹם אָנֹכִי 10d						Adjc. Sing.	Absolute	Because bare skin I	SNC
וָאֵחָבֵא: 10e			*			WAYYIQTOL 1P. Sing.	Nifal	So I hid myself	VC
וַיֹּאמֶר 11a					Θ	WAYYIQTOL 3P. Msc. Sing.	Qal	Then he said	VC
מִי הִגִּיד לְךָ 11b						x-QATAL 3P. Msc. Sing. Perfect (REPORT QATAL)[552]	Hifil	Who has exposed to you	CNC

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[551] Occasionally a text which can be classified as speech includes a narrative section when the speaker wishes to report certain events he considers important for the actual situation. I use the term 'narrative discourse' for this type of narrative in which the events are not reported in a detached way, as in a historian's account, but from the speaker's point of view. *The Syntax*. §74, 102. Niccacci notes "from the syntactic aspect the 'report' QATAL differs from retrospective QATAL in two ways: it is a form with first position in the clause and it is at degree zero." *The Syntax*. §23, 43.

[552] QATAL "never heads a sentence but can be preceded by a particle". N.B. QATAL "is

	כִּי עֵירֹם אַתָּה 11c							That bare skin you	SNC
	הֲמִן־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ לְבִלְתִּי אֲכָל ־מִמֶּנּוּ 11d					x-QATAL 1P. Msc. Sing.	Piel	So the tree that I ordered you prohibition of eating from it	CNC
	אָכָלְתָּ׃ 11e					QATAL 2P. Msc. Sing.	Qal	You ate	VC
וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָדָם 12a					Θ	WAYYIQTOL 3P. Msc. Sing.		Then the grounder said	VC
	הָאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה עִמָּדִי 12b					x-QATAL 2P. Msc. Sing. (Casus pendens)	Qal	The woman that you gave as companion of I	CNC
	הִוא נָתְנָה־לִּי מִן־הָעֵץ 12c					x-QATAL 3P. Fem. Sing.	Qal	Her-she gave to me from the tree	CNC
	וָאֹכֵל׃ 12d				Θ	WAYYIQTOL 1P. Sing.		So I ate	VC
וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים לָאִשָּׁה 13a					Θ	WAYYIQTOL 3P. Msc. Sing.		Then said Yahweh 'elohim to the woman	VC

intrinsically linked with the setting as 'report', the announcement of information which the addressee does not yet know. When known events are reported the verb for used is WAYYIQTOL, not QATAL, and the passage is no longer a report but a narrative discourse". *The Syntax*. §23.1-24, 43.

	Hebrew					symbol	Form	Stem	Translation	Code
	מַה־זֹּאת עָשִׂית 13b						x-QATAL 2P. Fem. Sing.	Qal	What?? This! you made	CNC
וַתֹּאמֶר הָאִשָּׁה 13c						Θ	WAYYIQTOL 3P. Fem. Sing.		But the woman said	VC
	הַנָּחָשׁ הִשִּׁיאַנִי 13d					↑	x-QATAL 3P. Msc. Sing.	Hifil	The snake–he motivated me to hope in vain (conned)	CNC
	וָאֹכֵל: 13e					↑	WAYYIQTOL 1P. Fem. Sing.		And I ate	VC
וַיֹּאמֶר יְהֹוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶל־הַנָּחָשׁ 14a						Θ	WAYYIQTOL 3P. Msc. Sing		Thus the divinity Yahweh said to the snake	VC
	כִּי עָשִׂיתָ זֹּאת 14b						x-QATAL 2P. Msc. Sing. (PROTASIS)	Qal	ever since you produced this	CNC
	אָרוּר אַתָּה [a] מִכָּל־הַבְּהֵמָה 14c						Passive Participle 2P. Sing. (APODOSIS)	Qal Absolute	Alienating/ despicable (are being) you from all the livestock	SNC
	וּמִכֹּל[a] חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה 14d						Common noun construct Fem. Sing (APODOSIS)		And from all living thing of the arable land	SNC
						↓	x-YIQTOL 2P. Msc. Sing.	Qal	Upon your belly you will walk	CNC

	עַל־גְּחֹנְךָ תֵלֵךְ 14e								
	וְעָפָר תֹּאכַל כָּל־יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ: 14f				↓	x-YIQTOL 2P. msc. Sing.	Qal	And dust you will eat all the days of your lifetime	CNC
	וְאֵיבָה אָשִׁית בֵּינְךָ וּבֵין הָאִשָּׁה 15a				↓	x-YIQTOL 1P. Sing.	Qal	Enmity I will set tween you and between the woman	CNC
	וּבֵין זַרְעֲךָ וּבֵין זַרְעָהּ 15b						construct	And between your seed and tween her seed	SNC
	הוּא יְשׁוּפְךָ רֹאשׁ 15c				↓	x-YIQTOL 3P. Msc. Sing.	Qal	He will crush your head	CNC
	וְאַתָּה תְּשׁוּפֶנּוּ עָקֵב: 15d				↓	x-YIQTOL 2P. Msc. Sing.	Qal	And you will crush his heel	CNC
אֶל[a] ־הָאִשָּׁה אָמַר 16a		*				x-QATAL 3P. Msc. Sing.		To the woman, {on account of her doing} he said	CNC
	הַרְבָּה אַרְבֶּה				↓	x-YIQTOL 1P. Sing.	Hifil	I will intensify the toil of your	CNC

	עִצְּבוֹנֵךְ וְהֵרֹנֵךְ[b] 16b							pregnancy	
	בְּעֶצֶב[c] תֵּלְדִי בָנִים 16c				↓	x-YIQTOL 2P. Fem. Sing.	Qal	In pain you will bring forth sons	CNC
	וְאֶל-[d]אִישֵׁךְ תְּשׁוּקָתֵךְ 16d							And towards your man you inclination	SNC
	וְהוּא יִמְשָׁל-בָּךְ[d] 16e				↓	x-YIQTOL 3P. Msc. Sing.	Qal	Yet he-he will manage you	CNC
וּלְאָדָם[a] אָמַר 17a				*		x-QATAL 3P. Msc. Sing.		But to the grounder {on account of his actions} he said	CNC
	כִּי-שָׁמַעְתָּ לְקוֹל אִשְׁתֶּךָ 17b			*		x-QATAL 2P. Msc. Sing.		Since you heeded the voice of your woman	CNC
	וַתֹּאכַל מִן-הָעֵץ 17c				Θ	WAYYIQTOL 2P. Msc. Sing.		Consequently, you ate from the tree	CNC
	אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ לֵאמֹר 17d			*		x-QATAL 1P. Msc. Sing.	Piel	Concerning that which I ordered you saying	CNC
	לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ 17e				↓	x-YIQTOL 2P. Msc. Sing (indicative)	Qal	You must not eat from it	CNC
	אֲרוּרָה הָאֲדָמָה					Passive Participle Fem. Sing.	Qal Absolute	Uncaring [Unresponsive/	SNC

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בַּעֲבוּרֶ֔ךָ 17f							Indifferent] (is being-she) the ground for the sake of you	
בְּעִצָּבוֹן֙ תֹּֽאכֲלֶ֔נָּה[b] 17g				↓	x-YIQTOL 2P. Msc. Sing.	Qal	In toil, you will eat her	CNC
כֹּ֖ל יְמֵ֥י חַיֶּֽיךָ: 17h							All the days of your lifetime	SNC
וְק֥וֹץ וְדַרְדַּ֖ר תַּצְמִ֣יחַֽ לָ֑ךְ 18a				↓	x-YIQTOL 3P. Fem. Sing.	Hifil	Thorns and thistles will she cause to sprout for you	CNC
וְאָכַלְתָּ֖ אֶת־עֵ֥שֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶֽה: 18b					WeQATAL 2P. Msc. Sing.	Qal	And you will eat the herbage of the arable land	CNC
בְּזֵעַ֤ת אַפֶּ֨יךָ֙ תֹּ֣אכַל לֶ֔חֶם 19a				↓	x-YIQTOL 2P. Msc. Sing	Qal	In the sweat of your nostrils {frustration from struggle} will you eat nourishment	CNC
עַ֤ד שֽׁוּבְךָ֙ אֶל־הָ֣אֲדָמָ֔ה 19b					2p. Msc. Sing	Qal infinitive construct	Until of your turn back to the ground	SNC

Hebrew					Verb form	Stem	English	Clause
כִּי מִמֶּנָּה לֻקָּחְתָּ 19c			*		x-QATAL 2P. Msc. Sing.	Pual	Because from her you were taken	CNC
כִּי־עָפָר אַתָּה 19d							Indeed, dust you	SNC
וְאֶל־עָפָר תָּשׁוּב: 19e				↓	x-YIQTOL 2P. Msc. Sing.	Qal	So to dust you must turn back	CNC
וַיִּקְרָא הָאָדָם שֵׁם אִשְׁתּוֹ חַוָּה 20a				Θ	WAYYIQTOL 3P. Msc. Sing.		And called the grounder the name of his woman Havah	VC
כִּי הִוא הָיְתָה אֵם כָּל־חָי: 20b			*		x-QATAL 3P. Fem. Sing	Qal	Since her, she was mother of all living	CNC
וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים לְאָדָם וּלְאִשְׁתּוֹ כָּתְנוֹת עוֹר 21a				Θ	WAYYIQTOL 3P. Msc. Sing		Now the divinity Yahweh made for the grounder and his woman shirt/jacket of skin	VC
וַיַּלְבִּשֵׁם: 21b				Θ	WAYYIQTOL 3P Msc. Sing.	Hifil	In order to dress them	VC
וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים 22a				Θ	WAYYIQTOL 3P. Msc. Sing		Then the divinity Yahweh said	VC

הֵ֤ן הָֽאָדָם֙ הָיָה֙ כְּאַחַ֣ד מִמֶּ֔נּוּ 22b					Θ	x-QATAL 3P. Msc. Sing	Report QATAL[553] Reporting on the event narrated with a WAYYIQTOL construction in verse 6 which the addressee(s) appear to not be aware of	Look here now! The grounder has come to be like one out of us	CNC
לָדַ֖עַת ט֣וֹב וָרָ֑ע 22c						Qal infinitive construct		Toward the knowing of good and bad	SNC
וְעַתָּ֣ה פֶּן־ יִשְׁלַ֣ח יָד֗וֹ 22d					↓	x-YIQTOL 3P. Msc. Sing. (indicative)[554]	Qal	And now lest he should cast/thrust his hand	CNC
וְלָקַח֙ גַּ֚ם מֵעֵ֣ץ הַֽחַיִּ֔ים 22e					↓	WeQATAL 3P. Msc. Sing.	Qal	And he should take as well from the tree of	CNC

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[553] In discourse, QATAL "always comes first in the sentence" and it is used to relate an event "in discourse after verbs of saying, telling, hearing". This is called the report QATAL. Niccacci. *The Syntax*, §22, 41. Additionally, "the report QATAL never heads a sentence but can be preceded by a particle, by the subject or by the object. In these cases we have the x-QATAL construction for reports". Niccacci. *The Syntax*, §23, 43. QATAL form is used when information is relayed "which the addressee does not yet know". Usually, the QATAL is translated into the English present perfect.

[554] This construction seems to have a modal sense; "modality refers to (the orientation of a speaker concerning) the actuality and/or actualization process". The indicative is one type of modality. It "refers to a fact in the form of a statement or question. This is regarded as the unmarked (or neutral) form". Van der Merwe, Naude and Kroeze. *A Biblical Hebrew,* § 11.1.3, 51. However, "Biblical Hebrew does not have modal auxiliary verbs such as *can*/*could*, *shall*, *would*, *will*, *may*, etc.", the sense of the verb (YIQTOL/imperfect) will determine the modality whether it expresses directives, desirability of events. Van der Merwe, Naude and Kroeze. *A Biblical Hebrew,* § 19.3.5, 163. Furthermore, to make this point more explicit, "the indicative refers to a certain reality (factual event…the subjunctive and optative, by contrast, refer to non-real events. An event is non-real if a speaker is not sure about the actuality of events referred to. This is usually indicated by the YIQTOL (long form). it is used with certain particles to express "the sense of possibility…probability and contingency… also conveying the notion of contingency are instances where the particles… פֶּן are used to mark the possible purpose of what is said in a matrix clause". Van der Merwe, Naude and Kroeze. *A Biblical Hebrew,* § 19.3.5.3, 164-165.

							ultimate life	
22f וְאָכַל֙				↓	WeQATAL 3P. Msc. Sing.	Qal	And he should eat	CNC
22g וָחַ֖י לְעֹלָֽם:				↓	weQATAL 3P. Msc. Sing.	Qal	And should live onto everlasting	CNC
23a וַֽיְשַׁלְּחֵ֛הוּ יְהוָ֥ה אֱלֹהִ֖ים מִגַּן־עֵ֑דֶן				Θ	WAYYIQTOL 3P. Msc. Sing.	Piel	And so the divinity Yahweh thrusted him out from the garden of Eden	VC
23b לַֽעֲבֹד֙ אֶת־הָ֣אֲדָמָ֔ה					Infinitive construct	Qal	To service the ground	SNC
23c אֲשֶׁ֥ר לֻקַּ֖ח מִשָּֽׁם:					x-QATAL 3P. Msc. Sing.	Pual	That which he was taken from	CNC
24a וַיְגָ֖רֶשׁ אֶת־הָֽאָדָ֑ם				Θ	WAYYIQTOL 3P. Msc. Sing.	Piel	Thus, He expelled the grounder	VC
24b וַיַּשְׁכֵּן֩ᵃ מִקֶּ֨דֶם לְגַן־עֵ֜דֶןᵇ אֶת־הַכְּרֻבִ֗ים				Θ	WAYYIQTOL 3P. Msc. Sing.	Hifil	And he caused to tabernacle from east to the garden of Eden the kherubim	VC
24c וְאֵ֨ת לַ֤הַט הַחֶ֙רֶב֙ הַמִּתְהַפֶּ֔כֶת					Participle Fem. Ing.	Hitpael Absolute	The sword of flame turning itself over and over	SNC

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לִשְׁמֹ֕ר אֶת־דֶּ֖רֶךְ 24d עֵ֥ץ הַֽחַיִּֽים׃						Infinitive construct	Qal	To guard the road of the tree of ultimate life	SNC
Genesis 4									
וְהָ֣אָדָ֔ם יָדַ֖ע אֶת־ 1a חַוָּ֣ה אִשְׁתּ֑וֹ						x-QATAL 3P. Msc. Sing.			CNC
וַתַּ֙הַר֙ 1b					Θ	WAYYIQTOL 3P. Fem. Sing			VC
וַתֵּ֙לֶד֙ 1d					Θ	WAYYIQTOL 3P. Fem. Sing			VC
קָנִ֥יתִי אֶת־ᵃאִ֖ישׁ ᵃ׃יְהוָֽה 1e						QATAL 1P. Sing.			VC
וַתֹּ֣סֶף2a					Θ	WAYYIQTOL 3P.	Hifil		VC
לָלֶ֔דֶת אֶת־אָחִ֖יו 2b אֶת־הָ֑בֶל						Infinitive construct	Qal		SNC
וַֽיְהִי־הֶ֙בֶל֙ רֹ֣עֵה 2c צֹ֔אן					Θ	WAYYIQTOL 3P. Msc. Sing.			VC

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וְקַ֙יִן֙ הָיָ֣ה עֹבֵ֖ד אֲדָמָֽה׃ 2d					x-QATAL 3P. Msc. Sing.			CNC