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**Mythologies of Masculinities and the Search of
the (Male) Self**

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I hope I did well.

Blessed be God . . . that He did not make me a woman, say the Jews in their morning prayers, while their wives pray on a note of resignation: 'Blessed be the Lord, who created me according to His will.' The first among the blessings for which Plato thanked the gods was that he had been created free, not enslaved; the second, a man, not a woman. But the males could not enjoy this privilege fully unless they believed it to be founded on the absolute and the eternal; they sought to make the fact of their supremacy into a right.

Simone De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*

Abstract

Preface

The book of Ezekiel portrays a devastating event in the life of the written biblical community: destruction of the home and of society itself. But it also can be viewed differently – as a manifesto of a power/knowledge process and technologies of power: a manifesto that reflects the recreation and re-rising process of the destroyed Israelite masculinity, accompanied by extreme textual violence.

Research Assumptions and Questions

The main assumption is that the fundamental building block of (also the biblical) societies is Man and his images. A Man is a ‘Self’ that is caught in an identification process through construction and deconstruction, in an ever-changing discourse that shapes and reshapes myths and produces the ‘correct’ and ‘wrong’ knowledge in order to fulfill a political end. The notion Man exists as something neutral even though it is constantly in the process of identification. Another assumption is that no identity is fixed, and all identities are fluid and are changing as response to political events or to fulfill a political end. In fact, there is no such thing as an identity but a subject trapped in a constant identification process.

The main research question is: What is the genealogical theological process of the political subjectivization in the book of Ezekiel? Asked differently: What is the total sum of the technologies of power that are manipulated on the reader and generates the subject who subscribes to the text?

The political event described in the book of Ezekiel is the destruction of the land. This event may be treated as a traumatic event or as a book of post traumatic stress order.

Whether the players in the book are historical entities or not, the analysis cannot exempt this factor – a destruction of a home, the city and the nation itself is a traumatic event.

The Reader

The basic intention of the research is not to focus on the historical events of the physical exilic community, nor on Ezekiel itself, but on the effects of the text on the reader. The reader is not traumatic, since the reader did not witness the trauma or took part in the traumatic event. To become a traumatic subject, the reader must apply the trauma as his own personal memory, while his sense of selfhood needs to connote the name Israel.

The reader is not only the target in which technologies of power are being manipulated on, but is also the one that uses this book to establish a self, which in this case is Israelite. Hence, the reader, even if not in a state of PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder), is embracing the trauma by creating a memory and locating his self in that history. This act makes the history in the book of Ezekiel an event that always exists and is part of the reader's experience. The book of Ezekiel is a perpetual site of memory. It is an imagined past that the reader relives, takes part in the trauma and recovery process to be reconstituted as a new Israelite subject. The acceptance of the new Israelite self and the taking part in this constitution is the way for the reader to recover from the trauma. On that note, we can say that the Israelite identity is in an eternal state of trauma and recovery. It functioned as a trauma and recovery site for the Israelite reader in the making, and later became as an archive for the modern Israelite reader whether it was Jewish, Christian or Secular.

Hence, the focus will shift to the reader, its construction, the different technologies that are used in the formation of the reader and the identification process of the reader itself. The reader is created while reading the text and does not only interpreting the text but is being interpreted by it. The identification process of the reader is rooted in the meaning that the reader is taking part in its construction, whether the reader invents a new meaning or whether it is the so-called 'original meaning'.

Since we cannot treat identity as fixed but only a subject that is in a constant identification process, referring to the reader without designating the different phases of its identification process will be somehow lacking. Therefore, the reader is divided into a few different categories that signify each step in the identification process. There is a need to stress that the identification process of the subject reader is not linear, nor diachronic. The process is always in the making and the subject reader can be a few entities at the same time. The reader can split to different categories according to the different technologies used in the book.

Different phases of the reader:

R^N – The Neutral Reader

R^M – The masculine Reader

R^{MF} – The masculine feminine reader

R^I – The Israelite Reader

Unit 1 Chapters 1-14 and the establishment of the discourse

The first part is designated to show how a new discourse is formed. In this section, the book of Ezekiel initiates a recovery process from a traumatic event of the lost of the land, temple and god. The first condition to recover from the trauma is to

reestablish a discourse where the reader can identify his self and produce a sense of identity.

The technologies of power discussed in this unit are:

- Panotopism
- Masochism as an art of power
- Different discourse-ordering methods such as exclusion, ownership on the

writing, and drawing the borders of the discourse.

In this unit, the reader separates itself from Israel. He is waiting to be constructed, and in this sense, the sign Israel is not the ideal Israel, nor the 'historical' one, but the instrument that will construct the reader. The written Israel is the starting and departure point. It is the base for its identification process and at the same time, it is all that is needed to leave behind – derivatives of identities that cannot, and should not be used. Hence, in this part the R becomes R^N , his former identity in being erased so he could be a blank site for the reception of the sign Israel. The R accepts and circulates the statements of this discourse, in which they in turn, create his sense of subjectivity, materialize his body and unify his personal body with the body of the community.

This discourse-production with its limitations, exclusions, and the correct knowledge production, is given to us in an already produced book signed and sealed with an autograph that has a name, Ezekiel. This signature, the seal of the book, of the correct knowledge is also protected in the ultimate canon, the basis of western philosophy, religions and thoughts - it is sealed in the Hebrew Bible. We as readers, as modern readers, already accept the fact that the Ezekielién discourse is the right one, these chapters just keep reaffirm what we already know, and strengthen our will for truth.

Unit 2 Chapters 15-23 and the creation of the new male

The second part discusses the second unit of the book, chapters 15-23. In these chapters the entity of Israel is depicted as a sinful woman that betrayed Yhwh and was punished severely. The unit is written in an allegorical and metaphorical fashion depicting bad Israel as a woman and good Israel as a man, the bad Israel is thus being purged for the sake of the good one. To say it differently, in this unit we witness the rendition process of the reader from a R^N to a R^F and then to a R^{MF} so he could finish as R^M .

The technologies that were used here are:

- Pornography
- Metaphorical language and remapping of the discourse
- Biopower and the cataloguing of subjects to zoé and bios entities

Bad Israel, the woman, is depicted as a primal almost animalistic creature that lives in his blood and represents the sinful state of Israel that betrayed her husband Yhwh. This is shown by a detailed violent pornography. This sign is being scarified and on its remaining the R^M is constructed according to the law, through a process of allegories and metaphors, or through a process of remapping metaphors and truths. By subscribing to his sins and accepting his traumatic history, the R feels shame and guilt. He, as R^{MF} participates in the exclusion of his 'dark side', by beating the metaphorical woman that is an integral part of his sense of selfhood, at the same time R^{MF} understands that he is punished and beaten by his master Yhwh.

The process of the constitution of the RI is the process of the recovery from trauma. From here on, the R will gradually exit the state of trauma until fully assuming

his RI identity. The union between the R as the new Man and his god is created through a violent sexual act that is manifested as textual pornography. This sexual union gave birth to a contract of laws between the R and his god that the R himself is taking part in its constitution. Put differently – the process started as bodily sexual relationship and ended by a constitution of a new subject that will be the adobe of the new Israelite body.

Unit 3 chapters 24-39: The Creation of the National/Communal Identity

In this part the R^M completes its process and rendered R^I. 24-39 mainly deals with prophecies against the neighbors of Israel, from Tyre through Egypt to Gog from the land of Magog. Another aspect in this unit is the historical event of the final destruction of Israel, Jerusalem and the temple, and the creation of the community of exiles.

Some different aspects of nation narration were utilized and the map of Israel was sketched. This new Israel is not necessarily a physical entity but rather a model that can be used by anyone according to a political end. The importance of the notion of exile in the entity that is called Israel is discussed and it is argued that Israel that is constructed in the book of Ezekiel is not an entity that survived exile, but rather an entity that exile is a vital part in its core. This transition in the depiction of Israel allows many other subjects that are not part of the geographical location of historical Israel to take part and assume the name Israel. The paradigm of friend enemy according to Schmitt is used in the analysis of the differentiation between the true Israel and the false one. Also discussed how Yhwh and the leaders of Israel are being constructed according to different punishments of the foreign nations.

Unit 4 Chapters 40-48: The Utopic Pan-Israel

40-48 draws the new borders of future Israel via a utopic geometrical vision of the temple and New Jerusalem. In this unit the last technology of power is discussed and that is Heterotopia.

The analysis of this unit via spatial prism allows a better understanding to its theological perspectives. The well organized spatial planning does not only create a new Promised Land, city and a temple, it also or perhaps mainly creates an identity. For thirty nine chapters the R^l, its leaders and the discourse that enables its constitution, were shaped in a violent process of purging, eradication and cleansing of the deviant feminine elements in his selfhood that represents all that is not Israel – in all aspects, within and from without. 40-48 with its heterotopian style, allows the reader to accept a new pure and clean Israelite selfhood that is shaped as the land of Israel and being nourished by the abundant river of the temple of Yhwh.

The spatial utopic description of Israel permits the reader to identify with the geographical location, and to subscribe to the notion of Israel without necessarily to be physically in Israel. The new allocation of the land to the twelve tribes and its new borders negates the old Israel in the form of Judah and creates an Israel that bears within its name the past, present and future. The renaming of the city of Jerusalem to ‘Yhwh is there’ concludes the entire line and creates an all male heaven in which all signs – Subject, Law, Land, City and Temple are depicted male, leaving the woman and the feminine as commodities in the masculine cultural market.

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Preface

This work started as a short paper written during my MA. The course discussed violence in the Hebrew Bible and I immediately turned to the book of Ezekiel, specifically to chapter 16 and its extremely graphic depictions of violence. More than being stunned by the extent of violence, I was puzzled by modern biblical criticism and research that analyzed every single word of this horrendous chapter banned even by the rabbinical movement from synagogues (TB Megilah 25a), while neglecting its political value, misogyny and violence against women.

During that time, I was deeply involved in masculinities studies and post-structuralism and worked to implement these studies as deeply as possible within my own personal research. Through masculinities studies I have attempted to understand in depth the construction, deconstruction and identification of the category that is called Man and to break the notion that the category Man is a fixed point, a non-breakable subject responsible for his own construction, while at the same time constructing others.

Through post-structuralism, specifically Foucault and his writings, I have come to a realization that I need to examine the parameters that allow their existence before examining different texts and ideologies. As such, I understood that the biblical text could not have existed without the mediation of religious figures or modern biblical critics. In other words, the boundaries between the writer and the reader are not as clear as some may or wish it to be. I have strived to interconnect post-structuralism and biblical studies while trying to apprehend the biblical text as it may be perceived in our time discourse. This has been done in order for me to break the boundaries between the reader and the writer, text and world, and reality and the metaphysical, while clarifying concepts

of male, maleness, and masculinities and the ways readers identify with such mythological systems.

The main assumption here is that the fundamental building block of societies (including biblical) is Man and his images. A Man is a 'Self' caught in an identification process through construction and deconstruction, in an ever-changing discourse that shapes and reshapes myths and produces the 'right' and 'wrong' knowledge. The notion Man has continuously existed as something neutral even though it is always in the process of identification. Another assumption, that is a derivative to the main one, is that no identity is fixed, and all identities are fluid, thus changing as a response to political events, or in order to fulfill a political end. In fact, there is no such thing as an identity but rather a subject trapped in a constant identification process.

The primary questions that are of most interest to me here are:

How is the construction of biblical male images accomplished? What are the terms and differences between various biblical images of masculinity? How does myth come into usage, and how is it shaped and reshaped according to social construction? How does the Man cope with a traumatic event of the destruction of his manhood and the god that was the reference point of his manhood? How was the woman and the feminine constructed accordingly? And, most of all, how may this process affect me—or you, any 'you', as reader?

If I am to summarize the main goal of my work then I will say this: My goal is to offer another avenue in which to examine different biblical texts especially in response to modern day discourse, and to present-day political and cultural reality. This goal derives from the understanding that one can never find the original meaning of any text, and that

every text, even though it has a specific meaning has always been used as something more than its objective quality. The Hebrew Bible, in that sense, is one of the most important texts of western culture, and thus I aim to offer another form of biblical/textual/cultural criticism.

Hopefully this dissertation will encourage researchers to examine the biblical text in ways that are relevant to philosophy and to interdisciplinary studies in order to enhance the Bible's relevance for contemporary life, society and its readers.

Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
BDB	Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs, <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907)
BHS	<i>Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i> , Monograph Series
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JFSR	<i>Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion</i>
JQR	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JQRMS	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i> , Monograph Series
JR	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i> , Supplement Series
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIV	New International Version
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLSS	SBL Semeia Studies
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i> <i>Vetus</i>
VTSup	<i>Testamentum</i> , Supplements
WBS	Word Biblical Commentary

Introduction

Textual relationships: Reading, Interpretation and the Search for the Self

1. Textual relationships: Reading, Interpretation and the Search for the Self

The Light of Hannaniah, Son of Hezekiah

The book of Ezekiel portrays a devastating event in the life of the written biblical community: the destruction of the home and of society itself. But it can also be viewed differently – as a manifesto of a power/knowledge process and technologies of power: a manifesto that reflects the recreation and re-rising process of the destroyed Israelite masculinity, accompanied by extreme textual violence. The magnitude of this extreme and condensed violence, which includes rape, mass murder and radical death penalties, is difficult to find elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. A few questions need to be asked: Why is the book of Ezekiel so violent? Why do human lives in most parts of the book have no value at all except as a subjugated body that is trapped in a restrictive political soul? And why, despite the extreme violence and the subjugation, is this book so popular among critics? In other words, how does the book of Ezekiel promote the creation of a self, and why is this violent process so accepted?

Tractate Menahot 45a of the Babylonian Talmud discusses a problematic verse in the book of Ezekiel that says: Priests shall not eat anything, whether bird or animal, that died or was torn by beasts (44.31).¹ R. Johanan immediately raised the question: ‘is it only the priests that may not eat such but the Israelites may?’² This difficult question made Hannaniah, son of Hezekiah retire for a time period of 300 candles, approximately

¹ The English version to the Hebrew Bible that will be used in this dissertation is the JPS 1985.

² All of the English quotes from the Talmud are taken from the *Soncino Talmud* Epstein and Simon 1983.

a month or two, and interpret the book, preventing its death sentence of archiving. As R. Judah confirms: ‘Rab Judah said in Rab’s name: In truth, that man, Hannaniah, son of Hezekiah by name, is to be remembered for blessing. If it were not him, the Book of Ezekiel would have been hidden (b. Shabbat 13b).’

While putting aside the theological aspects of eating habits and rituals in the book of Ezekiel, a different question may arise: Did Hannaniah, son of Hezekiah, see something in the book of Ezekiel that we, modern and postmodern researchers, have failed to understand? Could it be that Hannaniah, son of Hezekiah, did not see the book of Ezekiel just as a theological manifesto and a book of prophecy and ultimate salvation, but also as a political tool for a community in exile that needs reformation and a new vision? Such a political tool so important, that the theological problem of kosher food is just a minor setback in the great scheme of the imagined exilic society of Israel and the imagined future society of Israel, whose faith he might have been concerned about? What has occurred though in Hannaniah, son of Hezekiah’s act of reading, and his act against misreading, that has kept the book, according to the Talmud, forever in the canon of western thought? I hope that this question will be answered. Before discussing the book itself and its different aspects, I would like to discuss the art of reading itself, methods of readings, the political role of modern biblical interpretation and its misreadings.

1.1 When Moses Could not Speak

What matter who’s speaking, someone said, what matter who’s speaking

(Beckett 1974:16).

Barthes’ short essay titled ‘The Death of the Author’ (1977) became one of the most important foundations of post-structuralist and anti-logocentrist thinking. Barthes

claims that the author has one main function that is to create a unity of the text, a central meaning that the reader must discern. He goes on to write that one cannot assume a writer's intention since the 'writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original... Did he wish to express himself, he ought at least to know that the inner "thing" he thinks to "translate" is itself only a ready-formed dictionary, its words only explainable through other words, and so on indefinitely...' (Barthes 1977:146). In this manner, the author stands behind the work as if he were God standing behind the material universe; thus, the author gives stability and order to the work. Moreover, deciphering the author's intentions, interpreting him and claiming to know what he meant are western society's ways of creating order and a unified center of thought. Barthes asks to overthrow the author and the critic together with him, thus changing the way we should treat the text, not as a frozen stone onto which words are etched and can never be altered, but as a living eternal object with infinite meanings that can never be blocked by the god-like notion of the author. Moreover, Barthes' essay creates a powerful subject that can liberate himself - the reader. The reader now has the power to participate in subversive reading so he is able to lead a revolution of ideas and human practices, just like Hannaniah son of Hezekiah who saved the book of Ezekiel with his reading.

Michel Foucault, although he never mentions Barthes' essay, also wrote an essay in the same spirit a few months later, titled 'What is an Author' (1977b). Foucault wishes to understand the function of the author in the text and his political purpose in society. Instead of saying 'an author', Foucault decided to name the author, 'author-function', since an author has the political function of giving a certain type of political position to the text within the general cultural discourse.

Textual criticism cannot function without the name of the author that becomes the mediator who gives the text a higher status in the discourse, promotes its meaning, and settles contradictions. Hence, we may say that biblical research has created an author while also giving him a name, a geographical location, dating his time of work, and of course an agenda and a clear ideology. All of these have created a clear and stable discourse, locked within the mighty authority of the writer. These actions generate the text, or maybe reestablish it as a religious text that no one can read without the mediation of modern biblical studies. It seems that modern biblical studies has secularized the Bible but at the same time has made modern biblical scholars holy. Can we actually say anything new about the Bible and its effects on a contemporary reader when we constantly need to deal with and discuss the so called ‘original meaning’ of an author whom no one actually knows anything about for sure? In my view, the author-function used by modern biblical studies can be depicted as intact, strong, powerful, omnipresent, and in most cases, if not all of them - a Man.³ In short; he is the guardian of biblical criticism, and in many ways the modern critic has become the author of the Bible.

Fontaine elaborates on this notion:

‘...The scholar who regularly regards herself or himself as part of the hermeneutical circle of interpretation is usually labeled as “subjective” and “partisan”, as compared to the mainstream or “malestream” commentators who present themselves as “objective” and engaged in their research for purely disinterested motives’ (Fontaine 2001:13).

³ See Moore and Sherwood 2010:1-27 for the invention of ‘biblical scholar’ as a product of the enlightenment, and even if the biblical scholar may think that he/she is doing something entirely different once reading the Bible and not a modern criticism, he/she is still engaged with sustaining modernity and producing knowledge that is well rooted in modernity.

Biblical ‘malestream’ critics cannot act as such without assuming or even claiming the position of an author. It is difficult not to see the process of subscription of modern biblical scholars with the biblical text, in this case with the book of Ezekiel.

In the *Feminist Companion to Reading the Bible* Fontaine states the reason for such a series in the first place:

In fact, no one learns all the ancient languages and background subjects needed to become a professionally competent biblical scholar without some powerfully motivating force at work, whether the scholar is aware of it or not. The investment of time and money, and the uncertainty of a successful outcome, are simply too overwhelming to allow anyone engaged in biblical studies to view the pursuit as merely ‘objective’. ‘Experts’ are not created by accident; there is always some intentionality on the part of one being so credentialed. Under such conditions, it is not an ‘out of bounds’ question for readers to wonder what motivates the authors they read, especially if and when those expert authors fail to divulge their contextualized starting points for discussion of something as important as biblical literature (Fontaine 2001:14).

Indeed, every act of interpretation is a political act; no science is just a pure science but a tool to control a discourse, thus to monitor and normalize the different aspects of our being. In fact, modern biblical research has created a triangle of interpretation in the form of God – Author – Scholar - in which all are males. This paradigm was set to be broken by the *Feminist Companion to the Bible* and more recently by various postmodern paths, all in order to understand the ‘hows’ and ‘whys’, and the effects of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament on our current lives and the predominantly western episteme. However, this process was already present in rabbinical thinking, which this story from the b. Men.29b may illustrate well:

Rab Judah said in the name of Rab, When Moses ascended on high he found the Holy One, blessed be He, engaged in affixing coronets to the letters. Said Moses, ‘Lord of the Universe, Who stays Thy hand?’ He answered, ‘There will arise a man, at the end of many generations, Akiba b. Joseph by name, who will expound upon each tittle heaps and heaps of laws’. ‘Lord of the Universe’, said Moses; ‘permit me to see him’.

He replied, 'Turn thee round'. Moses went and sat down behind eight rows [and listened to the discourses upon the law]. Not being able to follow their arguments he was ill at ease, but when they came to a certain subject and the disciples said to the master 'Whence do you know it?' and the latter replied 'It is a law given unto Moses at Sinai' he was comforted. Thereupon he returned to the Holy One, blessed be He, and said, 'Lord of the Universe, Thou hast such a man and Thou givest the Torah by me!' He replied, 'Be silent, for such is My decree'.

Then said Moses, 'Lord of the Universe, Thou hast shown me his Torah, show me his reward'. 'Turn thee round', said He; and Moses turned round and saw them weighing out his flesh at the market-stalls. 'Lord of the Universe', cried Moses, 'such Torah, and such a reward!' He replied, 'Be silent, for such is My decree'.

Putting aside the criticism against God, we can see a remarkable questioning of authority; Moses sits at the back of R. Akiba's class and does not understand a word. Moreover, R. Akiba claims that what he teaches is actually what Moses received at Mount Sinai. The rabbinical thought of that time actually erased the notion of a center, of an author, and this story aptly shows us that there is no such thing as an ultimate author. R. Akiba was already teaching his disciples concepts that Moses couldn't even begin to imagine. This story shows us that the rabbinical movement of the third to seventh centuries CE was in some cases so progressive and radical that they had little difficulty in breaking the chain between the Text, the Author and God, thus promoting thinking that does not focus on the center and its authoritarian values.

Another story that illustrates this notion well can be found in b. Bab. Mets.59b, the story of the oven of Aknai. The story begins with an argument about the purity of an oven, and eventually becomes a discussion on the authority of interpretation. R. Eliezer cried out to heaven in order to seek a definitive proof of his interpretation of the law. A voice cried out from the sky, asking: 'Why do ye dispute with R. Eliezer, seeing that in all matters the halachah agrees with him!' thus granting him full authority on the text.

However, the text continues and says that: ‘R. Joshua arose and exclaimed: “It is not in heaven (Deut. 30.12) לֹא בַשָּׁמַיִם הִיא. What did he mean by this? – Said R. Jeremiah: That the Torah had already been given at Mount Sinai; we pay no attention to a Heavenly Voice, because Thou hast long since written in the Torah at Mount Sinai, After the majority must one incline.’

This rather shocking statement gives the scholars ultimate power to decipher the text and use it for their political needs. Thus, Leaving God almost as a symbolic figurehead, and not the ultimate logos centered deity that all logic must spring from it. Boyarin writes: ‘Even the most extremely antiparaphrastic of western interpretative methods, for instance the poem-interpretation of the New Critics, still is infinitely more paraphrastic than midrash, which simply refuses to take even the text as verbal icon, preferring almost to read each word, and sometimes each letter, and sometimes the shape of the letter or even its serifs, as a virtual icon in itself’ (Boyarin 2004:131).

This thinking, similar to Barthes, does not lock the text, freeze it, confine it as a fixed point in time and space, but promotes many different interpretations and avenues to pursue. After all, it was God himself who wrote the text with numerous small details for R. Akiba to decipher thousands of years later. It was God himself (the Rabbinical God in any case), the ultimate author that left so much room for new voices and for new readings. This perspective offers a way of reading the Bible without confining ourselves to the central thinking that forever promotes hegemony. It offers endless forms of interpretation. Boyarin claims that the rabbinic Midrash was a resistance to logocentric thinking, due to the need of the Rabbis to define them against the rise of Christianity. According to Sherwood and Hart, ‘As logos theology grew into Christology and as

“Israel” became a signifier whose signified was not the historical people of Israel, the Rabbis deferred the logos and undid, as it were, the Parmenidean revolution with enormous cultural consequences’ (Sherwood and Hart 2005:135). How much actually modern biblical research differs from the Christian logocentrism? How much does western thinking differ from its source, the Christian logos theology? Moreover, do scholars who read the book of Ezekiel see a historical Israel or do they see a signified Israel, a Christian (and Jewish for this matter) sign that is mainly the imagined spiritual, community of Israel? If this is the case, can we say that biblical research did indeed depart from theology, or is it actually an improved Christian and Jewish theology? In other words, can we really call biblical criticism a science? In addition, if Israel became a sign, and a spiritual mythological base for numerous imagined communities worldwide, then we need to discuss the identification, supplementarity, and the subjectivity, both personal and communal (spiritual and physical) of the biblical scholar, and of the one who reads the text and produces a discourse on it. Derrida and Paul de Man dealt with these matters extensively and their methods may help with changing the reading process, by teaching us how to read against and with the currents of the text.

1.2 In the Beginning There Was the Word

“Deconstruction” is a word I have never liked and one whose fortune has disagreeably surprised me (Derrida 1983:44).

According to Derrida, no text is unified or coherent; everything is consigned and therefore everything can be split into atoms and fractions and there is no way of finding the primary initial thought. There are always differences, tensions, and paradoxes between what a text means (or what an author would like to assert, or thinks s/he is

claiming) and what a text does. In other words, one cannot claim, even if ‘proof’ is given, the original meaning of the text or the primary intention of the narrator or the redactor, and there is no need to look outside the text. Everything that exists - exists in the text. The text is the speech-act to which the narrator/writer/redactor meant and/or thought he meant or did not mean at all. To be more precise, ‘there is nothing outside/but context’. ‘Context’ here can be: speech, life, the world, the real, history, and what is not (Derrida 1988:136-137). In this manner, reading the text is reading the world, not the frozen one that modern biblical criticism aims to see, but the world here and now, the reality that is surrounding the reader. This strategy was implemented by R. Akiba, who created laws by reviving Moses and recreating him in any given moment. Hence, reassuring Moses’ existence not as a tomb in a book, but as a living person whose textual existence is the context.

The key idea of deconstruction here is decentering; decentering the human subject, institutions, logos, human thought, what is to be thought of as the ‘true meaning’ or just the meaning.

1.2.1 Being One with the Text

A ‘supplement’, according to Derrida, is what is added on to something in order to enrich it and as an ‘extra’ to something. It comes to fill in something that is missing, a void so to speak. Derrida treats this term as writing itself, claiming that ‘the art of writing is nothing but a mediated representation of thought’ (Derrida 1976:144). The supplement as the mediator of speech is a process of identification of the self; writing in that case is the reflection of the process of identification. If the supplement as writing is the manifestation of the endless identification process of the self, then we can say that there

is nothing outside the text, or more precisely, nothing outside but context. Viewed differently, nothing happens outside of an experience of textuality, hence there is no getting outside of textuality into a supposed non-textual 'real' world. Deconstruction undoes the binary analysis of 'close readings' and 'contextual readings'; it follows the detailed work of language within a text and also opens the text up to its historical, social, and political contexts. 'There is nothing outside the text' also means there is nothing but context.

Derrida challenges the western thought of unity, origin and order. He goes on to claim that a text is essentially vitiated, impure, open, and haunted, consisting of traces and their palimpsests: no text is purely present, nor was there any purely present text in the past. In this light, modern biblical scholars have become one with the biblical text, and sometimes it seems that one can no longer disconnect the two, as if the commentaries have become the supplement to the Bible, and the writing to the speech.

In *The Slayers of Moses*, Susan A. Handelman, following Boyarin's comments about the Talmud, goes a step further and argues that deconstruction is not something that Derrida invented but it actually existed in the Hebrew Bible all along as an anti-Hellenistic approach, almost as an anti-philosophy in the western perception. According to Handelman, the Hebrew Bible posed 'a supreme challenge to the entire classical tradition of Western metaphysics: to assert that matter was not eternal, that the world had a temporal origin, that substance came into being through divine fate, indeed through divine speech'. It is not nature that is the ultimate reality but the text itself that 'points not outwards towards images and forms, but inwards towards itself, its own network of relations, of verbal and temporal ambiguities. It calls for its own decipherment, not for a

movement away from itself towards vision or abstraction; the word leads inwards into itself, not outwards towards the thing' (Handelman 1982:31-32).⁴ If the textual reality, the supplement, is stronger than the so-called reality, if this supplement affects the way the subject reader writes and constitutes his self, then is there any place at all to understand what the Bible means? Hence, the reader is constantly in a process of never ending identification. Therefore, we can also read the Bible in a different way, not as history or as a political document of a nation/community, but as a text that functions as a tool in the reader identification process.

In her article titled 'My Song of Songs', Athalya Brenner wrote about her experience with the SoS and the way she analyses the book, by comparison to other scholars.

The 'Israel' that I grew up in...facilitated an understanding, from a very early age, that the SoS is about erotic, physical love. In my primary experience, the SoS poems have to do precisely with that. Imagining that an allegorical meaning-of divine-human love, historical or mystical; of any kind of Jewish or Christian or scholarly approach- is the primary or even a coexistent 'original' meaning of the SoS leaves me with genuine puzzlement, even embarrassment (Brenner 1997b:575-6).

This assertion is derived from the understanding that there is not a clear 'pure' analysis of a text and every analysis, like every text is well rooted in the contextual sphere of the critic, the so-called author and of course of the reader. In my view, the value in the deconstruction of the Hebrew Bible is not necessarily the extraction of new meanings of the text. It is actually the political act of destabilizing the way we perceive and read the Hebrew Bible. It is the attempt to subvert the effects of modern biblical

⁴ The synthesis of Handelman's thoughts is based upon Atkins: 1983, 'Partial stories: Hebraic and Christian Thinking in the Wake of Deconstruction'.

research, which in many ways has become an integral part of the Bible, a supplement that seems like the Bible itself. This notion is necessary in this dissertation, especially in the view of the stature that has been given to ‘Historical Ezekiel’ by biblical scholars, a stature whose ‘scientific value’ is not always clear, and in some cases acts as a tool to constitute the scholar’s political position. The philosophical perspectives of the analysis of the book demand quite a few methodology reviews. Due to the risk of veering from the main topic, some of the reviews will be in the Appendixes.

1.3 Introduction- Final Words

The insight exists only for a reader in the privileged position of being able to observe the blindness as a phenomenon in its own right- the question of his own blindness being one which he is by definition incompetent to ask- and so being able to distinguish between statement and meaning. He has to undo the explicit results of a vision that is able to move toward the light only because, being already blind, it does not have to fear the power of this light. But the vision is unable to report correctly what it has perceived in the course of its journey. To write critically about critics thus becomes a way to reflect on the paradoxical effectiveness of a blinded vision that has to be rectified by means of insights that it unwittingly provides (De Man 1983:106).

There is a chance that scholars might find some ‘logical’ inconsistencies and errors, and that my work may be negated entirely by declaring that it is not ‘biblical criticism’ but another unscientific historical philological Midrash. This introduction is my answer to those critics, and to add Fontaine’s words: We offer these volumes, then, in the hope of challenging, exciting, annoying, angering and liberating readers of all stripes and kinds. What you do not find in one place, we have tried to provide in another. The New Testament suggests that all the books of ‘Scripture’, Hebrew and Greek, are ‘Spirit-breathed’ (2 Tim. 3.16a); we remind you, Gentle Reader, that it is for you to decide how and in what way that may be so (Fontaine 2001:14).

This study is offered then, as Fontaine and Brenner offered their Feminist Companion to the Bible – to excite, challenge, annoy and especially to liberate readers from the prison of logocentrism.

2. When Titans Ruled the Earth - Modern Biblical Research of Ezekiel

Commentaries, especially within their introductions bestow upon us a great opportunity to understand different biblical discourses occurring at the time they were written. We may also witness their affects on the current discourse and on the episteme of biblical studies itself. The research of biblical studies, as many other 'studies', aspires to see itself as an objective discipline in which the researcher almost becomes an empty vessel, an impartial being who analyzes and reviews the text, as if it was still an object awaiting the moment for its truth to be revealed. One cannot ignore the political act of reading and misreading or the different functions of the author/critic that take part in the discourse and in its shaping (p. 311). Thus, in this review of the different commentaries, there is a need to examine and to better understand the different political statements of the critics and to assess the biblical discourse of the book of Ezekiel, its 'truths' and limitations. Not all the commentaries of the book of Ezekiel are reviewed here, but a substantial amount that in my opinion may represent well the biblical discourse surrounding the book of Ezekiel over the past hundred years. The selection of the scholars here was chosen in relation to the biblical writer and their status in the various commentaries. That is to say, these examples portray well the political elements that allow the construction of different 'Ezekiels' in order to fulfill a political-scientific end. In order to better review the commentaries, I would like to shortly discuss the meaning of discourse and power/knowledge.

2.1 The Discourse of the Bible

Discourse is one of the most commonly used terms by Foucault and features in many of his works. A discourse, according to Foucault, is something that produces something else, a concept, an effect, and an utterance. The discourse is constituted by a set of structures and rules, which, in turn, produce utterances, statements, and objects. Some statements are circulated widely while others are not. Sara Mills, in her review of Foucault, gives the Bible as an example. The Bible is translated and printed in almost all countries and has journals devoted to research it. It is quoted by priests and leaders and has a highly circulated number of statements produced by a discourse, while other religions and their writings are neglected (Mills 2003:54). Discourse is not something that explains reality but a system which structures the way we see reality, a system that creates subjects. Using Mills' example, Foucault does not want to research the Bible, but to understand why the Bible is such a widely circulated statement while other writings are not, and what are the political effects of this highly circulated discourse?

In his essay 'The Order of Discourse' Foucault elaborates on the importance of discourse and its political role and says: 'The commentary must say for the first time what had, nonetheless, already been said, and must tirelessly repeat what had, however, never been said' (Foucault 1981:58). Using Mills' example on the Bible and its circulation, one cannot avoid the tremendous number of commentaries of the Bible and their effects on it. These commentaries not only keep the Bible in circulation but are also placing the commentator in the position of the owner of the discourse. They confer status to the commentator by showing that he has mastered the Bible and hence holds the right knowledge in the discourse.

Power/Knowledge

One can understand nothing about economic science if one does not know how power and economic power are exercised in everyday life. The exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power... It is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge; it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power (Foucault 1980b:51-2).

Foucault was persistent in his works on the relation between power and knowledge. Power is the sum of all human relations; knowledge is a vital part in the power relations and an integral part of struggle over power. In producing knowledge one is also claiming power. Whenever there is an imbalance of power between groups or an impending danger to society like a plague, war, natural disaster and such, there will be a production of knowledge. The power/knowledge process creates statements that with the procedures of the discourse become facts and truth. Thus, what Foucault seeks to assert is that truth is constructed and kept in place through a wide range of strategies, which, in turn support and affirm it and exclude and counter alternative versions of events.

While aiming to show how Ezekiel produces its own discourse and methods of exclusion and production of the true knowledge; we must not forget that it was not only Ezekiel (at least the author-function) who produced a discourse. When Hannaniah, son of Hezekiah decided to save the book of Ezekiel, he, in Foucault's terms, reintroduced it to the canon by producing a new commentary. He did this by giving it a new author-function, reestablishing its authority, and changing the statements of the book, as does the modern research of the Bible. Each commentary produces a discourse on the Bible that not only circulates the internal discourse that is written in the Bible, but also creates a new discourse that combines modern research and the Bible together. When a modern researcher formulates an authority without

any indication of its actual physical existence (a writer, an author or a school), and gives it a name, an ideology, a discourse of its own; (s)he does not just invent an author-function, but (s)he invents his/her self. By doing so (s)he adds his/her self to the biblical discourse, making this self a biblical writer just like Ezekiel. Hence, one cannot ignore modern biblical research and its methods of authorships, mainly due to the fact that one could not read the Bible if it were not for them – modern researchers and Hannaniah, son of Hezekiah in the case of Ezekiel.

2.2 Ezekiel Ezekiel

No critical question arises in connexion with the authorship of the book, the whole from beginning to end bearing unmistakably the stamp of a single mind
(Driver 1891:291).

Over a hundred years have passed since Driver wrote these lines and modern research is still debating the question of whether Ezekiel is one writer, many writers and one redactor, one writer and many redactors and so forth. The differences between the versions of the book, the repetitions in the book itself, and sometimes the lack of coherence have been much-debated topics. Nevertheless it has always been the topic of the composition of the book and the question of authenticity and originality that has occupied the researchers the most.

Cooke's analysis (1936) of Ezekiel is important for the understanding of the history of research, since it maps late 19th and early 20th century modern biblical research and reviews the methods and ways of thinking of different researchers, while synthesizing their ideas effectively. Cooke discusses the arrangement of the book according to dates. He claims that the dates mentioned reflect the progress, writing and editing of the book. They are the main means for examining the different ideological aspects and layers of writings. According to Cooke, Ezekiel had a well-

organized plan in which he arranged his book in four main divisions chs. 1-24, 25-32, 33-39 and 40-48, and an editor was involved in the final arrangement of the book while disturbing the author's intention and sometimes obscuring it 'to the despair of the commentator...' (Cooke 1936:xv-xx). In other words, Cooke sees history as a parameter of ideology, and more than researching the ideology per se, he examines the history of the ideology.

Early modern researchers mainly dealt with the limitations and the boundaries of the author figure of Ezekiel as a genuine writer in tandem with the redactor's influence/input, and Cooke discusses their views in order to establish his idea. Kraetschmar suggests that the prophet only wrote a small portion of the book, while the rest of the book was written by others and the redactors. Herrmann (1908) and Hölcher (1924) believed in the same principle too, but attributed a larger part in the book to Ezekiel himself (Cooke 1936:xx-xix). An interesting viewpoint of Cooke can be found in his criticism on Hertrich. Hertrich claimed that Ezekiel could not have been in two places at the same time, therefore he worked only in Jerusalem and a redactor added other prophecies to the book. 'The only alternative', writes Cooke, 'is to suppose that Ezekiel was gifted with a second sight; and both Hölcher and Hertrich declare that no scientific person nowadays believes in such a thing. Both critics are candid enough to admit that they hold a priori views of what is possible and not possible in the domain of the spirit. And after all, what relief do they give us? It is just as hard to believe in the highly imaginative redactor as to accept the statements of text' (Cooke 1936: xxiii, my emphasis).

Cooke criticizes Hertrich and Hölcher and touches on a very delicate matter: who is this imaginative redactor and how was he invented? What role does he fulfill and for what purpose? Cooke does not further elaborate on his statement and goes on

to claim that Ezekiel is the main author of the book and that his visions carried him to Jerusalem and back to Babylon in a figurative sense and not literally. He concludes and writes that the book was eventually edited but with mistakes, even if Ezekiel remains the main writer and his ideology is the one that dominates his book. Cooke's commentary numbed the redactor and silenced his voice, so he could have a stronger Ezekiel with a history, a personality, character and a mind: 'He was not like other men, or even like other prophets; if he had been, he would not have responded to his calling... He united an intense imagination with a curious even prosaic, love of detail' (Cooke 1936: xxvii). I am not aware of Cooke's intentions for wanting to empower Ezekiel in a very different manner than other commentators; nonetheless, his move is a good example of the political aspects of 'scientific research', its limitations and lack of so-called objectivity.⁵

Torrey (1970)⁶ has a very interesting and quite radical assessment about the role of Ezekiel in the constitution of his book. Torrey claims that the book of Ezekiel is the latest book in the Hebrew Bible to be written, dating it to the Hellenistic era, while a redactor shaped the prophecies so they could be tallied to the Babylonian exile. He bases his assumptions on the claim that Ezekiel knew and had almost all of the books of the Hebrew Bible in his library and took his ideas from the books themselves: 'The plain fact, as one day will be generally recognized, is that the author of the book had before him the completed Pentateuch, in the very form in which it lies before us at the present day' (Torrey 1970:199).

⁵ See also Brownlee 1986: xix-xxiii; Stalker 1968:17-25 who discuss the same matter.

⁶ Torrey's work was first published in 1930, but was not recognized and accepted. It was in 1970 that his work was reprinted with an afterwards written by Greenberg, and a response by Torrey himself. Quotes are taken from the 1970's edition.

Redpath (1907) is another example of the use of Ezekiel and his figure from the standpoint of the researcher. Redpath speaks extensively on the personality of Ezekiel, his calling and his deep commitment to the people. 'Ezekiel was an Idealist... He anticipated a reunited kingdom and an ideal restored temple... The kernel of the renewed life of the people was to be spiritual, with a deep personal sense of sin and of responsibility' (Redpath 1907:xii). Redpath's words of the prophet may be reviewed here as a personal religious discourse, something that could be pronounced in a church, rather than in an academic study. Nevertheless, this is exactly the juxtaposition of research and sermon; both are political, both wish to posit a discourse and both construct a new authority of interpretation and knowledge.

In his commentary, Wevers (1969) writes: 'The book of Ezekiel more than any other book in the canon of the Latter Prophets, yields evidence of intentional arrangement and a single editorial mind' (Wevers 1969:1). Wevers claims that the book is a carefully arranged collection of materials, that is the end product of a long tradition that started with Ezekiel. Wevers claims that the prophets were speakers and not writers and their sayings were remembered by their disciples and were passed on; a process that yields speeches that are altered from the original utterances. Wevers does not know when the original sayings of Ezekiel were delivered, but he differentiates several historical levels of writings and editing according to the literary levels. Moreover, different sayings of the prophet were circulated, sometimes with no relation to one another. At one point, these sayings were put into writing in order to assist the memory of the disciples of Ezekiel. The process of collecting Ezekiel's sayings came to a final end with one editor, who collected all of the writings, bound them together, thus creating the book. This editor, according to Wevers, represents his own personal traditions and sometimes fails to understand Ezekiel's by editing,

tidying and inserting parts of Ezekiel's proverbs in the wrong places. The process did not end until the final canonization; the book was altered in a few ways and with small changes (Wevers 1969:1-11; 22-23; 28-30).

Wevers determines what the discourse of Ezekiel is, and most importantly, he also determines the role of Ezekiel as the speaker. Wevers' distinction between oral and written is very interesting. According to his analysis, the spoken word is more important than the written one since it is more authentic and true. This matter may bring us back to the notion of the main voice that is prior to the written word. Derrida has demonstrated how this process springs from western logocentrism and from the need to create a hegemonic authority, and to actually establish the voice of the commentator more than the voice in the text (p. 104).

This process continues with Zimmerli (1979) who asks the same questions as others before him: 'Can we still recognize in the book of Ezekiel the oral, spoken word of the prophet, or is the book a piece of latter literal work? (Zimmerli 1979:68 my emphasis).' Zimmerli distinguishes between different types of utterances, one that was intended for the ear and one for writing. Two beats hammer like rhythm can be identified as an oral utterance; conclusions and descriptive verses such as the death of Ezekiel's wife (24.18) must be regarded as a written utterance, hence we must treat the book as a final end of an editorial process'. Zimmerli argues that Ezekiel worked during the sixth century BCE but the formation of his book is very complex and was not created only by him but also by 'The School of Ezekiel'. His attempt to find the basis of the text while examining other versions of it led him to assume three different stages of redaction:

1. Oral prophecies.
2. Written prophecies by Ezekiel himself.

3. Redactions, omissions, supplements and many repetitions, some by the prophet, some by the school of Ezekiel.

According to Zimmerli, Ezekiel might have even known about his school that explained and broadened his message, and that his prophecies in 18; 33.1-9; 10-20, are different than the other prophecies, and are influenced by this school. Zimmerli coined this process with two terms: *Nachinterpretation*, later interpretation, and *Fortschreibung*, an ongoing writing. The meaning of these two terms is that the message of Ezekiel has different supplements which grow from the text itself; a final redactor rearranged the process and sealed the book (Zimmerli 1979:68-74).

Zimmerli breaks any possibility of a one coherent authorship, as Driver claimed, and showed in a very detailed manner that the book was formed by many people over many years, taking the diachronic method to its extreme. What is this school of Ezekiel if not Zimmerli himself or anyone who engages in reading/writing it? 'It needs still further study in order to work out more fully the features of this "School of Ezekiel"' writes Zimmerli (1979:70). The features of this school can be found in over a hundred and twenty years of research, in the *Fortschreibung* and *Nachinterpretation* that relentlessly create a writer, kill him and then create an editor just to kill him again. This continuous reading of Ezekiel might have been invented in ancient times as Zimmerli assumed, nonetheless it is fully functioning now, in our days, giving the book of Ezekiel new meanings and supplements, closed with an 'academic' seal. This seal makes it almost impossible to read and comprehend the book without the intervention of the 'Modern School of Ezekiel' that no biblical researcher, or reader can escape or neglect, thus leaving any postmodern researcher or reader a very narrow window of self-reading and interpretation. The reader's self is trapped in a process of supplementarity in which every interpretation is originated in

the so called ‘source’, a logos that Zimmerli and his like create, control, and constitute their supremacy according to it. The oral word, the so-called authentic one that Zimmerli speaks of, is the written word. No oral word can exist without its written form. In fact, Ezekiel himself could not have existed without these written words, in which the reader takes part in his construction. It is time to admit that the ‘School of Ezekiel’ is not an unknown writer and redactor but could also have been Hannaniah, son of Hezekiah, Zimmerli and his colleagues, Rabbis, Priests, the different churches, and even the Zionist movement, or anyone who reads this book – that is to say: You and I.

Eichrodt (1970) states that the book is a product of complex editing and assumes that it is built mainly by two unities: oracles against the nations and oracles against Judah. The dates in the book construct the preliminary base, and to that base other units were introduced and filled up the gaps. At a later stage, different units were moved from their place in order to form a better and more coherent reading sequence (Eichrodt 1970:18-22). Eichrodt may not have introduced a school of thinking but he did, like the rest of the researchers, pinpoint an origin, and by doing so, created a writer, an ideology, and an intention.

Greenberg (1983) seeks to go against the grain and not to examine the book of Ezekiel as a product of a diachronic process, but as a synchronic one. He criticizes modern researchers by stating that they are altering the message of the prophet by deciding if an oracle is a pure Ezekielien one or not, and eventually asks: ‘What point is there in commenting upon a text whose authenticity has not been established?’ (Greenberg 1983: 19). Instead, Greenberg appeals to favor the MT to any other version of the text and to read it carefully. The critic must be humble ‘curb all temptations to impose his antecedent judgment of the text...’ (Greenberg 1983: 21).

The Critic must stay loyal to the MT since it remains unsound, and its literary meaning is superior to other versions. In other words, Greenberg offers to end the battle and chase off the authenticity of the text, accept it as is, and understand this text with this humble acceptance. Greenberg concludes his call to treat the book of Ezekiel differently by stating: [the] ‘book of Ezekiel is the product of art and intelligent design... A consistent trend of thought expressed in a distinctive style has emerged, giving the impression of an individual mind of powerful and passionate proclivities’ (Greenberg 1983: 26). Greenberg took us back to Driver’s time and reconstituted the author, this time he speaks Hebrew. In my view, we can also see a battle between Greenberg, a Jewish commentator who prefers the Hebrew and Jewish version of the text and the rest of the Christian commentators who might treat the Hebrew Bible differently than they will treat the NT.⁷

Greenberg’s point of view was pushed to its limit in Kasher’s (2004) commentary. Kasher claims that the book was written by Ezekiel, and edited by the people of the Great Knesset, and we should treat it as one unity that was written mostly, if not in its entirety by the prophet who lived in the sixth century BCE (Kasher 2004: 27). Thus swinging the power of interpretation to a clear Jewish point of view, and demonstrating again the political power of biblical scholarship.

Joyce (2007a) claims that Greenberg is influenced by his religious and Rabbinical background and argues that there are cracks in the ‘holistic’ approach of Greenberg, but he also questions the diachronic approach of Zimmerli and seeks to find a middle way between the two approaches (Joyce 2007a: 13-16). He offers to choose different ideas according to the theological/literals questions.

⁷ See also Levenson 1984: 210-217.

Block (1997) reviews the different approaches on the rendition of the book, however, he does not elaborate on them. Instead, he gives seven stages to the process of the formation of the book:

1. The prophetic event: the prophet receives a message from God.
2. The rhetorical event: the prophet transmits that message to his or her audience.
3. The transcriptional event: the oracle is written down.
4. The narratorial event: the account of the circumstances of the prophetic event is added to the transcribed oracle, creating a complete literary unit.
5. The compilation event: the literary units are gathered.
6. The editorial event: the collection is organized and the individual oracles are stitched together by means of connective and correlative notes, resulting in a more or less coherent book.
7. The nominal event: a formal heading is added to the book, identifying the prophet, the circumstances of ministry, and the genre of the collection.

According to Block, Ezekiel collected his own oracles that he presented to the exiles and was involved in most parts of its editing (Block 1997:17-40). By so doing, Block adopts the one mind paradigm, and grounding Ezekiel as a historical figure. This view of Ezekiel will influence much of Block's commentary and I will further elaborate on this matter in the analysis of Ezekiel's sign-acts (p. 105).

The debate about the authenticity of Ezekiel will probably continue, since one cannot interpret an ideology without first addressing the school or the person behind it. Whenever the writer died, the redactor was born and thrived, bringing us back to the endless debate about the death of the writer and the birth of the reader as was presented in the introduction (p. 40). Moreover, determining the existence of the

writer charges the commentator with the ability to control the discourse, to lock it and to acquire political powers over the discourse, the truths and the way we perceive the so-called reality. Moore and Sherwood appeal to the reader in their book *The Invention of the Biblical Scholar* to change the way we read the Bible:

What biblical studies most stands to gain, and needs to gain, we would argue, is a certain turn—a certain return—to philosophy. If Theorists have been staging a turn to religion, and even theology, to unsettle and spook philosophy, then Theory-inclined biblical scholars ought to stage a return to philosophy via Theory to unsettle and spook the disciplinary status quo, philosophy being another repressed element that figured prominently in the formative phase of the discipline, as we also show (Moore and Sherwood 2011:xi).

Philosophy, or to be more exact, post-structuralism is the perspective in which I would like to reflect upon and analyze the book of Ezekiel. In this manner, there is a need to discuss several methods and approaches, some of which have never been applied to the biblical text before (such as masochism, biopolitics, panotopism, and other forms of technologies of power). These technologies or technics allow the manipulation and the establishment of the reader subject and signifies the sense of intervention.

The book is divided differently than biblical research. The main reason for this division is the attempt to trace the creation and constitution of the Israelite subject, from trauma and a broken subjectivity to a full a strong powerful Israelite identity.

The units are:

- 1-14: The ordering of the discourse and the construction of the reader as a neutral site.
- 15-23: The creation of the social body of the Israelite and the designation of the Male Reader.
- 24-39: The creation of new Israelite entity, the defining of its borders, and the end of the process of the production of the new Israelite's self-male.

40-48: The birth of the Pan – Israel, the constitution of the nation of Israel as a blue print for future political use.

2.3 Discourse, Truth and Subject

...Man had never found himself in the presence of his own “nature.” At the heart of the human sciences was not to be found the “human essence”. If the promise of the human sciences had been to allow us to discover man, they certainly hadn’t maintained it. But as a general cultural experience, it was a matter rather of the constitution of a new “subjectivity” through the operation of a “reduction” of the human subject into an object of knowledge [connaissance] (Foucault 1991:123).

Foucault writes: ‘You do not have towards yourself the same kind of relationship when you constitute yourself as a political subject when you vote, and work, and when you try to fulfill your desire in sexual relationship’ (Bernauer and Rasmussen 1988:10). Instead of searching for the essence of the human being, Foucault suggests to understand the processes that take place in different societies and how in these relationships the subjects are formed. The base of these relationships, the mechanism of them, if you will, is power.

Power

Since Foucault did not have a full and coherent theory on power in one book rather in many books, essays and interviews, my summary of Foucault’s definition of power is a synthesis of his works.

...Power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society...there is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives. But this does not mean that it results from the choice or decision of an individual subject... (Foucault 1978:93).

Power relationships are everywhere; the condition of social relationships is the existence of the form of power within these relationships (a doctor and his patient, a teacher and his student, a prophet and his people). These relationships, which are

created by power in the first place, are what preserve the power in its current forms. Rather than seeing power only as a violent oppressing force, he sees it as a productive force that gives rise to new forms of resistance and power. Foucault opposes the notion that institutions hold the ability to subjugate the individual, leaving the individual totally passive in the matrix of power relations; and claims that power is not actually a noun but can be seen as a verb, a strategy rather than a possession. Therefore, individuals are not only subjected beings, but in some ways, they are the place, the location that power is exercised and they may take an active role in it, transfer it to others, interpret it, and enforce it. Power needs to be seen as something that has to be constantly performed rather than being achieved. In *History of Sexuality* Volume I, Foucault writes about confession as a practice, intended to subjugate the individual. He analyzes the formation of discourse about sex and argues that this discourse is a result of a combination of the priestly confession and techniques that are linked to the era of enlightenment, all fueled by the will to know. The confession, in which the confessor reveals his deepest secrets, is the condition of the ability of the priest to fulfill his role in the power relations between them. Through the confession the priest guarantees the afterlife and the salvation of the confessor, and by doing so he creates a new identity for the confessor by creating new truths about him. According to Foucault this practice has been widely utilized in the western world since the 19th century and this form of power has characterized all systems and institutions. He stated that man who was once defined as a political animal is now a confessing animal.

Foucault never really examined the Bible or the biblical era, but his ideas are significant for my own method and approach to the analysis of the book of Ezekiel in two ways. The first, the confession and the production of knowledge is a process that

can be seen in the book of Ezekiel, a process which I would like to trace and deconstruct. Second, the Bible as we know it, at least for the secular and academic world was born in the nineteenth century, in the era that the medieval age's religious confession became a knowledge production institution. One cannot separate modern perceptions of the Bible and the way modern individuals read the Bible, from modern biblical research perspectives. When the Israelites are asked to repent and confess, who is this Israelite, and who exactly is this community? Is it the authentic community that was born from the burning ashes of Egypt and subsequently saved by God, or was it the community that was created in the minds of modern researchers and is now a part of the reader's consciousness? Was Ezekiel 'really' Ezekiel of the sixth century BCE or was he born in the nineteenth Century, a repackaged product that fulfills a historical end? These questions are very important and need to be examined before one approaches the Hebrew Bible, due to its political, cultural, and historical value. One cannot read the text without understanding its impact and imprints that reside in our minds in this process of reading. As a reader, I must try to clean as much as possible the preexisting epistemological conditions, such as: A man, Jewish, Israeli, Zionist and so forth. And by doing so, I need to aspire to find the different discursive processes that construct bodies and self, rather than seeking my own.

The Book of Ezekiel as a Dispositif

The dispositif is a set of varied elements that contain almost everything, abstract and physical, from buildings via institutions to philosophical ideas. The dispositif is the network that connects between the different elements, and is always located in the relation to power. In his works, Foucault has shown how in a disciplined society, the different types of dispositif are designated to create a series of

practices, ideas and discourse; and of course a body of knowledge, a docile body, a human who becomes a subject. The dispositif is what allows the bodies to assume identity and 'freedom'. In short, the dispositif is a 'machine' that forms the process of the subjugation of bodies. There is not just one dispositif but many different ones. The dispositif, then, can be regarded not as a technology of power or institution per se, but as the third element. It is the location in which the technologies of power function, and where the human, the body, becomes a subject that is not only docile but a part of the great body of knowledge. It is the element in which the technologies of power affect the subject, where he learns how to govern his self and obtain a sense of freedom, independence and identity.

The book of Ezekiel may be perceived as a dispositif on its own, and as a tool that transcribes the human creating him into a subject with a sense of identity. This book allows the reader to confess; and its role as a dispositif is to produce a new sense of subjectivity through this confession, or, in this case, the subscription process.

The Panopticon

In the book *To Discipline and Punish* (1995) and in the interview 'The Eye of Power' (1980a) Foucault discusses a tool for implementing power and regulating the individual – the Panopticon. The Panopticon is an architectural device that was originally invented by Jeremy Bentham in the eighteenth century, as an instrument to supervise prisoners, and to cut costs on guards. Foucault interprets this tool as an instrument designed to give the inmates a constant state of consciousness of visibility. He never sees his watcher, nor does he know anything about him; what the inmate does know is that his life is under ceaseless scrutiny, he is seen but never sees, and the watcher sees but is never seen. This highly efficient tool can spread power in a homogenous way. When the individual is always seen, he is always in the process of

confessing, and continuously thinking about his actions, thus allowing power to be implemented with minimum or no violence.

To conclude this line, Foucault writes on diverse technologies that attribute to the sense of subjectivity. The subject does not preexist and is not manipulated to be something else, and controlled by institutions, but a creation of political, historical, and cultural ends. Foucault treats the panopticon as a political technology of power relations in society, a technology that he names: Panotopism.

The Âme

In *To Discipline and Punish* Foucault writes:

The man described for us, whom we are invited to free, is already in himself the effect of a subjection much more profound than himself. A 'soul' inhabits him and brings him to existence, which is itself, a factor in the mastery that power exercises over the body. The soul is the effect and instrument of a political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body (Foucault 1995:31 my emphasis).

This definition for the term soul may provoke quite a few scholars, but in my point of view it is the axis of this entire work. Overthrowing the western Christian notion in which the soul is pure and trapped in the body, Foucault claims that the soul is the tool that imprisons the neutral body. This soul is the total sum of the technologies of power that are manipulated on the body and generate the subject; it is the site of the dispositif of power and the tool to control the body. Moreover, it is not a prison into which the body enters against its will, but a prison into which the body enters out of its own free will so it could subject its self and create a sense of meaning.

There is a great risk of confusing the Foucauldian term 'soul' with the general theological aspect of the term. In order to avoid such confusion I will use from now on the word *âme* to describe the Foucauldian term 'soul' that is quoted here.

An Israelite is not Born an Israelite but Becomes one: Performativity and Israelites

Butler's works especially on citation, performativity, gender, and subject, may help greatly the analysis of the book of Ezekiel. Butler depends on the phrase that Beauvoir coined: *On ne naît pas femme: on le devient* 'One is not born but becomes, a woman' (Beauvoir 1971:281), which was introduced in *The Second Sex Part I*.

For Butler a woman is a term in process, a becoming:

If there is something right in Beauvoir's claim that one is not born, but rather becomes a woman, it follows that woman itself is a term in process, a becoming, a constructing that cannot rightfully be said to originate or to end. As an ongoing discursive practice, it is open to intervention and resignification. Even when gender seems to congeal into the most reified forms, the 'congealing' is itself an insistent and insidious practice, sustained and regulated by various social means. It is, for Beauvoir, never possible finally to become a woman, as if there were a telos that governs the process of acculturation and construction (Butler 1999:33).

One of the aspects of Gender Trouble is the attack of Butler, following Beauvoir on the description that gender congeals into a form that makes us think that it has been there all along. Butler wants to change this notion and to say that a woman, or a gender is a process with no end and no beginning and is never a frozen image. That is to say that gender is something we Do and not something we Are.

In the introduction to her book *Bodies that Matter*, Butler further explains the term 'performativity' that she had created in her book Gender Trouble:

Performativity must be understood not as a singular or deliberate "act," but, rather, as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names. What will, I hope, become clear in what follows is that the regulatory norms of "sex" work in a performative fashion to constitute the materiality of bodies and, more specifically, to materialize the body's sex, to materialize sexual difference in the service of the consolidation of the heterosexual imperative...the understanding of performativity not as the act by which a subject brings into being

what she/he names, but, rather, as that reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates and constrains (Butler 1993:2).

To better explain sexual performativity, Butler uses the philosophical term *interpellation*, the process by which ideology addresses the pre-ideological individual, and produces him or her as a subject proper. As an example, she writes on the moment of the birth of a child in which the baby turns from 'it' into a 'he' or 'she'. This moment of naming is the interpellation of the born child and the 'it' is 'girl' or 'boy'. But that naming does not stop at birth, it is only the departure point to the girl and the initial interpellation of gender will be reiterated by different authorities and institutions throughout the cultural political life of that girl and a woman. This process, argues Butler is what constitutes the human but not only, it also constitutes the inhuman, the boundaries and the exclusions that haunt the human, the margins that will not allow the human to articulate itself outside the norms of the interpellation. Butler draws the idea of interpellation from an essay by Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological Apparatuses' (2008), where he uses the term to describe the 'hailing' of a person into her or his social and ideological position by an authority figure. His example was a policeman that hails a man in the street, 'you, hey there!' The moment the man turns around is the moment he becomes a subject. The policeman interpellated the man as a subject, and by the man's action of turning around, he accepts his position.

In this preliminary remark and these concrete illustrations, I only wish to point out that you and I are always already subjects, and as such constantly practice the rituals of ideological recognition, which guarantee for us that we are indeed concrete, individual, distinguishable and (naturally) irreplaceable subjects. The writing I am currently executing and the reading you are currently performing are also in this respect rituals of ideological recognition, including the 'obviousness' with which the 'truth' or 'error' of my reflections may impose itself on you (Althusser 1971:172-3).

Hailing or interpellating does not end, of course, in the street but takes place in all the spheres of political, cultural existence.

2.4 Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Other elements in the book of Ezekiel that need to be discussed are the traumatic state of exile, the exiles, and the persona of Ezekiel. Whether the players in the book are historical entities or not, the analysis cannot exempt this factor – a destruction of a home, the city, and the nation itself is a traumatic event.

Traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life. Unlike commonplace misfortunes, traumatic events generally involve threats to life or bodily integrity, or a close personal encounter with violence and death. They confront human beings with the extremities of helplessness and terror, and evoke the responses of catastrophe. According to the Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry, the common denominator of psychological trauma is a feeling of “intense fear, helplessness, loss of control, and threat of annihilation”(Herman 1997:34).

Bowen, whose commentary of the book of Ezekiel is based upon the notion of trauma, calls to further examine the text according to trauma studies, while connecting it to the traumatic events of 9/11. She defines trauma as extreme stress, while focusing on the lasting psychological wounds that are manifested in two elements: First, powerlessness – an individual is unable to influence the occurrence or development of the event. Second, disruption – the situation crudely disrupts the course of daily existence. One is cut off from a previously secure environment and the world no longer makes sense.⁸

Bowen writes:

Given Babylonian conquest, corporately and individually Judeans were powerless to influence the course of events. To call the exile a “disruption” is an

⁸ Bowen relies also on the studies by Allen 1995; Figley and Kleber 1995.

understatement. The Davidic dynasty was nullified and the king ignobly taken away. The city of Jerusalem and the Temple, the place of YHWH's assured presence, were razed. Citizens were forcibly exiled from the land that was the foundation of their identity. Their world no longer made sense, raising profound questions of faith: (1) was YHWH not powerful? and (2) was YHWH not faithful? The experience of exile meets this definition of a traumatic situation (Bowen 2010:xviii).

Some trauma theories see the element of disruption as the key to understanding the mental scheme of trauma. The subject holds models of and beliefs about the world and how it should function, trauma destroys these notions and forces the subject to question his/her basic beliefs (Janoff-Bulman 1985:18-25). In order for the subject to cope and recover he/she reestablishes a conceptual system that can offer a better way to face the changes of the models to see the world.

Bowen implements these theories on the text itself and writes: 'In Ezekiel, Israel's mental schemes are primarily expressed in theological categories: the inviolability of Jerusalem, the assumption that covenant guarantees YHWH's protection, and the honor of God's people. It is possible to view the book as an attempt to come to terms with these shattered assumptions by establishing an alternative conceptual system' (Bowen 2010:xix). Bowen's line is refreshing and highly necessary in the research on the book of Ezekiel; it provides us with better tools and understanding of the text and sheds new light on this powerful discursive tool. However, the basic intention of my research is not to focus on the historical events of the physical exilic community, nor on Ezekiel itself, but on the effects of the text on the reader. In this light, the reader is not traumatized, since he/she did not witness the trauma or take part in the traumatic event. To become a traumatized subject, the reader must apply the trauma as his/her own personal memory, while his/her sense of selfhood needs to connote the name Israel.

The reader is not only the target in which technologies of power are being manipulated, but also the one that uses this book to establish a self; in this case – an Israelite self. Hence, the reader, even if not in a state of PTSD, is embracing the trauma by creating a memory and locating his/her self in that history. This act makes the history in the book of Ezekiel an everlasting event that always exists in his political *âme*. The acceptance of the new Israelite self and the taking part in this constitution is the way for the reader to recover from the trauma. The process of recovery is the process that the reader partakes in which several technologies of power are inflicted upon and shapes the reader from R^N to R^I , (the index and the explanation of the different signs of the reader will be given shortly). On that note, we can say that the Israelite identity is in an eternal state of trauma and recovery.

The Creation of Memory

The reader, who is the target of this research, and assumes the trauma depicted in the book of Ezekiel, first needs to be identified with the historical event of the book, hence, to produce a memory. Halbwachs writes:

We preserve memories of each epoch in our lives, and these are continually reproduced; through them, as by a continual relationship, a sense of our identity is perpetuated. But precisely because these memories are repetitions, because they are successively engaged in very different systems of notions, at different periods of our lives, they have lost the form and the appearance they once had... One should rather compare them to those stones one finds fitted in certain Roman houses, which have been used as materials in very ancient buildings: their antiquity cannot be established by their form or their appearance but only by the fact that they still show the effaced vestiges of old characters. . . (Halbwachs 1992:47).

Memory is what allows the subject, to identify his self with a certain group without feeling necessarily trapped or imprisoned in it. In other words, memory, or the production of memory is an element in the production process of an identity – memory even though it may seem to be personal is social. ‘In this way, collective

memory not only reflects the past but also shapes present reality by providing people with understandings and symbolic frameworks that enable them to make sense of the world. Because the past is frequently used as the mirror in which we search for an explanation and remedy to our present-day problems, memory'(Misztal 2003:13). Organized social memory is designated to ensure and root the social and political order. When memory functions as a bank of myths it can be utilized to invent a tradition and to establish social order and knowledge production for a specific political end.

Pierre Nora discusses the differences between memory and history in the modern age and argues that memory and history appear as oppositions:

Memory is life, borne by living societies founded in its name. It remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived. History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer (Nora 1989:8).

While memory is considered more mythological and personal, history is an intellectual scientific production that claims universal truth and authority. Nora offers a new concept to understand the perception of history and memory, called *Lieux de Memoire*, sites of memory. The site of memory is constructed at the intersection where memory loses its affects and becomes 'a reconstituted object beneath the gaze of critical history' (Nora 1989:12). This moment bears within a big wave of historical research consolidated with a heritage. A matter, showed in the review of the biblical research of Ezekiel (p. 50).

These *lieux de memoire* fundamentally remain, the ultimate embodiments of a memorial consciousness that has barely survived in a historical age that calls out for memory because it has abandoned it...they mark the rituals of a society without ritual; integral particularities in a society that levels particularity; signs of distinction and of group membership in a society that tends to recognize individuals

only as identical and equal... We buttress our identities upon such bastions, but if what they defended were not threatened, there would be no need to build them...if history did not besiege memory, deforming and transforming it, penetrating and petrifying it, there would be no lieux de memoire. Indeed, it is this very push and pull that produces lieux de memoire—moments of history torn away from the movement of history, then returned; no longer quite life, not yet death, like shells on the shore when the sea of living memory has receded (Nora 1989:1).

Continuing this line, the book of Ezekiel can be seen as a book that captures an event that has become a site of memory by later readers, from Hannaniah, son of Hezekiah to modern biblical researchers, who in their turn, have tried to freeze the book in a cold historical shell. The madeleine of Proust in the masterpiece *In Search of Lost Times* was the writer's cure to his unease and his self-discomfort since it gave him his memories again, hence his selfhood:

But when from a long-distant past nothing subsists, after the people are dead, after the things are broken and scattered, taste and smell alone, more fragile but more enduring, more immaterial, more persistent, more faithful, remain poised a long time, like souls, remembering, waiting, hoping, amid the ruins of all the rest; and bear unflinchingly, in the tiny and almost impalpable drop of their essence, the vast structure of recollection (Proust 1992:63-4).

Indeed, this is the book of Ezekiel, an everlasting site of memory, with its own unique smell, a gate to a past that was never the reader's. It is an imagined past that the reader relives, takes part in the trauma and recovery process to be reconstituted as a new Israelite subject. Just as a war memorial functions as a site of memory that facilitates the production of an historical narrative of a certain group, so does the book of Ezekiel. It functioned as a trauma and recovery site for the reader in the making, and later became an archive for the modern Israelite reader whether Jewish, Christian or Secular.

In other words, the performativity process as was presented in Butler's analysis (p. 65), of the Israelite, is the remembering of things past, and taking part in

the traumatic event while wanting to recover from it.⁹ Hence, the focus will shift to the reader, its construction, the different technologies that are used in the formation of the reader, and the identification process of the reader. What do we mean when we say Israel/Israelite and how is this meaning being produced?

2.5 The Reader

The process of assembling the meaning of the text is not a private one, for although it does mobilize the subjective disposition of the reader, it does not lead to day-dreaming but to the fulfillment of conditions that have already been structured in the text. Herein lies the significance of the over determination of the text: it is not merely a given textual quality, but a structure that enables the reader to break out of his accustomed framework of conventions, so allowing him to formulate that which has been unleashed by the text (Iser 1978:49-50).

Iser in his book, *The Act of Reading*, discusses the role of the reader and the connection between the reader and the text. According to Iser the text is dynamic and not frozen and has a potential meaning that the reader is supposed to decipher and identify his/her self accordingly. However, the reading process is two-ways and the meaning is not completely relied upon for the reader's intention. In this case, the reader does not necessarily have a set of tools or detailed instructions on how to decipher the text, and each text is unfamiliar to the reader since the potential meaning of the work has yet to be discovered. Thus, the reader must discern the meaning of the text by interacting with it. The text has different structures that guide the reader to understand it while reading. However, these structures do not provide the meaning of the text on their own. Through this interaction, the reader will create a meaning out of the potential meanings uncovered in the texts. The reader is created while reading the text and does not only interpret the text but is being interpreted by it, in other words –

⁹ More on memory and performances in the Hebrew Bible, see Brenner and Polak, 2009.

the identification process of the reader is rooted in the meaning that the reader is realizing in its construction, whether the reader invents a new meaning or whether it is the so called 'original meaning'.

Since we cannot treat identity as fixed but only a subject that is in a constant identification process (p. 31), referring to the reader without designating the different phases of its identification process will be somehow lacking. Therefore, the reader will be divided into a few different categories that will signify each step in the identification process. There is a need to stress that the identification process of the subject reader is not linear, nor diachronic. The process is always in the making and the subject reader can be a few entities at the same time. The reader can split into different categories according to the different technologies used in the book. As of this point and throughout the dissertation, terms such as subject and 'I' will be replaced by the following signs:

R^N – The Neutral Reader

R^M – The masculine Reader

R^{MF} – The masculine feminine reader

R^I – The Israelite Reader

Ezekiel - Main Role

Another aspect that needs to be taken into consideration is the persona of Ezekiel himself. The book of Ezekiel does not only tell the story of the exile, trauma and recovery, but also of the prophet himself: his trauma, sadness, sense of loss, even fears, bitterness and resistance, and of course its recovery. Who is Ezekiel? Not the historical Ezekiel that might have lived at a certain time, but the persona of this unique and intriguing character. And most importantly, what is the connection between the persona of Ezekiel and the performance of the reader? The persona of

Ezekiel is a traumatized one that tries to save its self from annihilation. It is a persona that functions as a tool for the R who takes part in the constitution of the Israelite self, to identify with; thus, rendering the book of Ezekiel as its process.

To conclude, I treat the trauma in the book of Ezekiel as a cultural identity rupture that ignited a violent process of reproducing another identity. This process is so profound that the exile and the trauma of the exiles are no longer historical factors in the story of Israel, but an element in the existence of the identity that is interpellated as Israel. In this book, trauma is the memory that the R assumes. Once the R assumes the trauma and the traumatic event, he begins the process of recovery that is also the process of recovery of the persona of Ezekiel.

Part I. Chapters 1-14.

The Designation of Ezekiel and the Construction of the 'R'

Part I. Chapters 1-14: The Designation of Ezekiel and the

Construction of the ‘R’

3.1 Chapters 1.1-3.15: Order

Ezek. 1.1 In the thirtieth year, on the fifth day of the fourth month, when I was in the community of exiles by the Chebar Canal, the heavens opened and I saw visions of God.

1.2 On the fifth day of the month — it was the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin.

1.3 the word of the LORD came to the priest Ezekiel son of Buzi, by the Chebar Canal, in the land of the Chaldeans. And the hand of the LORD came upon him there.

The opening section presents a few matters that are the cornerstones of the Ezekielien discourse. The book begins just like other prophetic books with a *superscription* (1.1-3),¹⁰ a short account of the author, date, and subject. However, the superscription differs from other opening verses in other prophetic books in a few significant aspects. Firstly it indicates a specific geographical location and a very precise date. Secondly, 1.1 is in the first person singular, as opposed to 1.3 that describes the name of Ezekiel’s Father and Ezekiel’s position (or maybe his father’s position) in the third person, while 1.2 pinpoints a date that in many ways seems irrelevant or peculiar.

The explanation of the first date in 1.1, as has been offered by many, is Ezekiel’s birthday. The thirtieth year is the thirtieth year of the life of the prophet himself, an assumption that may make sense if we refer this verse to Num. 4.30 which denotes the date in which the priest is eligible to assume office (For instace: Block 1997:83; Joyce 2007a:65). The second date in 1.2 raises more questions especially in

¹⁰Cf: Isa. 1.1; Joel 1.1; Obad. 1; Mic. 1.1; Nah. 1.1; Hab. 1.1; Zeph. 1.1; Mal. 1.1.

regard to the previous date: Why have a second date, and what is the meaning of this date, especially in regard to king Jehoiachin who ruled for only three months? The main solution that has been offered by different scholars is that 1.2-3 are different from 1.1, are a later insertion to the text, and reflect the work of an editor (Zimmerli, Cross, and Baltzer 1979; Block 1997:80-82). Zimmerli adds that 1.2 is not to be separated from 1.1, and can by no means be linked to 1.3a, since 1.2 is an extended interpretation of 1.1, and 1.3 must be regarded as a type of book heading in a pure form like other prophetic books such as Hos 1.1; Joel 1.1; Mic. 1.1; Zeph. 1.1 (Zimmerli, Cross, and Baltzer 1979). This book heading shapes not only the frame of the book but also the message this book conveys.

The first geographic location בְּתוֹךְ־הַגּוֹלָה, ‘in exile’ (1.1) can be treated as a general location and tells us that Ezekiel is not in Judah any longer. The second, נָהָר כְּבָר, ‘the Chebar Canal’ has been treated as a simple geographical location in most commentaries, and commentators tried to locate the place and to answer the question as to whether Ezekiel was there while the heavens opened, or if it was just a general indication of the region in which the Judeans had settled. Zimmerli and Greenberg discuss the custom of Judeans who tended to pray next to rivers or canals in Babylon, as can also be seen in Ps. 137, and assumed that the Judeans saw rivers and sources of water as pure spatial locations that allowed them to pray and worship in the impure land of Babylon (Zimmerli 1979:115, Greenberg 1983:40-1). Block concluded this matter by saying that ‘it is only a geographical note’ (Block 1997: 81). The main problem that has occupied the commentators is the jump from first person singular in 1.1, to a vague form and uncertainty in 1.2 and to a clear third person singular in 1.3. This jump was attributed to the redactor. Block argued that the editor inserted the verse about Ezekiel’s position, his father’s name, and the geographic location, since

the book of Ezekiel is mostly written in first person singular and there is a need to identify Ezekiel as the prophet. In other words, the editor wanted us to be sure that this is indeed the book of Ezekiel (Block 1997:78). Greenberg, in defense of his theory that the book of Ezekiel was written by Ezekiel himself, offered a different approach and built a somewhat logical line: Since the date in 1.2 explains the date in 1.1 in terms of the era of Jehoiachin's exile, then there is a jump in dates between 1.1 and 1.2-3 and the prophet basically moved from one era to another, taking no account of the change: 'One can avoid this embarrassment by supposing the prophet to have been his own editor and the author of the explanation in vss. 2-3 – extraordinary but not impossible' (Greenberg 1983:39). Greenberg's logical line may not be fully clear or fully supported, since he has no proof, not even philological proof. However it offers a different perspective on the problem that these three verses raise. Block's claim, that the editor inserted a verse so that the readers may understand that this is Ezekiel speaking and not just anyone else, is interesting in the manner that the first reference to the book is as a book and not as oral sayings that were gathered together to arrange a book.

In my opinion 1.2 does not constitute a problem; rather it functions as a bridge between 1.1 and 1.3. What if the book of Ezekiel is first a book, a text? And since it is a text, it was written to the R that is reading it right now. This R is constantly being neglected by modern researchers, as if it was just an empty shell, an unimportant mortal. However, the R needs a metaphysical point that will validate its construction and identification. To use the definition of the Introduction: The R needs a logos and logocentrist thinking that will be able to construct himself. This logos is carefully constructed in the first few chapters, and specifically in 1.1-3. Treating the book of Ezekiel as a book may change the way we read it. It is no longer a collection of

prophecies added together, but a guide, a *biblical* book, a book that was designated to confer a political meaning and a sense of self. The book of Ezekiel, more than a historical book, is a transcription of trauma and recovery that from now, the R will assume and will subjectify by it accordingly.

I am the Voice

Two persons speak in these three verses, a first-person singular whose name is not known until the end of the unit, and a narrator. But must they be two different entities? The first verse opens with an unknown person. This person is placed in a certain geographical location, and a certain year. The person does not have a name yet, but he speaks, and says ‘I’ while seeing visions of Yhwh. It is only in 1.3 that the person receives a name, a father, and a position – all the parameters to become an authority.

Who is this narrator that enters here for the first time and will never be seen again, and what is his position? In order to answer these questions, let us refer to 1.28-2.1. In 1.28-2.1 Ezekiel hears a voice, but first he sees something, the image of כְּבוֹד יְהוָה, the glory of Yhwh. The word כְּבוֹד in Hebrew derives from the root heavy, in this connotation, the ‘heaviness’ of Yhwh, but when applied to royalty and divinity it is the sheer heaviness of the glory. In this case the glory of Yhwh could also be a mode of presence of Yhwh and a form of personification (See also Block 1997:115; Joyce 2007a: 74).¹¹ Only after Ezekiel sees does he hear a voice; it is not clear whether this is actually the voice of Yhwh, or a voice without a direct authority, like the voice in 1.2. However, if we continue to 2.3 we can safely assume that Yhwh

¹¹ Out of thirty-seven occurrences in the HB, the combination כְּבוֹד יְהוָה occurs ten times in the book of Ezekiel. HALOT treat this term as glory, power and authority and also connected with manifestation of light (HALOT 1996:456), so does BDB (1996:459). I will not elaborate on this topic and the different aspects of the term kabod of Yhwh since it is not the concern of this analysis. For a discussion on the word kabod, see: Carol 1982; Allen 1993; Keck 2011.

speaks to him since Yhwh tells him that he is sending him to the people of Israel ‘*who have rebelled against Me*’ (2.3b). This voice commands Ezekiel to stand up on his two feet but not before it hails him and gives him his attribute **בֶּן־אָדָם**. The form **אָדָם־בֶּן** appears in the book of Ezekiel ninety three times, and only once, in 24.24, does Yhwh say Ezekiel’s name to the people of Israel, making Ezekiel’s name a reference to the prophet but never as a direct call to him. In comparison, Yhwh called other prophets by their own personal names (Amos 7.8; 8.2; Jer. 1.11; 24.3).

Six times the verb to see in the Qal stem, **רָאָה** and twice the verb to hear in Qal, **שָׁמַע** appear in Ezekiel’s vision. He sees the visions of Yhwh, animals and fire and he hears voices, in the beginning, voices of animals but eventually the voice of Yhwh himself. But to whom does he refer? At this point, Ezekiel’s vision does not necessarily address the ‘physical Israelites’. He does not speak and describe his vision to someone that is physically in front of him, but actually to the one who reads it.

Bowen writes:

Often those who experience trauma are “unable to tell a coherent narrative, with a beginning, middle and end” (van der Kolk and Fisler 1995, 517). In different words, simply narrating what has happened is sometimes impossible for a trauma victim. Ezekiel’s language sounds like someone who, although he recalls isolated images, is not yet able to give a coherent account of a traumatic experience. It is perhaps a surprising, unfamiliar, and uncomfortable notion to consider a divine encounter as “traumatic.” There is a tendency in American society to “tame the text,” or perhaps to “tame” experiences of God to make them seem friendly and centering. Ezekiel pushes readers to consider how an encounter with the divine can be terrifying, traumatic, and decentering. In this opening scene God overwhelms Ezekiel. Yet the prophet survives to tell of his experience – however disjointed it may be. Perhaps this hints at the exiles’ future. They too will be overwhelmed—by God and by the Babylonian army. Ezekiel’s experience may give them hope that though they are driven to their knees, they too will survive to tell the tale (Bowen 2010:6).

Bowen’s perspective is important to the understanding that the book of Ezekiel is a traumatic account. However, her viewpoint relies on historical facts.

Whether the exiles partake in the vision or not, is less of interest here, since one cannot really tell what actually happened. In this light I would like to refer to the persona of Ezekiel and its connection to the R. The persona of Ezekiel does not only push the R to consider how an encounter with Yhwh might be terrifying, but also connects the present R to the events in the book and invites the R to assume the trauma of the prophet and to create a memory. In other words, Ezekiel speaks now to the R himself.

Zimmerli writes, ‘We should not translate Ben Adam as “child of man”, but more as son of man, a general call to a human, as a subject of ruling’ (Zimmerli 1979: 131). Joyce agrees and adds that ‘the use of the address is relational, it is important that the emphasis will not be placed on Ezekiel but on Yhwh himself in keeping him as holy and other’ (Joyce 2007a: 76). In 2.2, רִיחַ comes and lifts Ezekiel on his two feet. The BDB gives seven main different explanations to the word רִיחַ: 1. breath of the mouth or nostrils. 2. Wind. 3. Spirit. 4. Spirit of the living. 5. Spirit as seat of emotion. 6. Moral character. 7. Spirit of God. The word רִיחַ appears eleven times in the entire unit of 1.1-3.24. The word רִיחַ in 1.4 is translated by JPS, KJV, ASV as wind and the rest of the occurrences as spirit. Their linkage between spirit and wind connects Yhwh to nature and increases his terrifying image, rendering him also as danger. However, the translation to spirit is not as clear and conclusive where the word is spirit, and where it is wind might sometimes be determined by theological thinking and sometimes Christian rather than philological analysis. Also, the extensive use of the word and its connection to Yhwh while Ezekiel stands, acknowledges the turbulences connecting Ezekiel with Yhwh and initiates the process of creating Ezekiel into the representative of Yhwh. The extensive use in wind may be treated differently: It gives an air of unease, as if Yhwh himself is not stable, gushing

and rushing and moving the wings of the angels *like the sound of mighty waters, like the sound of Shaddai, a tumult like the din of an army* (1.24).

The trauma account here does not only apply to Ezekiel who transcribed it to the R, but might be of Yhwh himself! This section will be connected to the final ease of Yhwh and the trauma recovery of the R¹ in the analysis of chapter 37 (p. 255)

Block writes, ‘Ezekiel may be a Ben-Adam, “a mere human”, but infused with the רִיחַ he must stand in Yhwh’s presence’ (Block 1997, 115). Ezekiel is no ordinary human but a very unique one. He may be a mere human for Yhwh but he is a hegemonic figure to the R. His words are his tools to construct the R. Moreover, his words are not just his words, since Yhwh himself is lifting Ezekiel. He is infused with him, thus owning the discourse of the sovereign. His persona may be perceived as a symbol (as Yhwh refers to him in 24.24), connecting the R to this sovereign, operating as a mediator, a sign, and a mere human, all at the same time. רִיחַ may also be viewed differently, not necessarily as a spirit per se but also as law, or the Yhwhist speech, as the pivotal point for the Ezekielien discourse. The connection between the רִיחַ and the persona of Ezekiel, that renders Ezekiel as the sole owner of the discourse, may be found in a peculiar use of Hebrew grammar by Yhwh.

Yhwh uses a grammatical structure that is rarely used in the Hebrew Bible outside Ezekiel:¹² אֶדְבַּר אֲתָךְ, 2.1. This form, ‘I will speak you’ in Piel stem, appears only here (and in 3.24b, where Ezekiel says that Yhwh speaks him אֶדְבַּר אֲתָי). The BDB discusses a few different kinds of constructs of the verb ‘to speak’. The closest construct to ‘I speak you’ is דְּבַר ב, in Piel which means I speak in, or I speak with. Or according to the BDB is: ‘instrumental...speak with, by, or by means of a person’

¹² Cf. Jer. 5.5; 35.2. In both places ‘I will speak you’ refers to second person plural, ‘I will speak them’.

(BDB 1996:180-1).¹³ Disregarding this impossible grammatical structure and treating it as we ‘suppose’ it should be, may seem like the right decision, especially in comparison with other versions of the Hebrew Bible:

The Septuagint translates אֶתְּךָ אֲדַבֵּר, ‘to you’, while the Targum Jonathan and the Vulgate treat this reference to ‘with you’. The Oxford Hebrew Bible does not mention any version changes, a matter that may lead us to the understanding that all translators to the different versions saw the same text. The same structure can be found in modern biblical translations:

ASV: And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak with thee.

KJV: And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee.

JPS: And He said to me, ‘O mortal, stand up on your feet that I may speak to you.’

NRSV: And he said to me, "Son of man, stand upon your feet, and I will speak with you."

NIV: As he spoke, the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet, and I heard him speaking to me.

The decision to read אֶתְּךָ, and not אֶתְּ (since the preliminary version of the text was a non punctuated Hebrew) in the ancient and modern translations, was taken also by the different commentators who did not stop and fully analyze this grammatical form, and mainly regarded it as ‘I will speak to you’ (Block 1997, 111; Greenberg:1983, 61; Joyce:2007,76; Zimmerli:1979,89,106).

¹³ Zechariah also uses a construct that is a bit different than the rest of the prophets הַמַּלְאֲכָה הַדֹּבֶר בִּי. ‘The angel that speaks in me’, Zech. 1.9; 1.13; 1.14; 2.2; 2.7; 4.1; 4.4; 4.5; 5.5; 5.10; 6.4. However, it is not an impossible grammatical structure such as the one of Ezekiel.

What will happen if we decide to use the punctuated MT version and not the translated one? 3.24 closes the connection between the R and the persona of Ezekiel via Yhwh himself. The book that commences as an autobiography, with a verse that starts with an 'I' allows the R to identify and to accept it as part of his self. This notion gives the R a sense of being the exiled that sits by the river and sees Yhwh, assuming a state of trauma. 1.2 is a 'gray area' that leaves the R no option but to slow down and wait for the vision, and to see how heaven looks. 1.3 provides the R with the explanation that it is not him that sees Yhwh but the persona of Ezekiel that not only sees Yhwh but that Yhwh speaks him, not to him, but him. This Hebrew verse is repeated again in 3.24b וַיִּדְבֶּר אֲתִי, this time Ezekiel says that Yhwh 'speaks him'. Who speaks whom here? Does Yhwh speak Ezekiel or does Ezekiel speak the words of Yhwh? It is not so easy to tell and can be interpreted both ways. If we remove the political tool of the writer/editor we will receive a remarkable discourse construction: it starts with a clean 'I' and 'it', and ends with a firm well-established authoritative figure named Ezekiel that is backed up by Yhwh, infused by his discourse:

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי בֶּן־אָדָם עֲמֹד עַל־רַגְלֶיךָ וְאִדְבַּר אֲתִי

And he said to me, human, stand on your feet and I will speak you.

Ezekiel is Ezekiel the priest to the R that has no stable sense of identity yet; and a clean neutral son of man for Yhwh. Ezekiel is standing on his two feet now, rising and receiving the word of Yhwh. What allows this infusion as was said by Block is the רִיחַ but this spirit does not have to be spirit in the theological Christian sense and can be viewed as the law and discourse of Yhwh, as the preliminary and most important tool to construct a new male Israelite subject (R¹). Ezekiel has two different discursive roles, he is superior to the R and under Yhwh, and he is the highest human figure that exists at this given moment. This designation leaves the R

with no identity, a process that will continue throughout chs. 1-14 until rendered R^N . The R^N thus becomes the site for the assuming of the attribute 'Israel'. Moreover, Ezekiel is not just a prophet; he is a metaphysical point, an *Archimedes point* that was written in order to become a reference point to the construction of the R. In a way, Ezekiel is not only the representative of the discourse and the logos - he is the discourse itself. His persona is the symbol and image for the R to become R^1 after accepting the traumatic account.

If Ezekiel is the son of man, then what is the R? Ezekiel's vision, this beautiful picture of Yhwh, is told not to the Israelites, it does not seem that there is anybody next to him who hears his voice. It looks as if Ezekiel is having a dialogue with the R in order to hail him and to make the R listen to him. The authoritative figure of Ezekiel was not meant for the 'Israelites in the book' but to the Israelite that is being constructed now and every time a reader opens this book. The narrator who speaks only once in v. 3 is like a *בת קול*, a divine voice, a whisper that comes out of the unknown, notifying the R, telling him what his position in the discourse is, and disappearing once she had done her job.

To conclude, treating Ezekiel as a book or as written discourse yields different results than that of modern research. Modern research tries to give the author all possible power, and by doing so, giving this power to itself. By adding schools, ideologies and author/function to the text, modern biblical research actually replaces the role of Ezekiel, thus rendering the researcher Ezekiel. A more post-structuralist approach will explain not only how the discourse is formed but also how the reader is created via the researcher who reads it, the Israelite that R becomes, the *Man* that he is constructed to be.

Three different subjects are created here: 1. The subject Yhwh whose image will flare up along the entire book, giving Ezekiel the power of the discourse, that will be fashioned according to Ezekiel's needs, and will be in one point subjected to the prophet. 2. The subject prophet, who stood on his feet with the word of Yhwh, that Yhwh speaks him and he speaks Yhwh. 3. The subject that is in exile, of the R that accepts its construction by the discourse and in its own turn reconstructs a new discourse, circulates the statements of Ezekiel, affirms and reaffirms the construction of the new Israelite identity in the making.

Ezekiel, as was mentioned by Bowen, recounts the trauma of his own exile and the destruction to come. The vision of Yhwh colors the text with a sense of unease, as if Yhwh himself is disturbed, all these elements are registered in the R that assumes a history that he never took part in. The recovery process is about to commence to all of the three elements in the text: Yhwh, Ezekiel and the R. Let us not forget that the trauma depicted in the book is not necessarily an outside event forced upon the subjects, but an event created by the sovereign himself. However, this is not to say that Yhwh is traumatized or in a state of PTSD, but that he is the one responsible for the trauma. The process of recovery in the book transforms and changes everything known to the R: It changes the subject, the discourse, the ways to perceive the discourse, the community of the Israelites, the spatial configurations of the new Promised Land and Yhwh himself. This radical change can only be created through a full destruction of everything that was known before.

One does not need to look for historical affirmations to the events in the text, since this text is more powerful than history itself. It challenges history, and creates a new one. At the end it will challenge historical thinking all together by using space as an ahistorical future (p. 271).

Who Are You Talking to?

2.3 starts with a direct speech of Ezekiel, he is telling his story to the R, who is reading him right now, and this story is a dialog between Yhwh and himself. Nevertheless, not in any point of Ezekiel's dialog with Yhwh, does Yhwh answer him back directly. Instead, we may notice that Ezekiel speaks to the R, thus making him the interlocutor. In 3.14 Ezekiel is expressing emotions, and his own opinion on the events that shape his life: *I went in bitterness, in the fury of my spirit, while the hand of the LORD was strong upon me* (3.14b). Ezekiel expresses his feelings to the R, and from his words we can understand that he did not want to be a prophet. Moreover, Ezekiel's expression of feelings plays another part in the identification and construction process of the reader. It allows the R to identify with him, giving way to a second process of identification and construction, in accordance with Ezekiel's.

2.3-2.7 offers some information regarding Ezekiel's task. According to Block, the superscription 1.1-3 provides the information that is essential for any commissioning ceremony: (1) the name of the sender: Yhwh; (2) the identity of the messenger: Ezekiel; (3) the target audience: the people of Israel (Block 1997: 117). However, the target audience is yet to be present, in fact, the target audience will be present only at 3.15. Until then only Yhwh speaks, not to Israel but to Ezekiel, explaining to him the nature of Israel. Ezekiel in turn explains it to the reader; hence the real dialogue that takes place here is not the dialogue between Yhwh and Ezekiel but that between Ezekiel and the R.

Thus, the R takes part in the construction of Israel. The R learns how Israel acts and thinks, while realizing that Yhwh does not like it. Ezekiel still does not tell the R what wrong they have committed; nonetheless, he underlines the character of Israel. Twenty three times in this unit, the third person plural (they) is mentioned,

whether it is in direct form such as: **אֵלֵיהֶם, מֵהֶם, הֵמָּה** (they, to them, them) or as a third person suffix such as: **בְּתוֹכָם, מֵצָחָם, וּמִדְּבַרֵיהֶם** (in them, their forehead, their sayings). This theme denotes a process of *othering*. It renders the Israelites in the text as a literal constructive tool, a name that the R needs to subscribe to and at the same time to denounce.

The book starts with an opening line by Ezekiel: *when I was in the community of exiles by the Chebar Canal (1.1)*. In this verse we may assume and acknowledge the fact that Ezekiel is part of the Israelite community of exiles, hence he is part of Israel. However, he and the community of exiles (and the remaining Israelites in Jerusalem) are going through an identification process. A discursive process distinguishing Ezekiel and *othering* the Israelites, creating barriers between the two characters, making Ezekiel one player from one side of the board and Israel as a monolithic player from the other side of the board. The process ends in 3.15 - *And I came to the exile community that dwelt in Tel Abib by the Chebar Canal, and I remained where they dwelt. And for seven days I sat there stunned among them*.

This verse is an extreme shift from the first verse, Ezekiel is no longer amongst the exiles, and he is not one of them but someone who looks at them from the outside. Only when he is outside of them does he express his emotions: he is stunned. The word **מִשְׁמַיִם** in the hiphil stem carries more than one meaning, it also means shocked, silent, despaired, distressed, desolate and appalled (BDB 1996:1030-1). Block believes that this specific word may have been chosen intentionally because of the range of its nuances (Block 1997: 138). Whether the word was chosen intentionally or not, it is strongly connected to the description of Israel given by Yhwh to Ezekiel and then to the reader. Israel is now the ultimate other that Ezekiel

has no part of, as is the R. The reader is even more passive than Ezekiel, the R stays blank, waiting to be written, but not before the R understands what Israel did and then to observe its punishment.

One of Barthes' disapprovals of literary criticism in his time was the notion that criticisms ignored the role of the reader: 'the reader is without history, biography, psychology; he is simply that someone who holds together in a single field all the traces by which the written text is constituted' (Barthes 1977:153). This conception that Barthes condemns, paved the road for different postmodern methods of biblical research, especially reader's response criticism, that pays attention to the ways readers see the text and their different methods of reading. Can a black lesbian woman read a text the same way that a white heterosexual man reads it, and can a Jewish Israeli who grew up in the Zionist education system read Ezekiel the same way as a protestant scholar? In the case of Ezekiel, if we stop examining the writer and start listening to the text without limiting it to history and authority with close attention to the effect on the reader, we may see how the different ways of reading the text, the different identities of the reader, ancient or modern, are stripped and how the R becomes neutral.

The othering of Israel is the exclusion of Israel from the discourse. Twice Yhwh repeats the phrase in the same verse:

וְאַתָּה בֶּן־אָדָם אַל־תִּירָא מֵהֶם וּמִדְבָּרֵיהֶם

Do not be afraid of their words (2.6). Quotes by the Israelites will be given to us later on, but in these units they are left blank. Israel is being *othered*. Israel is becoming a tool, perhaps even a site in which different technologies of power will operate to construct the name Israel. This Israel does not have to be ancient Israel that existed in the Judean desert, it may also be a German philologist who lives in Berlin,

analyses and recreates the text's authority. It could also be me, the Israeli Jewish reader, who assumes a-priori that the textual Israel is modern day Israel.

Eating, Literally

Davis in his book *Swallowing the Scroll* argues that the book of Ezekiel is a shift from an oral society to a written one. He compares Ezekiel to Jeremiah and says that for Jeremiah, writing the oracles was an act of despair since Jeremiah was not allowed to enter the temple and was denied a public hearing.

...But most strikingly, there is no longer any ambiguity about the form in which the prophet receives the edible revelation. It comes to Ezekiel already as a text. This is the form in which he must claim his inheritance and the basis on which he must make his own contribution to the tradition of faithful witness...It is not surprising that, with a mind shaped and honed by the study of sacred texts, and living under conditions which greatly increased the importance of writing for public communication, this man should from the beginning have conceived his commission to prophesy in a manner congruent with the concept of God's word as text (Davis 1989:49-53).

It is important to discuss Davis' words here since I believe that Davis was right in his assumptions, but nevertheless, they lack one crucial element. Despite his extensive discussion on discourse, he regards Ezekiel as the author of the book, and the Israelites as the audience. Moreover, Davis claims that the role of the prophet as an ear opener for the people and as a disaster averter, like Jeremiah (cf. Jer. 25.3; 26.2-3; 36.2-3) no longer applies in the case of Ezekiel. The prophecy undergoes a profound shift 'and now the function of the prophet is simply to make known to Israel the author of Judgment and the just ground for the execution' (Davis 1989: 53). Thirty times the phrase **וידעו כי-אני יהוה**, *they shall know that I the LORD*, appears in the book of Ezekiel out of thirty one appearances in the entire Bible. Twice the phrase **וידעו כי נביא היה בתוכם**, *that they may know that there was a prophet among them* appears in the Bible, both of them in Ezekiel (2.5; 33.33). The verb to know in Qal

stem, ידע, also has the most amount of appearances in the book of Ezekiel, ninety nine times out of a thousand in the entire Bible, making the book of Ezekiel the ultimate book of discourse and knowledge production.¹⁴ Here is where I depart from Davis and other modern researchers. Their relentless quest for the writer and his intention missed an important point, a point that is endlessly stressed here: Ezekiel speaks to the R. He uses quotes throughout his prophecy, by doing so, he tells the R what the people told him and what he, in return will tell them, all in front of the R.

Hence, when Yhwh asks Ezekiel to eat the scroll he does not put Ezekiel to the test as discussed by Greenberg (Greenberg 1983:73). Ezekiel receives a scroll full of writing, front and back. The scroll is not only a well-written testimony but also a full and a complete message, rendering Ezekiel passive in regard to interpreting the message as the scroll cannot be altered, modified or edited. This passivity goes hand in hand with 2.2; 3.14; 3.22-23. Ezekiel is told to do something and he does it without questioning at all, making him almost one with Yhwh, and his persona as the dispositif, the site of the logos. Nevertheless, Yhwh is an element in this discourse and not someone who had actually created it, that is to say that Yhwh is a *written god*, created for political purposes. Moreover, the fact the Yhwh speaks Ezekiel and that Ezekiel eats Yhwh's written words, makes Ezekiel the sole owner of the logos. He has become the source of all knowledge, the departure point for the discourse and the validation point for biblical scholars who are trapped in a process of supplementarity and are endlessly engaged in logocentrism, validating the voice of Ezekiel, thus validating themselves.

¹⁴To know in the meaning of *knowledge*, and not in the meaning of sexual intercourse, cf: BDB 1996:393-6; HALOT 1996:390-3.

Ezekiel's next communication with the R is 3.3b after he was commanded to eat the scroll, *I ate it, and it tasted as sweet as honey to me*. Block believes that lamentations cannot taste like honey and therefore it is the word of God that tastes like honey, thus laundering Ezekiel's ethics (Block 1997:126). What was then sweet as honey, God's word and not the content, or was it the *lamentations, dirges, and woes* (2.10b)? Could it be that sorrow and miseries of others are sweet and wonderful news for the prophet? Why did Ezekiel bother to mention that the scroll of pain is as sweet as honey? Is the R allowed to understand it differently? Moreover, does the R, also needs to taste the honey and trust Ezekiel that the horrors that are coming soon are actually beautiful and sugary? I would like to keep this notion open, and to fully answer these questions later on as the analysis progresses with the help of Deleuze and the technology of masochism as an art of power (p. 109).

The act of eating the scroll erases the borders and the hierarchies between the written and the spoken word, and makes Ezekiel the sole speaker. No longer a notion of a spoken word that is written after a certain process with some reductive hands in the way, but an immediate written word, a word that came before the spoken one, maybe even more important than the spoken one. Ezekiel has the power to order every angle and aspect of the discourse since he has both forms of words, written and spoken. This act makes Ezekiel the only prophet, the only person in the Bible that has an ownership of God's own words. In the act of eating the scroll, the author-function Ezekiel offers a new way of ordering a discourse. It is not a distant discourse which the R learns about while reading it, as if it was a recording of events; but as a living discourse that is happening right here and right now, through the R's eyes and in his head.

With these two forms of words, Ezekiel will go and reshape the Israelites, and the R that is constantly being made. An Israelite that belongs to no one, and yet it is assumed by everyone who reads it. An Israelite that can be utilized as a departure point for different religions and ideological movements; that can be denied by some and be embraced by others, all in correlations and demands of historical prerequisites.

Show Me Your Body

The book of Ezekiel extensively discusses the body and its construction, specifically in chs. 16-23 and ch. 37, in which the body of the individual is a vital element in the body of the society, figuratively and physically as well.

Feed your stomach and fill your belly with this scroll that I give you (3.3a). Says Yhwh to Ezekiel, and the word בִּטְנֶךָ, here may be interpreted not only as a stomach but also as a womb (BDB 1996:105-6) and so is the word מֵעֵיךָ that in comparison with Gen. 25.23; Isa. 49.1; Ps. 71.6; Ruth. 1.11; can also be regarded as a womb (BDB 1996:588-9). Not only does Ezekiel eat the scroll and enjoy the taste of honey, he also carries it, almost like a pregnant woman. The knowledge, the discourse that comes out of him is part of his body, reemphasizes the cultural signification of Ezekiel as the site of the logos. The use of feminine attributes for the sketching of the male figure is not uncommon in the book of Ezekiel and a close consideration of this aspect will be given in the analysis of unit 16-23, specifically in the analysis of ch. 20 and the construction of the new Israelite according to the new law (p. 172). The connection between the body and the *true* discourse is being weaved now. As the process of reading/writing of the book progresses, the Israelite body will be more and more relevant to the ordering process of the discourse.

In an essay entitled 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History' Foucault argues that the body should be seen as 'the inscribed surface of events', that is to say that political

events and decisions have material effects upon the body, and they in their turn, can be analyzed. Foucault continues and says that the body is ‘the illusion of a substantial unity’ and ‘a volume in perpetual disintegration’, stating the notion that seems to us as most solid is, in fact, a discourse construct (Foucault 1977a:148). Moreover, the body as the vehicle of power is being controlled and governed by the *âme* that is created here, the embracing of the discourse that is part of Ezekiel’s body has its effects on the body of the reader. The self that is created here learns how to govern his body, and achieves a sense of freedom, by doing so he becomes a part in the matrix of power. Not as an individual that is being oppressed and yearns to be free, but as an individual who takes part in the construction of the power relations and is the medium that transports them from one place to another. ‘The individual was of interest exactly insofar as [s/he] could contribute to the strength of the state. The lives, deaths, activities, work and joys of individuals were important to the extent that these everyday concerns became politically useful’ (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982:139). The book of Ezekiel uses not only the emotions and everyday activity of the reader in political context, but it also searches the identification process of the reader and ways to constitute the reader’s body.

The R is still waiting to be constituted, and for his body to materialize. R knows now that the knowledge and the order of the discourse can never be in his possession. It has to go first through Ezekiel since his male body carries the discourse and all that is left for the R is to hand over his docile body and embrace the process of its inscription. Each reader brings his own repertoire of cultural systems to interpret the book, but eventually, each reader becomes a form, a sort of an Israelite; some are Jewish, others are Christian, Secular, Zionist etc. The R will undergo a process: First it will identify with Ezekiel, since Ezekiel is human, just like the reader. Second, it

will identify and worship Yhwh, and at the end it will distance itself from Israel, yearning to see its punishment, Israel's and its own. Leading to the final outcome - confession in front of the prophet and acceptance of the new heart and the new body under the (new) hegemony. This heart, this *âme* is the political tool, the anatomy of political power, the prison of the body, and this prison will be analyzed extensively in regard to myths of masculinities. What kind of a *Man* do I need to be in order for me to be Israel and for Yhwh to be God? What kind of *Man* is Ezekiel?

3.2 Who do you call Israel?

The name: What does one call thus? What does one understand under the name of name? And what occurs when one gives a name? What does one give then? One does not offer a thing, one delivers nothing, and still something comes to be, which comes down to giving that which one does not have, as Plotinus said of the Good. What happens, above all, when it is necessary to sur-name (*surnommer*), renaming there where, precisely, the name comes to be found lacking? What makes the proper name into a sort of sur-name, pseudonym, or cryptonym at once singular and singularly untranslatable (Derrida 1995:11).

3.4-3.16 enfolds a matter that requires close consideration - the extensive use of the name Israel in the book of Ezekiel. The name Israel reoccurs in the book a hundred and eighty six times in a few different constructions: בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (the sons of Israel: 2.3; 4.13; 6.5; 35.5; 37.16, 21; 43.7),¹⁵ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל (the house of Israel: 2.3; 3.4,5,7,17; 4.3,4,5,13; 5.4; 6.11; 8.6,10,11), אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל (the land of Israel: 7.2), אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (the god of Israel: 10.19, 20) שְׁאֵרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (the remaining of Israel: 9.8) גְּבוּל יִשְׂרָאֵל (the border of Israel: 11.10, 11) while the name Judah appears only fifteen times, mostly in relation to the elders of Judah (4.6; 8.1, 17; 9.9; 21.25; 25.3,8,

¹⁵ And here we need to remember that the general Israel is in the form of a man, never a daughter.

12; 27.17; 37.16, 19; 48.7,8;22, 31). This statistic is very interesting since according to the historical events in the book, Ezekiel is the prophet of the exiles of Judah, not of Israel. The kingdom of Israel is long gone, and since Ezekiel could not even have seen it with his own two eyes, then why does he speak to the house or the family of Israel? According to Greenberg, the prophet's mission is to Israel in general without a distinction between the remaining Judah or the tribes of Israel that were exiled before the time of Ezekiel, and 'Israel' came to designate the remaining kingdom of Judah as well as the ideal whole nation' (Greenberg 1983:62-63). Indeed, this name was meant for the whole nation, but not only that; Ezekiel's use of the name Israel creates a few meanings and discursive tools. The first – a name, an entity is being interpellated. Yhwh attributes Israel: *for the whole House of Israel are brazen of forehead and stubborn of heart* (3.7b). They understand the words and the language but they do not want to listen. The R cannot identify with them, nor would he want to, since the R is not they. As was mentioned, Ezekiel speaks to the R about Israel, by doing so he *others* Israel, telling the R what Israel is. Israel becomes different than the R, representing all of the immoral qualities that R should not have – this is the second discursive tool, the otherness of Israel. The R does not want to be Israel, but nevertheless, Yhwh is the god of Israel and (especially as the book progresses) the R wants to be part of his kingdom. This double interpellation process, the positive and the negative interpellation of Israel, leaves the R yet again a blank page, waiting to be filled with meaning.

Derrida mentioned that the name enfolds meaning, identity and also integrity. To name something, and in this case, to name Israel is to bring something before us but also to distant it from us at the same time. The double naming process of Israel simultaneously makes the name Israel a surface and an abyss. Derrida writes: 'the

name hidden in its potency possesses a power of manifestation and occultation, of revelation and encrypting. What does it hide? Precisely the abyss that is enclosed within it. To open a name is to find in it not something but rather something like an abyss, the abyss as the thing in itself' (Derrida 2002:213-4). Indeed, the name Israel will be etched on the R^N and will reside in many bodies throughout history. In this part of the book of Ezekiel, the name Israel is becoming the site for the construction of the identity and at the same time the abyss that pulls all other identities to it, erasing the boundaries between the reader and the text, creating and recreating the new body and its new *âme*.

R may not be defined yet, but Ezekiel surely is. Whatever Israel is doing, Ezekiel will do better according to Yhwh. If the sons of Israel are strong, Yhwh will make Ezekiel stronger and he will not fear them. *I will make your forehead like adamant, harder than flint* (3.9b), says Yhwh to him, and also reassures me that Ezekiel is the right man for the mission.

The end of the unit, the fact that Ezekiel does not just go to them, but is carried by the chariot of Yhwh, is an act that yet again emphasizes Ezekiel's and Yhwh's strength faced with rebellious Israelites. This unit ends the first step of the discourse establishment and the first step in the interpellation of Israel and the construction of the R. The units to come 3.16-5.4 will end the designation process of the prophet, establish the power relations, and continue to reshape the hegemony of Yhwh.

3.3 Chapters 3.16-3.27- The Panopticon and the Technology of Panotopism

The BDB interprets the word **צִפֹּקֶה** to spy, lookout, keep watch (BDB 1996:859), so does HALOT (HALOT 1996:1044). Joyce translates this position as a sentinel, a guard watcher. Block adds that the whole verse: *I appoint you watchman*

for the House of Israel; and when you hear a word from My mouth, you must warn them for Me (3.17) may shock the readers since the role of a watchman is to warn the people of an enemy. In this case, the enemy could be comprehended as no less than Yhwh himself (Block 1997:144). Examining the word and its appearances in the Bible may lead us to the understanding that the watchman position has military qualities (1 Sam 14.16; 2 Sam. 13.34; 2 Sam. 18.24; 2 Kng. 9.17). The watchman is supposed to blow the horn in case of an enemy attack; Jeremiah for example, speaks of the people that do not wish to listen to the sound of the horn (Jer. 6.17).

Joyce translates the Hebrew word to ‘sentinel’ (Joyce 2007a:80), so does Odell (Odell 2005:49) Greenberg to ‘lookout’ (1983:84), Block, Wevers, Eichrodt and Zimmerli to ‘watchman’ (Zimmerli 1979:142-3; Wevers 1969:56; Eichrodt 1970:74). While the latter scholars agree on the translation, it is interesting to see the two different interpretations of the word. Joyce’s sentinel is a position that assumes death and war. Greenberg’s lookout is a position that might be regarded as a person who cares about Israel, and warns them of their own mistakes, saves them from themselves if you will. Thus, making Yhwh the fierce educational force, and Ezekiel as the one that is appointed by him to save Israel. I would like to offer a new interpretation to *נֹפֵק* in accordance with Foucault’s theory in *Discipline and Punish* (p. 63), Ezekiel as a Panopticon - the see all. A watchman can be regarded as a guard that protects a certain place, a city, a factory, a school, etc. The meaning of the panopticon is not just to watch, but to be a part of the political anatomy, to be an unknown guard, someone that does not guard the camp from outside enemies but from the inside. The role of the panopticon is not necessarily to control in a violent way, on the contrary, it is actually supposed to avoid violence. Once the subject has the thought in his mind that he is constantly being watched, he will act differently.

Another factor that needs to be taken into consideration is the fact that the person who is in the panopticon tower, whose face no one can see, is not outside the camp but inside. In a way, he is locked in the structure just like the people he watches, and this notion is also very important to the understanding of the role of the prophet here. Ezekiel might be the one who watches the R, but he is not outside the matrix. His power is derived from the power relation inside the matrix. Only Yhwh is outside the matrix, controlling the entire universe, history and space. Nevertheless, Yhwh is a product of the book of Ezekiel, meaning that he is an element in the text, not a metaphysic entity that actually spoke or wrote the book. The book of Ezekiel needs Yhwh as an *other*, as a political tool that will make Ezekiel a subject. Hence, nothing is really outside the matrix, and no metaphysics can be assumed in this discourse.

The structure of power is sketched now, Yhwh, Ezekiel, People. 3.18-3.21 is not a warning to Israel, it is a warning to Ezekiel and a blueprint of power relations to the R. The R now understands that if the prophet does not do his work properly he will die; hence, he is not in the position of an omnipotent. This tricky element puts Ezekiel in a position of omnipresence and in the position of a subject at the same time, Ezekiel's image is constantly being subjugated and undermined yet at the same time, strengthened.

A supporting factor to Ezekiel's all-seeing role is 8.1-9.11. Ezekiel is taken from his home to watch the punishment of the people in the temple and Jerusalem, he does not warn them or prophesize but just sees what Yhwh is doing. In 8.7 Ezekiel digs a hole in the wall, and eventually he finds an entrance and he sees all that Israel is doing, he sees in the dark interior rooms and outside next to the entrance. All of these visions are narrated with Yhwh's words: *Mortal, do you see what they are doing* (8.6; 8.12; 8.15) followed by a quote of the Israelites: *'The LORD does not see us*

(8.12; 9.9). But Yhwh does see them, they don't know it, he sees them and now his Panopticon sees also. His Panopticon is based in a different land, in his house with the elders of Judah and is suddenly being taken back to Jerusalem to see; the Israelites are mistaken, Yhwh sees, and the R knows that too.

Nevertheless, they do not know that they are being watched; not knowing that you are being watched negates the whole concept of the Panopticon. However, the 'historical Israel' is not the target of this research. It is the reader that knows from now on that he is being watched, and Israel is the discursive political tool of the construction of the reader, that is in the process of assuming the identity of Israel.

Dumb

The position of the dumb or the prophecy of the dumbness may be linked directly to the position of the Panopticon. Joyce has reviewed different scholars' interpretations on the meaning of 3.26-27- the command that Ezekiel will open his mouth only when Yhwh decides that he will do so. However, he leans mainly on the review of Wilson to this calling; according to Wilson the key phrase of understanding the calling is the phrase *אִישׁ מִכִּיָּהּ* or as translated in the NRVS and also in the JPS as *reprover to them*. Wilson has shown that this term is used in a legal context and it refers to a mediator rather than to a reprover or a judge (confer Job. 9.33; Gen. 31.37). In other words, Ezekiel is forbidden to act as a mediator between Israel and Yhwh and he cannot represent Israel in front of Yhwh and try to ensure that they will get a fair trial. The role of Ezekiel here is one way, from Yhwh to the people and not two ways (Joyce 2007a:82-3). Joyce uses this explanation to support his notion that the role of Ezekiel is to be a sentinel, and to deliver the sentence. However, if we further develop the notion of the Panopticon we will see that the role of Ezekiel is not to speak at all, but to watch. It seems that Ezekiel's mouth is opened only in 33.21-22, when

Jerusalem is destroyed. After the destruction, Yhwh will allow the people to seek him (36.37) and also Ezekiel who will speak as a conduit.

The panopticon post is not just a controlling and watching post; it is also an educating one. Once a person knows that he is constantly being watched, he changes his behavior or modifies his actions accordingly. Keeping this understanding in mind, one must first have a code of conduct to submit to before being watched, controlled, and obeyed. This set of conducts, rules, regulations, layout of the power relations in the matrix, and the different myths of masculinities, will be given throughout the book, portraying the image of Yhwh, his hegemony, and the characteristics of the Israelite - that is to say, the R.

3.4 Theory Revisited

The reader separates himself from Israel. He is waiting to be constructed, and in this sense Israel in the book is not the ideal Israel, but the instrument that will construct the reader. The written Israel is the starting point and the departure point. It is the base for its identification process, and at the same time, it is all that is needed to leave behind – derivatives of identities that cannot, and should not be used. The R needs to carry now the name Israel and to follow its identity process. And the first and most important political tool in this new discourse is the role of Ezekiel, the see it all, the Panopticon. He is the Yhwhist element inside the discourse, and he is also a tool for a discourse construction. In this case Ezekiel is the representative of Yhwh, and the manifestation of the Yhwhist logos. When Ezekiel and Yhwh are watching, more than they are watching Israel, they are watching the reader who knows now that there is always someone out there as opposed to the Israelites who were in the temple. The technology of the panotopism has become a playing part in the R's *âme* and of the way he thinks and acts.

The political tools in the discourse have been acquired; the positions of the different characters have been set, but the next chapter is unknown, how will Ezekiel prophesy if he cannot speak? Will Yhwh open his mouth? The reader is in suspense, waiting to hear and absorb the new knowledge, to have his *âme* constructed and his body made docile, but all of this does not really happen, instead Yhwh wants Ezekiel to do some acts.

4. Chapters 4.1-7.27: Yhwh In Furs: The Sign-Acts And The Theatre Of Masochism

The audience of this book is not the physical historical community of Israel but the imagined one, hence the reader. Therefore thinking how the sign-acts were designated to affect the Israelites is pointless in this analysis. The matter that I seek to understand here is the cultural meaning of these sign-acts at their connotation level, and not in the denotative one. In other words, one may examine the different meanings of each sign-act according to its historical relation, theology and so forth, or one can decide to examine these acts as channels of power in the dispositif; hence – the use of masochism as a form and art of power, or as the theater of power. Before I go ahead and explain the meaning of masochism as power, I will first draw and lay out the different sign-acts.

The Siege of Jerusalem (4.1-3)

In the first act, Ezekiel is commanded to take a brick, to engrave the city of Jerusalem on it, to set a wall around the city, towers, enemy camps and bring battering ramps to surround it; in short to besiege the city that he had just built. Then he is ordered to take an iron griddle and set his face against it, and to distance himself from the sieged city. Figuratively, Ezekiel is building a set, a theatrical stage.

Bearing the Punishment of Israel (4.4-8)

Ezekiel is ordered now to lie down for three hundred and ninety days on his left side and forty days on his right side; each day represents a year in the exiled life of the kingdoms. After he had completed these tasks, he is commanded to prophesy to Jerusalem, with bare arms, wrapped with cords around him so that he cannot move from side to side. Block is very skeptical about the execution of this sign-act and writes: ‘it is unlikely that Ezekiel lay on his side continuously for 390 days. He

probably adopted this posture for several hours each day, timing his lying down to achieve maximum rhetorical effect, that is, at the busiest part of the day. During the rest of the day, especially in the evening he probably carried on with his normal activities in the privacy of his home or prepared for the performances of the next day' (Block 1997:179). Friebe is equally skeptical and adds that once the prophet had finished his routine he was free to carry on a more normal, but secluded, life when not in the view of the audience (Friebe 1999:374). This sign-act analysis as was examined by Block, Friebe and others will yield such an assumption indeed; after all, no normal human being could act the way Ezekiel did. However, what will happen if we remove the historical influence of the book and the quest for historical truth, and search for a different hypothesis? Block's statement is as good here as the rest, and none of the researchers will ever be able to know what really happened if anything. There must be a way out of this Gordian knot of interpretation.

Eat, They Will be Hungry 4.9-17

In the third act Ezekiel is requested to eat bread that he will make from six different kinds of food. This loaf of bread is supposed to last for 390 days according to 4.9b, the rationing of the loaf of bread is also mentioned, 20 shekels of weight per day (4.10) and so is the water ration (4.11). In 4.12 Ezekiel is commanded to bake the barley cake over human excrement, and only here he actually protests: *Ah, Lord GOD, my person was never defiled; nor have I eaten anything that died of itself or was torn by beasts from my youth until now, nor has foul flesh entered my mouth* (4.14). Yhwh agrees and changes the human excrement to cow's dung (4.15). Block, again, fills in the gaps in the story and writes that since Ezekiel cannot under any circumstances live off one loaf of bread/barley cake then he must have been eating at home every night. And since the size of the loaf of bread does not match the daily

rations specified in 4.10-11 one can see 4.9 and 4.10-11 as two separate signs acts (Block 1997:184).

What is most interesting for the analysis here is the compromise between Ezekiel and Yhwh, or more the plea of Ezekiel to Yhwh. Ezekiel does not want to eat a loaf of bread that was baked over human excrement since it is against the priestly laws. We are already aware of the fact that Ezekiel is a priest and a son of a priest, hence his priestly persona should be fully aware of these laws (cf. Exod. 22.30; Lev. 11.39- 40, 17.15-16; 22.8; Deut. 14.21). Ezekiel's plea contains three reasons:

1. נִפְשִׁי לֹא מְטַמָּא *my person was never defiled* (could be also throat, confer Block 1997:186).
2. וְנִבְלָה וּמְרָפָה לֹא־אָכַלְתִּי מִנְעוּרַי וְעַד־עַתָּה: *Nor have I eaten anything that died of itself or was torn by beasts from my youth until now.*
3. וְלֹא־בָא בְּפִי בֶּשֶׂר פְּנוּל: *Nor has foul flesh entered my mouth.*

And his god surprisingly agrees and gives him a new option: cow's dung. All in order to make his message clear: *shall the people of Israel eat their bread, unclean, among the nations to which I will banish them* (4.13). And concludes with: *O mortal, I am going to break the staff of bread in Jerusalem, and they shall eat bread by weight, in anxiety, and drink water by measure, in horror* (4.16). A very interesting question rises here: is Yhwh aware of the priestly laws, which are supposed to be his own? And if so, does he break his own law? I will return to this question later.

Cutting The Hair And Killing All Fate (5.1-4)

In the last sign-act, Ezekiel is commanded by Yhwh to cut both of his hair and beard with a sword that will be used as a barber's knife. After shaving, he is ordered to divide his hair into three equal parts, using the scales. The first portion is to be set

on fire, the second is to be distributed around the brick of Jerusalem and the third portion is to be thrown to the wind. Ezekiel is also ordered to take some of his hair and to place it in the hem of his garment, and take some of the hair that was tucked away and also set it on fire.

These signs-acts can be compiled and interpreted as a complete allegory: Jerusalem will be sieged; Israel will live under siege in great stress. Many of them will be burned; only a few will last and from that few, some will be eradicated. In fact, one does not need a biblical commentator to decipher these sign-acts, since Yhwh himself explains them to Ezekiel, and Ezekiel explains them to the R. It is only the written community of Israel that needs to decipher them. If so, then why does Ezekiel tell the R about the sign-acts, and not just do them? In fact, Ezekiel does not even articulate that he had actually done the signs acts; all he did was to explain to the R what he needed to do, and the reasons for doing them. Ezekiel even shared with the R one of his concerns, in short, Ezekiel gave the R a screenplay to read. The theater, the play and its script that had been written by Yhwh, have a tremendous effect on the R. The theater of Yhwh, in which Ezekiel is the only actor, can affect the R in two main ways: The first, where the R continues to be carried away from the written Israel and becomes more and more distant from this foul community. The R is taught at the same time, that he is Israel, but not the one in the book that deserves only death and suffering. The second effect on the R that also correlates with the first one is the use of a technology of power - masochism as an art of power. The sign-acts that are presented here are an epilogue to the theater of masochism that will rule a dominant and a substantial part of the book. However before I explain my theory, there is a need to summarize and synthesize a few theories of masochism and sadism as a political apparatus.

4.1 Masochism As A Technology Of Power

Many theorists are widely tempted to describe masochism and similar ‘perversities’ as mere symptoms of something else, evidence of failure or simply a kind of psychosexual mistake. I do not believe that masochism is a condition to which its adherents are condemned, nor do I believe that it is a mere lifestyle choice. Masochism is a cultural and historical formation, and is as easy to choose or reject as any other of our forms of subjectivity, sexuality or ontology. Finally, I do not believe masochism is a discrete entity to be assessed definitively. Indeed, it is the many obscure and complex ways that it interpenetrates our politics, gender, sexual definition, and subjectivity that make it such an important phenomenon (Mansfield 1997:16).

Deleuze, in his book *Coldness and Cruelty* (1989) was the first to fully treat masochism in its cultural aspect as opposed to its psychoanalytic one. But before we comprehend Deleuze’s perspective on masochism, first we need to understand the meaning of the representation of masochism in society. Von Krafft-Ebing was the first one to coin the term masochism in his book *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1887), this term of course was related to Sacher von Masoch and his writings.¹⁶ The interesting point in Von Krafft-Ebing’s analysis of masochism is that his analytic subject was not a patient and a person, but literature. The phenomenon that was something that people do, became first a psychoanalytical term and then essentially, a cultural one. It was literature that was the first base of research to masochism and, it is literature, which ‘plays an important part in the ongoing practices of the masochist’ (Mansfield 1997:3). In other words, masochism can of course be perceived in the psychoanalytic field. However, the moment that this practice sprang into the world and took part in shaping the subject, it was a literal one; the cultural representation of masochism is as

¹⁶Since there is a great risk that this review will extend more than necessary, I will lay down here a brief review of masochism and will continue to develop the matter as the analysis progresses. Nevertheless, there is a need to assert here that the short review of masochism is based on Mansfield’s book *Masochism, the art of power* Mansfield 1997 and Lenzer 1975.

important as the clinical psychoanalytic one.¹⁷ That is to say, the technology of power of masochism, sadism and sadomasochism in its political/cultural aspect is strongly rooted in literal statements and in products of power/knowledge process. Since the book of Ezekiel is a well-circulated statement and a product of power/knowledge process, it may be looked at as a literal base for the mechanism of power technology that produces a subject, an obedient, docile body.

Indifference and Subjectivity

In his book *Being and Nothingness* (1956) Sartre discusses masochism not as pathology but as a method of inter-subjectivity. Sartre's opinion on the subject in general is that the individual creates his subjectivity once he comes into contact with the other. In the case of masochism, the subject does not want to produce himself in relation to the other but to change the order and reduce himself to an object so he could be desired by the other and then to be subjectified. The reduction to subjectivity is a source of shame for the masochist, shame that he embraces as proof for the success of the process. For Sartre this process signifies the freedom of the subject. By the fact that the subject refuses to be anything else but an object, he rests upon the other to be desired and subjectified, 'I would like to be desired, I make myself in shame an object of desire' (Sartre 1956:492). The masochist denies his subjectivity and forms it at the same time; he fulfills his freedom by imprisoning his *self*. We must understand here that the other, to whom the masochist is giving himself to, has nothing to do in this process; he is in a zero degree of subjectivity as Mansfield states (Mansfield 1997:17). The process of the masochist is not designed for the other. The

¹⁷ In this point I would like to avoid as much as possible the field of psychoanalysis and to stay firmly in the cultural analysis realm. For a review of psychoanalysis of masochism see: Reik 1949; Silverman 1992:185-213, 198:31-66; Taylor 1989:106-30; Marshall 2002:13-56; Savran 1998:2-38.

other in the process of masochism does not have any control over the objectification and the perception of the masochist, and in this manner, the other side of masochism is not sadism, nor the sadist. For Sartre the masochist process is doomed to failure because it is impossible to be at one and the same time both the subject and an object that is perceived by the other. Mansfield solves this problem by saying that Sartre thinks in a binary fashion, and he is puzzled by a subjectivity that refuses to stabilize into a single meaningful position, hence his conclusion that the masochism process is a failure. Instead, Mansfield offers a more poststructuralist view which portrays the self as a part of a never ending identification process, 'the masochistic subject is many positions and many semi positions at once, rendering unstable the relationships between power and powerlessness, active and passive, self and other, pain and pleasure, subject and object, male and female' (Mansfield 1997:19). Defined differently, the binary positions for the masochist are the means of his inspiration and departure point, and a reflection of his politics but not his essence. The masochist destroys his *self* and reasserts it at the same time; it is this contradiction that is actually the core of the masochistic existence. Mansfield concludes: 'there is no difference, between the assertion and demolition of the masochistic subject: masochism produces the indifference between subjectivity and its destruction' (Mansfield 1997:20). Hence there is no difference between the destruction of the subject and his reformation. Indifference is where the subject constructs his power as powerlessness, in order to strengthen and fulfill his own subjectivity. Just as Ezekiel was telling the reader in 3.14 that he was taken against his own will, thus portraying himself as powerless and as the reading continues, becomes powerful.

We must remember that the masochist is not always a man who desires to be controlled by the woman. The woman, or the category of a woman is also a part in the

masculinities matrix. The woman exists here only as another meaning and category in the matrix of masculinities. Masculinity is not powerless because the man is compared to a woman but because powerlessness is just another form of masculinity. Masochism can be grasped as an alternative model of masculine power, of masculinity; this masculinity will sacrifice anything, including its own images in order to stay in power, as long as it does not need to give it up. Did Hannaniah, son of Hezekiah, actually recognize the book of Ezekiel as a form of a different technology of power, and was this the reason that he was so eager to keep this book?

Literature, Masochism and the Theater

Before I continue to Deleuze and his perception on masochism, I will briefly discuss the connection between masochism and literature. Reik in his book, *Masochism in Modern Man* (Sartre 1956)(Sartre 1956)(Sartre 1956) like Von Krafft-Ebing, writes that first and foremost, masochism is a fantasy, and that masochism ‘springs from the representation, from the thought-rehearsal of violent and aggressive actions, which are changed and reshaped through a change of role’(Reik 1941:186). For Reik, This rehearsal is a theater of cultural and psychological representation; and the fantasy itself that is the base for masochism is enacted as a theater. Hence masochism needs literature because at its root it is already a kind of literature. However in the political cultural sphere, this literature ends up representing a reality, its fantasied categories materialized to new institutions of subjugation and to contracts of power. The theater of Ezekiel as is presented in the sign-acts of chs. 4-5 is not just an allegory, but also a mechanism of power, a unique technology of power that will be fully utilized from chapter 16.

Masochism, Sadism and Sadomasochism, Deleuze and Venus in Furs

Deleuze in his book *Coldness and Cruelty* argues that masochism and sadism are two different entities, and that masochism is the most powerful since it created the dominatrix according to the image the masochist wishes to see. 'The masochistic hero appears to be educated and fashioned by the authoritarian woman whereas basically it is he who forms her, dresses her for the part and prompts the harsh words she addresses to him. It is the victim who speaks through the mouth of his torturer, without sparing himself' (Deleuze 1989:22). Deleuze's assumptions like Reik's, Krafft-Ebing's etc. are based on the story *Venus in Furs*, written by Sacher-Masoch (2000). This is a story about Severin and his wife Wanda, and the relationship between the two, a relationship of masochism that was forced on Wanda by Severin, sometimes against Wanda's will. Throughout the story, Severin trains Wanda to be his dominatrix until the process is completed; and we can see how Severin creates his own dominatrix, to be a subject as was mentioned before in the review of Sartre and Mansfield.

Deleuze draws the line between sadism and masochism and defines each one of them with almost no relation to the other. For him, the sadist does not want to convince as Severin did with Wanda. The sadist for Deleuze wishes to demonstrate that 'reasoning itself is a form of violence, and that he is on the side of violence, however calm and logical he may be. He doesn't even attempt to prove anything to anyone, but to perform a demonstration related essentially to the solitude and omnipotence of its author... the sadistic 'instructor' stands in contrast to the masochistic 'educator'. Deleuze writes: 'When it comes to masochism, we are no longer in the case of a sadist who enjoys torturing a victim and enjoying her more because she is resisting and un-consenting, but we are dealing instead with a victim in

search of a torturer and who needs to educate, persuade and conclude an alliance with the torturer in order to realize the strangest of schemes' (Deleuze 1989:19-20).

To determine the differences between sadism and masochism in cultural terms, the sadist thinks in terms of institutionalized possession, and the masochist in terms of controlled alliances. Deleuze summarizes the differences between a contract and an institution by saying that the contract presupposes consent between the different sides and is valid for a limited period. An institution determines a long-term state of affairs that are involuntary. What is more significant, according to Deleuze, is the difference between the two in the aspect of the law: 'the contract actually generates a law, even if this law oversteps and contravenes the conditions which made it possible; the institution is of a very different order in that it tends to render laws unnecessary, to replace the system of rights and duties by a dynamic model of action, authority and power' (Deleuze 1989:77). Deleuze offers us in his interpretation of masochism three main points: in the first, he reconnects masochism and literature and sees in literature the departure point for masochism. In the second, he claims that there is no connection between sadism and masochism and that sadomasochism does even not exist as a term. In the third, Deleuze outlines an anti-Freudian model; he replaces Freud's claim in which the woman who beats the masochist is, in the beating fantasy, a surrogate- father, to a cold oral mother figure (Deleuze 1989:63-4).

Going back to Mansfield's approach to masochism, masochism can be viewed as an art of power, and more so, masochism is an art of power in which power does not have to be necessarily phallic, and that masculine power can often have feminine attributes. Nevertheless, that is not to say that power is feminine in the aspect of female power, but as a masculine power that uses feminine categories to achieve and regain hegemonic control.

As was argued, masochism's departure point is fantasy, a theater in the subject's mind, and as was shown, Block tried constantly to fill the gaps between the real and the unreal. Of course it is impossible for a man to lie down three hundred and ninety days and then forty days more while tied with ropes, eating a very small amount of bread and drinking bad water in ration; but there is no need to search for the reality in this story. This story is strong enough to convey a spectrum of cultural meanings and political practices for communities and subjects. The sign-acts are a play, a theatrical piece that is laid in front of the R, and the R embraces this piece and plays it in his mind. The technology of masochism here helps the R to recreate his self as the new Israel, a powerful new Israel with a powerful new god. This is the process of the neutralization of the R. Together with Ezekiel; the R erases his old self and creates a new one by producing a new image of his god and a new matrix of masculinities.

Before I continue to elaborate on this fascinating technology of masculinities and power production, one question that I posed earlier needs to be answered now. In 4.12 Yhwh asks Ezekiel to bake his loaf/cake over human excrement, Ezekiel refuses since he wishes to follow the laws. Yhwh agrees and changes the excrements to cow's dung. 4.12-4.15 poses a problem: does not Yhwh know his own rules? I would like to resolve this problem with the model that was offered by Deleuze: Ezekiel is the one here that is the masochist, he is confined to contracts and laws, he sets the regulations and he is the one that is writing Yhwh. He creates him just as Severin creates Wanda. It seems that Ezekiel educates his god how to be a dominatrix, not a sadist but an *other* that will objectify the subject, an *other* that will be a point of destruction and creation at the same time.

'Marvelous woman!' I exclaimed

‘Silence Slave!’

She suddenly slowed, looked savage, and struck me with the whip. A moment later she threw her arm tenderly about me and pityingly bent down to me. ‘Did I hurt you?’ She asked, half shyly, half timidly.

‘No’ I replied, ‘and even if you had, pain for you is a joy. Strike again, if it give you pleasure.’

‘But it doesn’t give me pleasure’ (Sacher-Masoch 2000:105).

This scene teaches us that Wanda did not want to be a sadist; Severin was the one who formed her so she could subjectify him via pain and punishment. Wanda’s full process ends as the scene progresses when she accepts and assumes her new role: ‘Be then my slave and know what it means to be delivered into the hands of a woman’ (Sacher-Masoch 2000:106). This negotiation of Ezekiel with Yhwh shows us how Ezekiel teaches Yhwh to objectify him, Israel, and the R. Yhwh, the defeated god, the defeated masculinity, who has no temple and no land of his own, is being rewritten, this time as an object in a masochistic matrix. And he learns to, in his turn, how to function as the other in this matrix. It is not Yhwh that the book of Ezekiel saves here, but Israel, and since Israel and Ezekiel have no visible masculine phallic power, the technology of masochism is utilized here. For this matrix, the R needs to understand that this god is not a sadist but the other end of a new system of power, of a new art, of masochism.

And the first punishment comes indeed, Yhwh as a dominator unleashes his wrath in chapter 5, and the R that is slowly becoming Israel, is starting to embrace the punishment. For 4 long chapters in the book the R was suspended, knowing that at one point punishment will come. Now, the R is tamed, and is waiting to be beaten by this new God that is being formed here. By being beaten the R will embrace a new identity – a new Israel, a powerful and at the same time, powerless Israel.

4.2 I/O

Deleuze, Freud, Sartre, Reik, and of course Sacher-Masoch all speak about the masochist as a man and of his dominatrix as a woman, thus promoting and embracing a binary thinking of a man and a woman. Surrendering to this binary will not aid us with the understanding of this book and its political-cultural aspects, instead we must think of the subject as an unfixed identity that can ‘wear’ categories and mythologies in order to fulfill a historic end. These mythologies, in turn are created by the cultural system as a reaction to a threat to society or as a reaction to the changes of time. Some feminist critics who wished to challenge the main binary notion of male masochist-female dominatrix, offered new ways to see the structure. Kaja Silverman for example presented the ‘male lesbian’ via the story of Proust In *Search of Lost Times*. Silverman claims that Proust who wanted to be passive, desired and controlled by women, actually took the role of a woman who wishes to be controlled by another woman, ‘this fantasy may even stage the desire to penetrate the surface of a loved body while remaining at the same time a “woman”’ (Silverman 1992:386). Other critics of course show us more options for queer bodies and queer interpretations of masochism.¹⁸ Hence, the masochist subject does not recognize his limits, or actually refuses to recognize them. His existence is fluid and will reshape itself according to his needs and always in relation to power and the yearning to stay in a position of power.

He can choose to submit himself to the feminine while at same time holding the feminine in reserve as his own domain, even his own property... he includes the other within the large parameters of his own subjectivity. The other becomes part of the masochist subject’s massive, contradictory, and chaotic inferiority (Mansfield 1997: 33).

¹⁸ See Hornsby and Stone 2011:137-155.

And here another circle is coming to a closure, Ezekiel and Yhwh unite, Yhwh is the dominator of Ezekiel and by being one, Ezekiel takes possession of his own personal god. In this manner it is not Ezekiel that is being taken by force that is created, it is Yhwh. All of this is not something that happens in front of the eyes of Israel, physical 'historical' Israel, but in front of the R. Ezekiel is still reciting his monologue, he speaks to the R, his fantasies become the R's ones, he is not the one that will be constructed by Yhwh, but the R. The masochism as a political technology will end by subordinating the R, and will convince him to be a masochist subject, not to Yhwh, but to Ezekiel himself. Yhwh is a character of fiction, just like Wanda, and has a political purpose. The R is reading him, and once he reads him, he imagines him, fantasizes him; sometimes according to the cultural codes and constructs that the R already possesses, and sometimes with new ones, as Ezekiel teaches the R now. Once R becomes the masochist, Ezekiel will have a new role, not just a prophet but also as a negotiator between the dominator and the R.

Me, Myself and I

The first unit of the first part of the book is coming to a conclusion here. It draws the preliminary lines and aspects of the book and is intended to capture the reader, and subjectify the R into a solid 'I'. It produces a square: Ezekiel, Yhwh, Israel and the R that will be R^I. The triangle that had been created in many ways is a matrix that keeps altering in an endless identification process in which all of its parameters are equal and codependent.

4.3 Chapters 5.5- 7.27: Pleasure and Punishment

The second unit is a unit of prophecies in which Yhwh speaks against Israel and describes the punishment that Israel will receive. It is important to state here that Israel has yet to be punished, but has only been informed of her punishment. Her

punishment is set and her fate is doomed, since Yhwh does not leave here any room for repentance. Put differently, R is expecting now to witness the theater of masochism and to embrace its cultural meanings.

The unit can be divided into four different punishments and addressees of punishment:

The punishment of Jerusalem 5.5- 5.17

The punishment of the mountains of Israel 6.1- 6.14

The punishment of the land of Israel 7.1- 7.4

The Poetics of Doom 7.5-7.27

Each addressee can be viewed as a different aspect of written Israel. It seems that Yhwh prophesies on an empty land that had already received its punishment. This extensive use of the word Israel and its geographical location may indicate and re-support the assumption that this book was indeed written as a book and its audience is not a physical people who listen to the prophet, but a reader who reads and shapes his self according to the demands of the book.

Yhwh is saying what he will do to Israel, but in a very general manner. In the following unit, chs. 8-14, he will be much more specific and his words will manifest into actions. Deleuze stresses that the masochist is the one that forms his contract, his dominatrix, his environment, and especially the suspense and the delay of the situation. These chapters, or oracles can be treated as suspense; Reik writes: ‘tension, denotes a simple state of excitation in which there is a tendency to reach a climax which, it is self-evident, will be subsequently discharged. Suspense on the contrary connotes the element of the uncertain, the hesitating, the being poised and at the same time the idea that there is no definite duration or termination to this state’ (Reik 1939:174).

Here is the nature of this unit. Yhwh will do terrible things to Israel and the R is waiting for the expected punishment. Furthermore, the seeds of this punishment were being sowed, specifically of the rape scene in ch. 16. The suspense forces us to identify with the victim and is part of the mechanism of masochism. Until this moment Ezekiel distanced himself from Israel and thus taught the R that Israel is foul and the R must not identify with it. Now the process reverts itself: The R, in order to accept the mechanism of masochistic power must identify with Israel so he can reemerge and be a part of the new Israel that is being built now. The confession in front of Ezekiel in which the R admits that he is bad, splits the self into two, the one that confesses and needs to be eliminated, and the one that emerges as the new Israel at the same time.

Yhwh stands on one side of the equation, and Israel that is going to be severely punished, on the other side. In other words, by reading the book, the R gives Ezekiel the power to create his own dominator. From these oracles and further in the book, the R does not only accept his destiny, but indulges in it and desires it. The more Yhwh beats him, the stronger Yhwh will be and the more R becomes a subject with new powers and a sense of hegemony – thus making the book of Ezekiel, the creator of power for the powerless. This technology is the most predominate one in the book, the process of creating power for the powerless will reach its peak and will be utilized to the extreme in the following unit, chs. 16-23, by creating a woman as a tool in order to create a new strong R^M.

‘I want to be absolutely in your power, Wanda,’ I exclaimed suddenly, seized by that frenzy of passion when I can scarcely think clearly or decide freely. ‘I want to put myself absolutely at your mercy for good or evil without any condition, without any limit to your power.’

While saying this I had slipped from the ottoman, and lay at her feet looking up at her with drunken eyes. ‘How beautiful you now are,’ she exclaimed, ‘your eyes half-broken in ecstasy fill me with joy, carry me away. How wonderful your look

would be if you were being beaten to death, in the extreme agony. You have the eye of a martyr' (Sacher- Masoch 2000: 60).

The use of masculine plural and singular feminine is constantly changing in these oracles: the plural form of Israel is masculine but the singular form is a feminine, for example:

6.3 הִנְנִי אֲנִי מְבִיא עֲלֵיכֶם חֶרֶב וְאַבְדֹתַי בְּמוֹתֵיכֶם:

7.3 עֲתָה תֵקֵן עָלַי וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי אִפִּי בָךְ וְשִׁפְטִיתִיךָ

The individual *âme* that is being built here now is a feminine *âme* in which some of the verses in these oracles already have strong implications of rape, such as:

5.9- *On account of all your abominations, I will do among you what I have never done, and the like of which I will never do again.*

7.9- *I will show you no pity and no compassion; but I will requite you for your ways, and for the abominations in your midst. And you shall know it was I the LORD who punished.*

And the R^N is waiting for Yhwh to punish him, to rape him and to make him a new *Man*, a R^M. His *âme* that is being created here is the *âme* of a masochist. Hannaniah, son of Hezekiah, whose name - the one who was pardoned by god, and his father's name - the one that was strengthened by god, was sitting in his room. He did not leave it until he could find a way to keep this book in the canon and maintain this masterpiece of the art of power that has the ability to make him stronger.

The distinction between the masochist who seeks to have a contract, a new code of laws, and the dominator can be seen here. Yhwh gives reasons why he is going to punish Jerusalem, reasons that the masochist wants to hear: *but she rebelled against My rules and My laws, acting more wickedly than the nations and the countries round about her; she rejected My rules and disobeyed My laws* (5.6).

Indeed, by the end of the book of Ezekiel, a new code of rules will be written, a new contract between the dominator and his/her slave. And here again we can see the use of pleasure in the masochist's punishment: 'The masochist regards the law as a punitive process and therefore begins by having the punishment inflicted upon himself; once he has undergone the punishment, he feels that he is allowed or indeed commanded to experience the pleasure that the law was supposed to forbid' (Deleuze 1995: 88). It is not the R who did all the bad things, it is a theater, a fantasy, but the R will take pleasure in the punishment since it will allow the R to indulge in a forbidden law, and the will to be bad, and then to be punished again, so the R can reconstruct his self as R^M.

This book gives the R something that is very rare in history –the option to derive power from a powerless position. It makes the R a strong R^M even though his imagined historical people were defeated, the land was captured, the city was destroyed, the temple was burnt, and their god lost.

The process of masochism can be summed up in these words: the *Man* creates a bigger *Man* that will rule over him; this makes the *âme* of the man an *âme* with feminine characteristics. In other words, the man feminizes himself to be stronger. Hence, the R produces a few images: 1. God - the ultimate *Man* that he fears, admires, empathizes with, and wants to be punished by. 2. The feminine Israel - the image that the R loathes, but must accept now so God will be the ultimate *Man* and will punish him as severely as possible. 3. The new man that will be formed after he has been punished.

5. Chapters 8.1-14.23: The Discourse Exclusion and the First Acts of Violence.

I would like to go back again to the technology of panotopism, to elaborate on its role in the reader construction process and further discuss the use of the ordering of the discourse, the right speakers and the final establishment of the male god dominator, and of Ezekiel as his mediator. A process that yields, of course, the subjugation of the R in which it participates to acquire and gain new powers and a place in the dispositif.

The Technology of the Panotopism

One of Ezekiel's roles and technologies is the position of the Panopticon, or panotopism. The third major unit (8.1-14.23) and especially 8.1- 9.11, in which Ezekiel implements this technology, begins with a monologue of Ezekiel to the R with all of the known parameters. The R is the addressee of the message, and Israel is a well-constructed discursive tool. To this equation a new technology of power enters, the ordering of the discourse and the set of the right knowledge, right speakers and the right statements, and their circulation. Block argues that the chs. 8.1-11.25 needs to be treated as a single composition since the boundaries of this unit (8.1-4 and 11.22-25) are linked to each other and act as a frame to it. He also adds that the major themes seem to have been deliberately arranged in an artistic chiasmic order:

- A 8.1a the context of the vision (date, location, audience)
- B 8.1b the beginning of the vision (divine hand on him, he saw)
- C 8.3 the transportation to Jerusalem in divine visions
- D 8.4 the appearance of the divine glory
- D 11.22-23 the appearance of the divine glory

C 11.24a the transportation to Jerusalem in divine visions

B 11.24b the beginning of the vision (divine hand on him, he saw)

A 11.25 the context of the vision (date, location, audience)

(Block 1997: 272).

After mentioning the date, Ezekiel says that he is at his home with the elders of Judah sitting before him. He does not explain why they are sitting there, or if they are discussing anything. The position of the elders of Judah before Ezekiel in his house, in advance of his being taken to Jerusalem, allows us to draw several assumptions and reassess the discursive tools. Firstly, it tells us of the nature of the prophecy of Ezekiel – he is in his own home and is not in contact with Israel. Secondly, as was mentioned, the main name that had been utilized so far in the book for the imagined community was Israel and not Judah. Using the word Judah as a name and not as a geographical location (Ezekiel is being transported to Jerusalem and not to the geographical Judah) leads us to the understanding that Judah is in some way different from Israel, and the R might have some relay of interpretation, and may choose between different representations of the general identity of Israel. Judah is an identity that the prophet meets in his own house, represented as the elders. Judah is more physical, it still exists in the book's timeline, and the temple is in Jerusalem, its capital. Israel is a more abstract identity, a name that can be filled with different meanings. Identifying with Judah means identifying with the physical, or maybe historical entity. It is the body that will have the name Israel, an Israel that can carry on without a physical body but with an imagined physical one: The R's body, whether he is an Amorite, Christian or a Zionist.

Ezekiel is carried to Jerusalem, not in order to speak with the people or to prophesy to them, but to see. And here again he sees it all, he sees an image of fire

(8.2), he sees the temple and the glory of his god *like the vision that I had seen in the valley* (8.4b), and Yhwh asks him if he sees what the people are doing (8.6, 12, 15, 17). 8.7-8.14 further establish Ezekiel's abilities of seeing, Yhwh asks him to break a hole in the wall and to create an entrance so Ezekiel could see what the elders of Israel are doing. According to the BDB The meaning of the word **וַיִּדְרֹךְ** is to dig in the Qal stem, or row, and in this case is digging a hole in the wall . However, what Ezekiel is doing here is more than just breaking walls, in fact he investigates and surveys. Eichrodt too writes that Ezekiel investigates and doesn't just dig (Eichrodt 1970: 124).

The extensive use of the verb to see (12 times in 8.1-9.3),¹⁹ and the requests of Yhwh to Ezekiel to see, establishes here the technology of the panotopism. Even though Ezekiel is technically in Babylon, thousands of kilometers away from Jerusalem, he sees it all, and not only does he see it all, he sees it together with Yhwh and describes to the R what he saw. The strength of the Panopticon is by watching and not being watched, by the fact that the subject knows that somebody is constantly watching him without knowing what he looks like (p. 63). Here the R knows that as imaginary Israel, he is being watched, but the written Israel does not know that. Not knowing that they are being watched allows them to carry out the abominations, they even explain and say to themselves *'The LORD does not see us; the LORD has abandoned the country'* (8.14b).

If we link this passage to the first verse (8.1) we will see that there is a differentiation between the elders of Judah and of Israel, especially here in 8.11 in which seventy elders of Israel are doing abominations. Yet again, we see that there is

¹⁹ 8.2, 3,4,6,7,9,10,12,13,15,17.

a sort of hierarchy between the elders of Judah and the elders of Israel. Furthermore, there is a difference between the elders of Judah/Israel in exile, to the elders in Jerusalem. The ones in exile seek god and go to Ezekiel (8.1 the elders of Judah; 14.1 the elders of Israel) but they do not receive an answer, the ones in Judah think that Yhwh had left and might never come back. The R needs to choose to identify with the elders of the exile and not with the elders of Jerusalem. However the R also identifies with the Israel of Jerusalem, since he needs to indulge in the sin and get punished. This process allows us to see the use of Israel as a discursive tool and reaffirm that we cannot treat anything as a monolithic representation, as a frozen identity, and that the identity is always on the move, always evasive and always functioning as an element in the discourse.

Since the elders of Israel do not know that Ezekiel is watching them but the R does, we can treat Ezekiel not as a Panopticon to the written Israel, but to the Israel in the making that is being emptied of all signifiers and being reconstructed. This process is manifested with the participation of the reader, and by assuming his identity. The technology of panotopism is becoming a mechanism in the self's new *âme*, through understanding that geography will not be taken into consideration any longer and that a physical place has no more relevancy. Being next to a temple will not aid the Israelites in escaping their destiny, on the contrary, the power affiliated to proximity has dissipated, thus allowing the R to be Israel everywhere. The matrix, the facilities in which the new Israelite self exists is universal, and the watcher will always be looking and controlling. In this case, it does not matter if you sit in Babylon, Jerusalem, Rome or Berlin. The establishment of the panotopism technology is vital for the book of Ezekiel. Making this technology an element in the R's *âme* is the key to control over the body, the key of having docile bodies with no need for

physical violence at all. It of course demands the R to take part in the process of being docile. It creates an imagined hegemony, a virtual hegemony that does not need any weapon, an ideology without a physical matter, but nevertheless, an ideology that could and might be materialized into a political physical order.

Knowing now that Yhwh and his mediator Ezekiel are always on the watch is one thing, accepting the masochistic role is another. However two more practices here need to be finalized before the R's *âme* will be completely (re)created: The exclusion of the wrong knowledge and speakers, and the formation of the will to know. The R receives now a picture of what his crime is. The R finally hears Israel, and listens to it through Ezekiel and Yhwh who quote the elder; he participates in a discourse that teaches him which knowledge to seek. We witness now how practices become truth, how the discourse shapes the way we see things, how it narrows our perception and clarifies to us who the right speakers are.

Crime and Punishment

What exactly does Israel do in 8.1-9.11 that is considered such an abomination, and what is the nature of these abominations? Odell and Bowen treat this unit not as total sinful acts but instead as acts of despair of the people of Judea, an act in which the people don't seek to do abominations but to search of comfort (Odell 2005:104; Bowen 2010:44-5), other commentators choose to see this unit through its more traditional conservative approach, a set of abominations as an example of Judah's idolatry (Block 1997:283-301; Joyce 2007a:97; Zimmerli 1979:230-5). I would like to provide a new interpretation to this unit and to use Eichrodt's interpretation as a case study of subscription to the text.

Four times Yhwh asks Ezekiel the question: *Mortal, do you see what they are doing* (8.6a, 12a, 15a, 17a) and three times he tells Ezekiel that *You shall yet see even*

greater abominations! (8.6b, 13a, 15b), thus creating hierarchies of abominations from the lightest to the most severe:

1. The cult of Ashera, or the abominable statue 8.5-6
2. The images and the censers 8.7-11
3. Women lamenting the Tamuz 8.14-15
4. The astral cult, or the sun cult 8.16-18

These abominations have a few things in common. Firstly they all involve foreign deities and their worship. Secondly, they are also geographically positioned from the outside of the temple to the inner part of it. We can treat the spatial figure of the temple as an allegory to the discourse that Ezekiel wants to order; he starts from the boundaries and enters to its core - Yhwh and his seat. The first abomination, the cult of Ashera or the outrageous statue, takes place north of the gate of the altar where Ezekiel sees *סמל הקנאה*, (8.3) a ‘symbol of jealousy’, without any reference to humans or human activity near it. Eichrodt has used the interpretation of Hermann who had chosen to translate it as the *symbol of love* and not of jealousy, which serves to indicate that this symbol is of Ashera. This interpretation correlates with the statue that king Manasseh placed in the temple in 2 Kgs. 21.7, and in the parallel account in 2 Chron. 33.7. In both accounts the word symbol was used for Ashera, and in this case we witness a different use of the name, a degradation of the statue (Eichrodt 1970:122). Yhwh’s words to Ezekiel in 8.6 may not be interpreted as a question, since no answer is given here, but with a ‘rhetorical purpose of drawing attention to the principal issue, the effect of this activity – it has alienated Yhwh from his sanctuary’ (Block 1997: 287). In other words, for the leaders of Judah, the statue indicates that the entrance to the discourse is no longer in the control of Yhwh, but is controlled by the discourse of Ashera. The next abomination is the images and the censers (8.7-11);

here Ezekiel is brought to the inner court, towards the gate of the temple. The fortress that is supposed to be guarded, the watchdog of knowledge is no longer there; when the discourse is not ordered many bad things may happen and the social/political/cultural order is in great peril. Inside the inner court we witness human activity, seventy elders of Israel, among them *Jaazaniah son of Shaphan standing in their midst. Everyone had a censer in his hand, and a thick cloud of incense smoke ascended* (8.11b). This activity is conducted in the dark, in a place that according to Block was designed as a storage room for the temple (according to 1 Kgs. 6.5) and was converted to a cult room (Block 1997: 289). Each man was standing in front of his creature while holding the censer in his hand and inhaling its smoke for the enjoyment of the image. According to Eichrodt, the animals that Ezekiel sees are Egyptian gods. Eichrodt writes: ‘in Egypt, more than anywhere, we find gods in animal shape, whether as crocodiles, snakes and dung-beetles’ (Eichrodt 1970: 124). Indeed, this act of idolatry is worse than the one before since now we have people committing it, seventy elders of Israel, important political people; but not only that, these people are committing the sin in a dark cornered room while saying *The LORD does not see us; the LORD has abandoned the country* (8.12b). These people practice their abominations in the temple but secretly, in the dark and a cornered room. If we continue the allegory of the temple as a space of the discourse, we may understand that they are in the margins of the discourse, they might worship different gods but they are still images on walls that they see in the dark, not a strong powerful god.

The third act, Women laminating the Tamuz 8.14-15, already has a god with a name. The location of the abomination, the inner court of the temple, is further into the heart of the temple and the center of the discourse. The act of laminating the Tamuz is a Mesopotamian act, Tamuz or Dumuzi was one of the most popular deities

in Babylon and his act of worship, the lamination, represents the withering away of life as was identified with his descent to the realm of death. Usually the weeping of the Tamuz is in the summer, in a month that carries his name, when plants die and vegetation disappears, this time of the year represents the death of the god, and the weeping is the yearning for his return. 'Here we see Yhwh being robbed of his right to control his land in yet another sphere. The mystery of life and fertility, upon which Israel's earthly existence depends, is no longer dominated by the mighty controlling power of the covenant God...' (Eichrodt 1970: 126). This scene ends with another and final reminder from Yhwh that the tour is not yet over.

The last scene, the astral cult (8.16-18) describes the most defiled abomination according to the text. Every step Ezekiel has taken has brought him closer and closer to the holiest place of the temple. Here are the hierarchies of the abominations, from the boundaries, to the margins, to the center; the closer we get to the core, the higher the level of the deity we encounter. The last god that is being worshipped is the all mighty god of the sun, the people who worship him are not even the priests, they are a governmental elite as was presented by Eichrodt (1970:127), or people undistinguished as was said by Block (1997:297) and they had completely abandoned Yhwh.

By so doing they turn their back on the temple and hence on the ark where Yhwh has his throne! It is an expression of their utter contempt for the holy god of Israel; it amounts to saying that they have actually dethroned him from being Lord of his people, to set up instead a foreign god, the mighty sun-god of the Babylonian empire. The real god is the one who has power and gives success! In the eyes of these persons, Yhwh has shown himself to be helpless, and can no longer be worshipped except as a subordinate divinity of merely national significance (Eichrodt 1970:127).

But we must ask here, is it really that foul to believe in this way and to follow other gods? It seems that politically, the decision of the people to worship the sun god

and reduce Yhwh to a national, regional level, can be perceived as a very wise step that will keep them in better relations with the Babylonian empire, and will ultimately keep them in power. The R is in a position of expecting the book to be a part of his credo, thus his discourse. In this manner it is enough to see Eichrodt's passion describing the scenes and the use of his words to understand how strong the discourse of this book is. Eichrodt is already locked in the discourse, he accepts the truths and wrongs, the right and wrong speakers, and commentates on the text, as if its truth is the right and only one, as if the textual history is the 'real' history and this is how the social order should be. He has fully entered the discourse and has no intention of trying to find the mechanism of the Ezekielien discourse. Eichrodt has become a part of the discourse, an author-function by himself, and an agent whose purpose is to continue circulating the same statements.

The book of Ezekiel portrays the actions of the people and their words, and changes the discourse (or reshapes it), making their actions the wrong ones. R listens to Ezekiel when Yhwh tells him that it is wrong to face the sun. R listens and identifies with Yhwh. It is also important to note that Ezekiel is quiet in this scene, he does not speak or give his opinion, we can almost say that Ezekiel had stepped aside to give room for Yhwh to speak directly to the R. If the temple is the allegory to the discourse, then Yhwh is its focal point, but he does not exist without Ezekiel who is the mediator from the god to the people. This process is very interesting since it subjugates Ezekiel to Yhwh and Yhwh is the object that is created by Ezekiel and reaffirmed by the R.

Since Ezekiel has no real physical power, he writes violence in the hope that his quill will be mightier than the sword of Babylon. Ezekiel's weapon is the text. The weapon that had beaten all enemies and has the power to move people from place to

place, to declare wars, to defend, sustain, nourish and to recreate nations. This text is always in the process of affirmations by different *Rs* that reaffirm the written discourse as the correct knowledge and truth.

Nevertheless, the descriptions of the abominations does not end here, Yhwh informs Ezekiel: *Is it not enough for the House of Judah to practice the abominations that they have committed here, that they must fill the country with lawlessness and provoke Me still further and thrust the branch to their nostrils?* (8.17b). All of these sins are nothing compared to the sins of Judah, the people's social evil and violence. Block writes: 'The switch from cultic to ethical abominations, is abrupt but intentional, providing a link between 7.23 and preparing a way for 9.9, where these same moral evils are connected with the statement of Yhwh's departure of the land (cf. 8.12)' (Block 1997: 298). Adding to that statement: Yhwh is concerned with the fact that the people do not follow the contract that was signed between them and him, they breached it and spread violence. The R^N needs to accept the contract, and his dominator; he will do so in the act of violence that Yhwh will bring upon him soon.

The abominations are all related to the worshipping of foreign gods. This matter needed to be dealt with, so the R^N would not agree with the fact that Yhwh was just a regional god or a simple dominator yet a strong one that ruled the whole world. The discourse must encircle every aspect of the imagined community and every angle of the Israelite's mind. The scene of the images and the censers (8.7-11) can reflect this notion. These people were almost hiding, in a cornered room in the dark and were still judged. The Ezekielien discourse, the monotheistic way of thinking and ordering, cannot stand any marginalization, nothing can escape the ordering of the discourse in which the written Yhwh of Ezekiel is its focal point. The discourse is not only ordered, it is also widened, nothing can be done outside the discourse, and its

limitations are in fact the boundaries that are not boundaries. No one is allowed to do, act or speak outside the discourse and must be inside of it otherwise he will be destroyed. Yhwh's tone of voice in these units can be viewed as despairing, disappointed, even hurt in a way, his questions to Ezekiel can be seen as rhetorical ones that were spoken to emphasize his stress. This narrative element renders the R identify with Yhwh's pain, and accept the punishment of Israel; after all, they deserve it. Since the R^N is aware that he is also Israel, then it is he that wants to be punished, yielding the already known masochistic equation: the more the R^N is punished the stronger his object/master will be, the stronger R^N will be and eventually will render R^M.

5.1 Chapters 8.18-9.11: It's Payback Time

The sin of the elite of the Israelites was the worshipping of other deities in the temple, while assuming that Yhwh was no longer around. The sin of the people of Judah was to break the law and to promote social and political disorder. Now Yhwh is about to inflict punishment. He calls six people, each one of them has his own weapon and amongst them one that is *clothed in linen, with a writing case at his waist*. (9.2b). Linen may be connected to the priestly garment (cf. Lev. 16.23, 32), a fact that may help us understand his higher stature amongst the people and the direct connection to Yhwh, but also the shift in Ezekiel's position. Ezekiel is higher than the priest, he is the link between Yhwh and the R, and also, he does not apply the punishment, he is Yhwh's guest to the show of punishment. Yhwh summons the man dressed in linen and asks him to mark anyone in Jerusalem that does not do any harm and complain against the acts of the people, the rest he must kill. *Begin here at My Sanctuary. So they began with the elders who were in front of the House* (9.6b) says Yhwh - begin here, in the heart of the discourse and with the heads of the people. After the six

people leave to kill most of Jerusalem, Ezekiel falls on his face and asks Yhwh *Ah, Lord GOD! Are you going to annihilate all that is left of Israel, pouring out Your fury upon Jerusalem?* (9.8b). Ezekiel does not seem to protest, but to be shocked, he asks a question, and receives a very logical cold answer, For they say, *'The LORD has forsaken the land, and the LORD does not see'* (9.9b). The marking of the people together with the use of the man with a writing case at his waist connotes two significations: the marking can tell us that a theology of an individual responsibility operates here, a matter that correlates well with the reader construction. It also makes it clear; together with Ezekiel's question to Yhwh that what is perceived as merciless judgment is in fact a just act of judgment (see also Joyce 2007a: 103-104). The punishment is something that Israel, or R^N, deserves. Second, the man with a writing case can be perceived as a writer, and this writer, as a messenger of Yhwh, can be connected to the act of eating the scrolls by Ezekiel. Both men have access to the written word, the writer is the one that is marking the people, carving a sign on their foreheads, using again the quill as the ultimate tool for life, and Ezekiel is the one that actually owns the words that were said by Yhwh. Yhwh's violence sets the discourse and it is coming straight out from the focal point of it, the temple, to the rest of Jerusalem.

The process of ordering the discourse is at its peak, in 8.1-9.11 R^N witnesses the ordering of the discourse through images and voices. In the unit of 11.1- 14.11 R^N will witness a different form of discourse ordering: It lacks the images and the vision and has more quotes and statements, and more specific sub groups of people. Only after R^N receives the whole picture, learns about all the false speakers and the false statements, understands that only Ezekiel is the right speaker and Yhwh's words are

the only ones, will he be ready to be fully controlled by his dominator who forms his *âme* that will be the prison of his docile body.

5.2 Chapter 11 In/Out, Right/Wrong

The final order of the discourse is meant to explain to the R^N , what the right discourse is, what the right statements are, who the right speaker is and eventually, what his place is in this discourse. The discourse is the adobe in which the construction of the R 's *âme* takes place. If the R does not reside in this discourse and obey the rules and the regulations, he will not be able to be constructed. These chapters are the construction site of this discourse. Foucault gives four ways of discourse ordering: three different kinds of exclusions: taboo, the difference between the sane and the mad, the definition between true and false. And four ways of ordering: commentary, the author, disciplines and the rarefaction of the speaking subject (p. 60)

The first speakers that Ezekiel is facing are a group of twenty-five people, among them *Jaazaniah son of Azzur and Pelatiah son of Benaiah, leaders of the people* (11.1b). Ezekiel does not watch only theological leaders now, like the priests in the temple, but also political ones, and hears them speak: *There is no need now to build houses; this [city] is the pot, and we are the meat.* (11.3). This quote is very important, and according to Block we might not even treat it as a verbatim quotation of a genuine saying, but as something general that Yhwh picked up, his own formulation of popular saying (Block 1997:332). But in fact, all quotations are important, since they can be used either as a positive tool or as a negative tool to order a discourse; even if they are not exact or were really said by the person that is being excluded. Here of course Yhwh opposes this notion, and even before negating the saying he had already called them the *men who plan iniquity and plot wickedness in*

this city (11.2b), declaring them as not important. In 11.7-11.13 after Yhwh explains why these people did wrong, Pelatiah son of Benaiah dropped dead. Block writes: ‘the notice of Pelatiah’s death, raises serious questions concerning the relationship between vision and reality. Was Pelatiah a real person? How was Ezekiel able to witness this? At what point did his visionary experience cease and glimpse into the historical reality of Jerusalem commence?’ (Block 1997:339). Block tries to solve this problem without great success, but if we treat this vision as a vision for the R to read, then the possibilities increase. The death of Pelatiah tells the R^N that excluding is not enough, and only death is the real and final exclusion. The second exclusion, the brothers of Ezekiel 11.14-11.25, is actually a reversed one; it excludes the rest of Israel by promising the exiled Israel a better future. It creates two distinguished groups, one that is doomed and a second that will be saved, in correlation to what was said earlier in regard to the formation of two groups of Israel as a discursive tool. Let us not forget, both of the groups are punished. Ezekiel starts by saying that he had received a vision from Yhwh. In this vision Yhwh quotes what he had said to the brothers of Ezekiel *your brothers, your brothers, the men of your kindred, all of that very House of Israel* (11.15a) by the inhabitants of Jerusalem *‘Keep far from the LORD; the land has been given as a heritage to us.’* (11.15b), this quotation is in compliance with the rest of the statement, Yhwh is not here any more and all is ours. To this quote Yhwh gives a speech full of hope, he acknowledges the exile as a punishment but as a temporary one, an educative one; he will guard them in exile and then he will bring them back to the land of Israel and they will be purified; after the punishment and the repentance, Yhwh says:

I will give them one heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove the heart of stone from their bodies and give them a heart of flesh,

That they may follow My laws and faithfully observe My rules. Then they shall be My people and I will be their God. (11.19-20)

This new heart, new *âme* will not come easily, Israel still needs to shape up, to be reconstructed before they – hence the R^N receives the new *âme*. The old heart will be pulled out and a new one will be placed, a better one, a heart that can follow rules and regulations that can understand the meaning of a contract. R^N must be punished, otherwise there was no need for the exile of the Israelite group that will receive a new heart, and Yhwh after all could have punished only the sinners. The fact that the group that will repent has already been punished, and that the evil Israel is still doing their wrongs may indicate the political purpose of this book and the fact that this book was meant to be the discourse of the powerless.

We are reaching a climatic point here on two levels. First, the R^N has the abilities now to distinguish between the right Israel and the foul one. R^N wants to be a part of the new Israel, the one with the new heart and for that R^N will be punished first, for at the end of the process a whole new personality awaits him. And here comes the second level, the male dominator is coming to its full capacity, the reason that Yhwh wants to give R^N a new *âme* is for him to follow his rules, to be his slave, to worship him, to follow the masochistic power relations that are shaped as a contract. The fact that this oracle is given as a gospel from the mouth of Ezekiel adds to the construction of Ezekiel's god: Yhwh at this point of the story is in a battle to clean his name and to regain his power. He is constructed as we go through the pages, he is created by Ezekiel and circulated by the R so he could be the other that will subjectify the R^N and will give him the new powers, of the powerless. R^N masters now the art of masochism.

The unit to follow (12.1- 12.16) *the rebellious breed*; presents the other side of Israel, and despite many commentators who argue that the 11.14-11.25 is misplaced;²⁰ I can see a strong connection between these units. These two units show us two kinds of Israel, one that hears and sees (the brothers of Ezekiel) and the others, the rebellious breed who don't see, that Ezekiel needs to do acts in order to open their eyes. Even when their eyes are open, they do not have the ability to understand the discourse, since Ezekiel needs to explain to them the meaning of the actions, making them more and more of a separate group from me. However, Israel is still a part of the R^N that needs to be considered.

I will continue discussing the discourse construction from 13.1: *The charges against the prophets, the charges against the women prophets, and the oracle against the prophetic abuse*. A quick note is required though on the oracle against the wrong circulation. In 12.22 Yhwh asks *what is this proverb that you have in the land of Israel, that you say, 'The days grow many and every vision comes to naught'?* He does not only wish to eradicate the statement but also the circulation of the statement. *I will put an end to this proverb; it shall not be used in Israel any more* (12.23b), Yhwh is the only authority that has the power to decide what statement will be circulated and what will not, and he is the only one that will produce the statements (12.24-25). Nevertheless, he is not the institution, he is the focal point that is created in the discourse, and the institution is the group(s) that will rule with this discourse. This is the power relations that will be based upon this discourse and will derive their means from it.

²⁰See Block 1997:342-343, and n. 14 on p. 343.

In 13.2a Yhwh asks Ezekiel to *prophesy against the prophets of Israel who prophesy*, this phrasing has a bit of a comical tone. These prophets – the prophets of Israel who prophesy, are now being prophesied by the prophet Ezekiel.²¹ But it also cloaks a powerful message. These prophets prophesy from their imagination. In my opinion, even more than being against their word, this oracle is against the prophets and their words, against the implication of the source: *they said, 'Declares the LORD', when the LORD did not send them* (13.6b). The false prophets say that they receive Yhwh's word, but in fact, they do not bear the logic of Yhwh. Their statements have no foundation in the discourse and they must be discarded. In 13.9 we witness a punishment on three levels: *They shall not remain in the assembly of My people, they shall not be inscribed in the lists of the House of Israel, and they shall not come back to the land of Israel*. All levels of exclusion are described here, community, history, and land. Without these means, no one can participate in the discourse or have any influence on it. The principals in these chapters will be further discussed, especially chapter 33 and the separation between the community of exiles and the inhabitants of the ruins (p. 243).

5.3 Chapter 13: The Introduction of the Wicked Femininity

The oracle against the woman prophets is a different process of discourse forming, and exclusions, and it deepens the connection of the reader to Israel as a community and to Yhwh as its leader. In some ways it may also be considered as the preface to chs. 16 and 23. To some extent the oracle can be treated as a continuation of the oracle against the prophets, the preambles to the oracles are almost identical (also Greenberg 1983:241) and both the male and female prophets prophesy from

²¹ On humor in the Bible, see: Brenner 1990.

their heart/imagination (13.2; 17). Nevertheless the women are not called prophets exactly, they are called women who prophesy, *הַמְתַּנְבְּאוֹת*²² and hence we can see a reduction of the cultural level of the women. Moreover, other differences exist between 13.1-16 and 13.17-23, which are the personal character of the women, and the methods and the addressees of the prophecy. The male prophets prophesy to the nation as a whole and the women address the individuals. I may add that they literally hunt them (13.18b, 20). In fact, Yhwh is set to the rescue and frees the fragile man whom is compared to a bird from their hands: *I am going to deal with your pads, by which you hunt down lives like birds, and I will tear them from your arms and free the persons whose lives you hunt down like birds* (13.20). In my view this unit echoes Prov. 7.5-7.27 that warns the man from the hands of the dangerous foreign woman. Both women trap the man like a bird (Ez. 13.20; Prov. 7.23) and both use techniques to attract the men to them, the women prophets *sew pads on all arm-joints and make bonnets for the head* (13.18a), and the dangerous foreign woman dresses in cloths of a whore and makes her bed sheets (7.10, 16, 17). In this unit we are facing, for the first time in the book the representation of the woman, which throughout the book will be evil and promiscuous. Yhwh's expression in 13.19a *וְהִחַלְלֵנָה אֶת־יְהוָה*²³ is shocking according to Block (1997: 416); they do not profane his name but him in front of his people, and for what? *In return for handfuls of barley and morsels of bread* (13.20a).

²² According to the HALOT, the meaning of this word is to talk like a prophet (HALOT 1996:659).

²³ JPS translates this verse as *You have profaned My name*, but I don't see a reason for this correction, especially due to the fact that the BHS does not offer any correction to this verse. Other versions do not use the phrase my name, but me: ASV: And ye have profaned me. KSV: And will ye pollute me. NRS: You have profaned me, NIV: You have profaned me.

They did it for a very small price, but if we read further we will see that they trap the people, meaning that the price is not for them. They just charge almost nothing so they could lure the innocent victim, exactly like the dangerous woman in Prov.7. *Thoughtlessly he follows her, Like an ox going to the slaughter, Like a fool to the stocks for punishment* (Prov. 7.22). No one can save the fool that goes to the woman in Prov.7 but in this unit Yhwh is the one that will save this miserable man. Block argues that Greenberg's interpretation of these women as fortunetellers is too weak because they actually seek to control and to trap them (Block 1997:414, note 30). Indeed, Yhwh comes to save the person, the individual person, not a full community but lost male individuals. And in the same breath, nine times the word עַמִּי, my people, appears in this unit alone (13.9, 10, 18, 19, 21, 23). Yhwh's reference, my people, is uncharacteristically sympathetic since throughout the book he opposes Israel.²⁴ Block argues that when Yhwh sees his people threatened by deceptive charlatans and human vultures, he stands as their patron and comes to their defense (Block 1997:415; same goes for Greenberg 1983:245). I would like to add to this notion another element; the first time that the phrase *my people* appears in the book of Ezekiel is in 13.9-10, in the oracle against the prophets, and a connection between the two appearances can be made. These two groups, both male and female pose a great risk to Yhwh, they prophesy peace. The men say that peace will come (13.10) and the women give life to people who are not supposed to live (13.19). Dealing with life and death and with the course of history ought to be exclusively Yhwh's domain, and indeed Yhwh stands firm against these groups. Nevertheless, one more cultural use of the word *my people* can be given here, the usage of *my people* in 13.9 can be regarded

²⁴ The word עַמִּי appears in the book in 14.8, 9; 21.17; 25.14; 33.31; 34.30; 36.12; 37.12, 13; 38.14, 16; 39.7; 44.23; 45.8, 9; 46.18.

as a means of exclusion **בסוד עמי לא ידיו** says Yhwh *They shall not remain in the assembly of My people*, continuing the distinction between the two groups, a circle of true Israel, and a circle of false Israel, only true Israel can listen to Ezekiel. In the women's case we can see one more element, the nourishing element. The women profane Yhwh and not his name, and we can see a connection here to Prov. 7, the evil woman who is sexual and not mother-like. The use of the word *my people* can be interpreted as an act in which Yhwh takes his son from the women, from the bad mother and guards him, or maybe we should call his son, *his slave*, his subject that is only his. The women want to take control over the male bodies, an individual after an individual, and it seems that they have no responsibility for the community while their intentions are not pure. Moreover, the women take possession of the *âme* of the men, the *âme* that Yhwh is in the midst of constructing. This is something that the book of Ezekiel cannot accept.

The R must understand that he is a part of a community, the imagined community of Israel. His whole construction is dependent on this, as is the construction of Israel. If the R receives personal deliverance then the existence of Yhwh as a validating and construction point outside the matrix is pointless. Especially if the deliverance will be by the hand of a woman! R must be a part of Yhwh's own people and when Yhwh tells the women [I will] *rescue My people from your hands, and they shall no longer be prey in your hands* (13.21b) he is telling the R that he can be freed from the hands of these women whose femininity is evil. R is now in the hands of his dominator who will punish him and at some point of the book will treat him as a woman. R is reminded that he is a part of a community and can never ask for personal repentance. His body is always a part of the greater body – every body that is mutilated is the R's body, and every body that is being born is part of the greater body

of Israel. This body does not belong to the woman for she is foul, evil and dangerous. Yhwh is taking both systems of mythologies – the masculine and the feminine and both will be used in the process of the construction of the reader/Israel that will come in 16-23.

5.4 Chapter 14: The Final Order

The last two oracles of the discourse-ordering are 14.1-11 and 14.12-23. These oracles can be viewed as a conclusion to the order of the discourse. In the first unit, the elders of Israel come and sit in front of Ezekiel. We do not know if it is in Ezekiel's house, but the resemblance to 8.1 may suggest that it is. Meaning, the prophet is no longer in Jerusalem and he is back, hence, these two oracles can be viewed as the conclusion of the discourse-ordering unit. It is not mentioned what the purpose of the elders is and why they sit in front of the prophet; instead we have a speech of Yhwh to Ezekiel. Yhwh says that he will not speak to these people, and instead he exclaims a rare reference in the book: *Repent, and turn back from your fetishes and turn your minds away from all your abominations* (14.6). According to Joyce this call for repentance that might seem a bit odd since death sentence to the guilty has already been given, serves two functions: Firstly, it is used as a rhetorical device, it may serve as a reminder of why the end has come. Secondly, it functions as the desire of Yhwh for the obedience of its people (Joyce 2007a: 124-5). In the verses that follow Yhwh says that whoever does not repent will be cut off from his people, using the word *my people* again. This repentance comes with a warning to a prophet that will bear a false prophecy, since his false prophecy might mislead the people (9-10). The oracle seemingly ends with a glimpse of hope, *so that the House of Israel may never again stray from Me and defile itself with all its transgressions. Then they*

shall be My people and I will be their God (14.11). Here again, Yhwh speaks to the R^N. He wants the R^N to confess so he could repent for him. However, Yhwh speaks to the R's 'communal self', a self that is personal and common at the same time. It may be perceived that Yhwh in the current situation cannot be the god of Israel, since he rejects practically everyone. Thus, the punishment and the acceptance of the punishment is a crucial element in this acceptance of the slave-dominator. The R construction is a vital key for the existence of the god and continuity, especially in front of the other deities. The prophet that is not Ezekiel is a false one, he carries the wrong statements and for that he will be killed. The right statements and the right speaker are presented to the R here in the book. It is Ezekiel and the R^N must not seek any other speakers or wrong statements, since the existence of Ezekiel is fundamental for the existence of Yhwh and vice versa.

6. Theory Revisited

Foucault suggests that there are epistemic breaks in discourse, that at certain moments in a culture, there are discontinuous developments in discursive structures; for example, the significance given to the divine world. In early and modern early Europe, every event was interpreted by the connection to the supernatural, or to the discourse of religion, but in modern times' Europe, events were interpreted by science (Foucault 2005:164-179). Hence, discourse can change and is not fixed, the reasons for the discourse to change and its breaking points are derived from the power and power relation, making the discourse shaped by power and shaping power at the same time.

In this discourse of Ezekiel the reader knows who speaks right and who speaks wrong. He know what knowledge is needed to be produced and what is the focal point

to this knowledge, and he knows that he can exist only within the limitations of the discourse, for nothing is allowed to be outside of it, and nothing can be said in the dark. The discourse has a watcher, a tower that guards any move and any thought that the R has. All that R must say, think and act has to be done in the light, under the eyes of Ezekiel. Ezekiel is the Panopticon who is in between the focal point of the discourse; and the R, the subject that is produced in this discourse. The R accepts and circulates the statements of this discourse, in which they in turn, create his *âme*, materialize his body and unify his personal body with the body of the community. In this unit the R is erased and becomes R^N , by accepting the process in the book the R^N is in the process of becoming R^M and then R^I .

Let us not forget that this discourse production with its limitations, exclusions, and the correct knowledge production, is given to us in an already produced book, signed and sealed with an autograph that has a name, Ezekiel. This signature, the seal of the book, of the right knowledge is also protected in the ultimate canon, the basis of western philosophy, religions and thoughts - it is sealed in the Hebrew Bible. We as readers, as modern readers, already accept the fact that the Ezekiélien discourse is the right one, these chapters just serve to reaffirm what we already know, and strengthen our will for truth.

I am trying to expose these methods and technologies and to try to seize this system of representations, to build another system on top of it, and by doing so, to question the episteme that is perceived by this given discourse. In fact, two different 'I's' participate in my reading: I, as R, understand the discourse that will construct me; and, I the critic, who attempts to expose the ways of constructions and exclusions in the discourse. These two I's, the one who is the addressee and the one who resists, help me to both accept and reject this discourse at the same time. They allow me to

understand why I am as I am, and what it means to think as an Israeli(te) and as a man. They allow me to expose my critical foundations, Judaism and Zionism, and the masculine one. However I as a self who desires to oppose these critical foundations, who believes that power should be averted, cannot accept the ordering of the discourse and my subjugation. Therefore I try to create a point in the discourse that will allow me to appropriate its meaning in Barthes' terms, to build a new one on top of it, to forestall the circulation and to reshape the statements that still circulate in our modern and postmodern world.

Part II. Chapters 15-23. In your Blood Live! The Wo(Man) and the Social
Body.

7. Blood and Order

Examining the manly ideal means dealing not only with nationalism or fascism, usually regarded as “masculine,” but also with socialism, communism and, above all, the ideals and functioning of normative society...Modern masculinity helped to determine, and was in turn influenced, by what were considered normative patterns of morality and behavior, that is to say, typical and acceptable ways of behaving and acting within the social setting of the past centuries (Mosse 1996:4).

Although Mosse has examined the image of man in relation to the modern state, his research is still valid here. The image of man is the image of the nation, whether it is a fascist/liberal/communist/democratic modern state or whether it's a monarchy, modern or ancient. This assumption may stand almost as a truism. Wherever we may go, it will be a male world shaped by its images that are constantly being restructured to serve a political end.²⁵ In this note, the chapter will deal with the genealogy of the male's *âme*, how it is constructed and what are the different elements that fabricate it. Different technologies of power were exercised on the R in the first part of the book, rendering the R as R^N , a clean slate ready to be scribed. In this part of the book we witness the movement of the R^N to R^M before its full assimilation into R^I .

Before analyzing different elements in the R's *âme*, and different gendered aspects that construct The R^M , there is a need to review the structure of this unit and to grasp the meaning of such an arrangement, and also the benefits in the establishment of the R^M and a future R^I . Chs. 16 and 23 can be viewed as a unit apart, since the frame is similar in some aspects: Both chapters engage in an extensive use

²⁵ For studies on the connection between masculinities and nationalism see: Yosef 2004:16-47, Cohen 1996:98-110, Nagel 1998:242-69, Brown 1998:1-22, 179-88, Messner 1997, Dudnik, Hagemann & Tosh 2004, Connell 1987:241-58, Gellener 1983:84-95, Radhakrishnan 1992:77-95, Heuer 2008:43-58.

of the rhetoric of pornography, and both are depicted as historical ones (in addition to chapter 20). In this way, ch. 15 serves as the prologue to the unit. Another element in this division that we need to take into consideration is the rhythm of the unit. The unit starts with a description of history, and continues as theology/law-history-theology/law-history. This rhythm may facilitate the process in which the R^N is being constructed and transformed to R^M , clearing the path for the ensuing units.

The Israelite past described in 16, 20, and 23 is a sexual mythical one, depicting Israel as a whore. Hence it is not a simple historical account of the Israelite, but rather a sexual historical one. The sexual history teaches the R^N the correct sexual conduct and ethics that he needs to perform in order to become R^M . Thus connecting together different concepts: the sexual and the political, pleasure and a sense of self, sexual activity and the correct knowledge. Due to this line of interpretation, I will not discuss the chapters in this unit in a consecutive manner but rather analyze 16, 20 and 23 together as the sexual metaphorical historical account of the R. 17-19 and 21-22, will be analyzed as one unit of theology construction due to the wide use of analogies and rules.

7.1 Curtain Down, Curtain Up: Chapter 15 as a Bridge

The unique layout and structure of ch. 15 has lead researchers to the understanding that it is connected to 14.12-23 and to the unit to come chs. 16-23 (Joyce 2007a:129; Bowen 2010:80). The figurative language of this chapter, which differs from the previous unit, will dominate the next unit, mainly the use of the metaphor and the comparison of Israel to different objects.

The chapter is divided into two main units: the first (15.1-15.5) - the rhetorical questions, the second (15.6-15.8) is Yhwh's answers to his own questions. In the first section, Yhwh is asking Ezekiel a few questions to which no answers had been given.

These questions that speak about the vinestock, scrutinize the nature of Israel and of its relationship with Yhwh. Yhwh asks Ezekiel, without waiting for his answer about the nature of this vinestock, and what the wood of the vine is used for. The answer to this question is nothing but the use of fire; one cannot build ships or construct buildings. ‘The soft vine shoot is of no use for any tool, not even for a light peg in a wall’, writes Zimmerli in response to 15.3 (Zimmerli 1979:320). Yhwh continues and asks about the fire qualities of this wood: *now suppose it was thrown into the fire as fuel and the fire consumed its two ends and its middle was charred — is it good for any use?* (15.4). ‘Clearly the answer is, “No!”’ writes Bowen, ‘If the fate of the vine (branch) was nothing before it was burned, then how much less than nothing is its fate once burned. What is worth less than burned wood? Compared to all other woods, the vine is both useless and worthless’ (Bowen 2010:81-82). After establishing the fact that the vinestock is worthless and useless, Ezekiel then compares it to the inhabitants of Jerusalem (15.6b) that are the charred middle part of the wood. Hence, stressing the fact that Judah is burned and all that is left is Jerusalem and its inhabitants whose fate will be similar to the fate of Israel.

The comparison of Israel to a vinestock is not unique to the book of Ezekiel: The spies in Num. 13.23 mention the vine as a sign of the lushness of Canaan; Ps. 80 describes Israel as a noble vinestock that Yhwh brought from Egypt and planted in Israel whose branches speared all over the country, and mountains were covered by its shade. Hos. 10.1 speaks about Israel as a fruitful vine, and so do Deut. 8.8 and 1 Kgs. 4.25. Nevertheless Judah has sinned and from this wonderful fruitful vine all that is left is a worthless naked pruned branch that will be burned to the ground.

‘Comparison of the vinestock to Jerusalem (a surrogate for Judah/Israel) is a grotesque distortion of the traditional use of the vine as a figure for Israel’, writes

Greenberg (1983:268). In most of its occurrences the noun **יָבֵט** denotes the tree itself (Gen. 40.9; Num. 6.4; Duet. 32.32; 1Kgs. 5.5). However, it seems that the connotation of the vine to Israel is done by the prophets themselves:

I planted you with noble vines, all with choicest seed; Alas, I find you changed into a base, an alien vine! Jer. 2.21

Israel is a ravaged vine and its fruit is like it. Hos. 10.1

According to the BDB, Israel is directly denoted as vine only in Hos. 10.1 while in some other cases it is used as an allegory for Israel or other foreign entities: Hos. 14.8; Isa. 16.8-9; Jer. 48.32 (BDB 1996:172). Therefore, it is difficult to understand why Greenberg cannot see the connection to Israel here. Moreover, Ezekiel himself denotes bad Jerusalem's mother as a vine: *Your mother was like a vine in your blood* 19.10, hence there is no need here to claim another way, unless Greenberg is trying to salvage Ezekiel. In the book of Ezekiel, Israel compared to vinestock is also Israel compared to a woman, or actually interpellated as a woman. To use Butler's term – the performatives of Israel in the book of Ezekiel are feminine. Moreover, Israel in this chapter is not only a woman, but she is a deviant one, a sinner, and a woman who bears no fruit or children. This is not the only place in the Hebrew Bible that the word **יָבֵט** has sexual connotations; Song of Songs gives us a few examples for this use:

I say: Let me climb the palm, Let me take hold of its branches; Let your breasts be like clusters of grapes, Your breath like the fragrance of apples. Song. 7.9

Let us go early to the vineyards; Let us see if the vine has flowered, if its blossoms have opened, if the pomegranates are in bloom. There I will give my love to you. Song. 7.13

Here we can witness not only the connection between the vine and the woman but also the vine as a vagina.²⁶ Thus, this marking of Israel as vine is neither accidental nor a mistake of other scholars, as Greenberg claimed, but a narratological technic to take the R^N through a new unit that will act as his male *self's* construction tool via the technologies of pornography that will render him as R^M.

Bowen concludes her analysis of this chapter and writes: 'One issue in recovery is changing that negative view of self...Ezekiel and the exiles will need to develop secure relationships with their self and others, including God, to become survivors instead of victims' (Bowen 2010:83). The process of assuming the new identity via a recovery from trauma was presented in the part on masochism (p. 109), and will continue throughout the book of Ezekiel, however it is not 'historical Israel' that is going through this process. In her findings, Bowen assumes an a-priori Israel that was crushed and is rising again; but what if this is actually the first time, right here in the book of Ezekiel, that Israel is being created? This is not to say that there was no Israel before the destruction of Jerusalem, but to say that Israel as we know it today, in its theological and political aspects, might be a product of the exile and not something that survived it. And further, the elements of exile and of borders, creating the geography of exclusion and inclusion, are almost immanent to the existence of the R^I. Ezekiel's use of history, or a revisionist history is what allows the R to produce a self, to form a past and to become R^M followed by R^I. Hence, it is not Israel that is the process of recovery, but the R that takes a part in the construction of the R^I self.

²⁶ There is an extensive debate about the pornographic and masochistic aspects of the Song of Songs and the usage of vine and other fruits and plants as pornographic tools. See: Burrus and Moore 2002 and 2003; Boer 1999:53-71, 2012:27-35; Meyers 2001: 197-213.

During the eight-year gap between the *History of Sexuality* I and II, Foucault decided to change the way in which he examines the historical events that produced the subject. 'How one constitutes one', or 'subjectivation' became his main concern, and he began to ask why sexual conduct became an object of moral apprehension? Instead of understanding the sexual acts as deviant, he decided to examine the problematization of them and how this problematization constructs the moral self. The book of Ezekiel, especially this unit, may be treated in the same way.

The questions in ch. 15 were not just given to an anonymous audience but were given to the R, and R answers them, realizing the problematization, and becomes ashamed. The shame here is connected to the next chapter that portrays Israel's behavior. The R needs to find a better way to govern the self, to embrace the technologies of powers that are laid here and to be a new subject that will be a part of a new Israel.

7.1.1 Biopower

A few more technologies of power are presented in this unit, mainly pornography and Biopower. Biopolitics or Biopower (Foucault intermingles these two phrases arbitrarily) use life itself as a political condition, and the mere existence of the human being is posited by politics. Foucault sees biopolitics as a technology of power to manage the people as a group and changes the human being into a political person. Agamben, unlike Foucault, does not regard the sovereign as the one who uses biopolitics; instead, he sees biopolitics as the core of the sovereign. Agamben argues that the central binary opposition of the political is between bare life (zoé) and the political existence (bios). This distinction is between the natural being – a being in the bare life status that does not live under the law (refugees, Jews in concentration camps, etc.) and the legal existence of the subject, the bios. According to Agamben,

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homo sacer is a person who can be killed freely by someone since he has been excluded or banned from the political-legal community and has been reduced to the status of his physical existence. This form that is called 'bare life', is the basis of political existence, the outlet from which the sovereign can strip the political legal existence from the person or give him one according to his own needs. Using Schmitt's work *Political Theology* (2005) Agamben describes the meaning of exemption and its role in the formation of sovereignty. Once the sovereign exempts someone from the law he strips him/her of his/her political existence and brings the subject back to the 'bare life' status; Schmitt named this process *Ausnahme*, a term that I will use later on in the analysis (p. 172).²⁷

7.1.2 It is All Politics

Let us agree that the Hebrew Bible is a political document. It contains ideologies of specific interest groups. It is used for achieving political ends. It exercises fundamental influence on believers, has cultural significance for non-believers. It is therefore as important to resist its unpleasant features as to celebrate its values and beauty (Brenner 1995, 256).

The idea behind these words is so fundamental that scholars sometimes tend to ignore or neglect it: the Bible *is* a political tool. Its words, ideas, stories, the so-called historical tales and its prophecies are the basic principles not only to Jewish thought but also to western thought in general. As important as the philological literal research to the Bible is, one must not neglect its political theological value, and understand that the theological is also political. Researching the theological aspects of the Bible is the examination of the political foundations that shaped and, in many ways, still shape our lives. If biopolitics makes the human into a political identity and differentiates the human from the status of 'bare life', and if the sovereign can be defined by the ability

²⁷ More about Biopower see appendix number 2 (p. 324).

to exempt, then all of these elements can be traced throughout the Hebrew Bible. If in the previous unit the R was cleansed and Israel rendered foul, then in this unit the R^N turns to R^M, then becoming R^I. All the while bearing in mind that the process showed to us here is a political, theological rendition of the male *âme*, and every aspect, even history itself, is a part of this process.

7.1.3 Porno-Theology

The introduction of pornography²⁸ into the academic field of research was as a result of the battle of feminists against pornographic material in society and against its implication for the status of women (Stern 1982:43-46). In this manner, researchers, mainly Dworkin and Mackinnon, were not interested in the phenomena of pornography but rather in its affect:

We define pornography as the graphic sexually explicit subordination of women through pictures or words that also includes women dehumanized as sexual objects, things or commodities; enjoying pain or humiliation or rape; being tied up, cut up, mutilated, bruised, or physically hurt; in postures of sexual submission or servility of display; reduced to body parts, penetrated by objects or animals, or presented in scenarios of degradation, injury, torture; shown as filthy or inferior; bleeding; bruised, or hurt in a context that makes these conditions sexual (MacKinnon 1987:176).

To sum it up in one sentence: The political subordination of women is mirrored and presented by pornography. It is very difficult to analyze pornography and the erotic while separating the unjust exploitation and representation of women. Nevertheless, it is impossible to disconnect the erotic and pornography from the human imagination, hence after establishing the opinion of Dworkin and Mackinnon I will try now to further explore this term. Some feminist theorists claimed that there is a difference between the erotic and the pornographic. Their main assumption is that

²⁸ For a full review of the term, see appendix number 3 (p. 327).

the erotic is about sexuality and pornography is about power, and that sex is being used as the male weapon to control women.

For Bataille, eroticism is born at the same moment as humanity, simply because the boundary separating man from nature is the boundary that is transgressed during (or rather *by*) erotic activity. In Eroticism, man faces his own annihilation and refuses to accept it. Therefore, the subject uses eroticism to die in order to experience life. However, this new life is not the subject's own life but the universal one. The human discontinuity is embraced in order to create a radical continuity that is the underside of human experience, which is essentially the act of sacrifice. Man, according to this statement, destroys his small self and builds a different self, one that is a part of humanity.

However, it is not as simple in the book of Ezekiel. The woman Jerusalem that is being raped and sacrificed in chs. 16, 23, is after all an allegory for Israel, and to its representative - the male reader. Such gender reversal cannot be solved easily, and not in the binary matter that is portrayed in Dworkin's and Bataille's. In her discussion on the value of pornography and its characteristics, Brenner states that the nature of pornography and the metaphorization of human sexuality secure the audience's attention and its emotional response is granted. 'The political result of this strategy is a contrast between the metaphor and its designated purpose: pornography is expected to promote religious and political reform' (Brenner 1995a:259-260). Another element must be taken into consideration – the fact that Israel is being treated as a woman. This complex episteme of gender reversal needs to be reviewed carefully. The woman that is being sacrificed to bring new life to the male is no other than male Israel itself, creating an equation in which a man becomes a woman to be sacrificed by his god, so his god could recreate himself, and by so doing the man could relive. Moreover,

pornography, or the erotic, is used to promote theology, and we may even view these chapters as the basic chapters for the theology of the book of Ezekiel.

7.2 The History of Sins

[...There is no moral code] that does not refer to a unified moral conduct; no moral conduct that does not call for the forming of oneself as an ethical subject; and no forming of the ethical subject without ‘modes of subjectivation’ and an ‘ascetics’ or ‘practices of the self that support them (Foucault 1985:28).

In *History of Sexuality* II and III Foucault does not speak about sexual behaviors but on the *problematization* of sexual conduct, and its moral application. This strategy allows us to discuss the way the subject is being constituted by the creation of sexual codes and conducts (Foucault 1985:26). In this case, the sexual moral codes are not something that were here all along but a tool that assists in the construction of the subject. This is how I will analyze chs. 16 and 23, the main focus will not be on the moral applications of the sexual behaviors of Jerusalem and Samaria but on the political use of these moral codes.

7.2.1 A Wo[Man]

Jerusalem’s trial starts with the telling of her history, 16.1-3. This is the first time in the book of Ezekiel that the cultural representation of the Israelites is designated as Jerusalem the city. In the rest of the cases Jerusalem was portrayed as an actual physical city while the prophecies were meant for the people who dwell in Jerusalem.²⁹ The shift in the naming of Israel and Judah can be viewed in some different ways. The main one is the metaphor of the city as a woman and its marriage with Yhwh. The metaphor of the city as a woman is a known rhetorical tool in the writing of the ancient Near East and contains elements of cities as goddesses who

²⁹ 4.1,7,15; 5.5; 8.3; 9.4,8; 11.15; 12.10,19; 13.16; 14.22; 15.6.

married the patron god of the city, thus making them more splendid than other cities.³⁰ Maier adds that ‘the personified female city offers a portrait of Zion in which spatial and gendered elements are intertwined. In other words, the personification allows one to think of Zion as a space and as a woman that represents the inhabitants of this space’ (Maier 2008:2). Indeed, the R^N starts to identify with Jerusalem as a part of the process of rendering to R^I. The understanding goes hand in hand with the marriage metaphor in this chapter and in ch. 23.³¹ Feminist research of Chs. 16 and 23, diverse as it may be, still springs from the same core idea that Jerusalem is a woman, Yhwh is a man, and Jerusalem is being punished for her sins. This assumption does not necessarily promote hermeneutics of feminine liberation but rather encourages a binary perception of gender. An example of this thinking can be found in Kamionkowski’s book *Gender Reversal and Cosmic Chaos* that writes ... ‘the root metaphor that lies behind the martial metaphor of Ezekiel 16 is what I call the WEAK MAM IS A WOMAN metaphor’ (Kamionkowski 2003:58, emphasis is in the original text). Although Jerusalem is regarded as a woman who marries Yhwh, we still need to remember that the nation/community, the audience, the writer and the reader (at least until modern times) are all men.

Maier states:

Modern readers, I continue to argue, should not take the whore metaphor literally as a description of women or gender relations in antiquity. Instead, they need to detect the power of the metaphor, which expresses on the one hand experienced shame and humiliation in a patriarchal and androcentric culture and on the other hand evaluates this experience in retrospect through self-accusation. The use of the sexualized and highly polemic language is due to the social-historical context and the then common language of warfare. Living in a totally different world and

³⁰ For a study on Jerusalem as a personified city and its parallels to Ancient Near East literature, see: Biddle 1991:173-194; Dobbs-Allsopp 1993; Schmitt 1985:557-569; Follis 1987.

³¹ A matter that was well established in the dissertation of Galambush 1992.

culture, modern readers should read these texts critically and challenge their one-sided portrait of God as the violent, victorious master of history and of his people. Further more, informed readers today should challenge any attempt to legitimate violence and war by referring to this portrait of the biblical God in current political or religious discourses (Maier 2008:139-40).

Hence, binary thinking of ‘a weak man is a woman’ is not sufficient here, and in order for us to understand the cultural gain in portraying the roots of the Israelite man as a woman, we must take into closer consideration the different levels of myths of masculinities.

In contradiction to the ‘historical facts’ stands a new historiography that tells a different story: A mythological story that provides the R with a new sense of a personal self as the manifestation of the national self and vice versa. This self is being achieved by metaphors whose rhetorical tools are pornography and biopolitics. In this manner, the use of the name of Jerusalem in the prehistoric (maybe even ahistorical) story of Israel gives the R^N a sense of eternity by accepting Jerusalem as his roots.

This Jerusalem had parents: *your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite* (16.3b). According to Joyce the intention in this verse is to insult (Joyce 2007a:203). Joyce ends his sentence here and does not elaborate on the insult; who is insulted here, Jerusalem or the R^N? Since Jerusalem is a written fictional character used as a rhetorical tool, it cannot be insulted. The one that is meant to be insulted here is the R^N whose self has been erased for 14 chapters and completely zeroed, and is being rebuilt to become R^M.

The R^N starts his history as a woman, a divine city that was picked up by the ultimate man Yhwh; then splits and recreates himself as a moral R^M. In this split, the male sacrifices his other part in his self, the woman, making her in the process the deviant creature that has no legal status and that always needs to be tamed. Here lies

the basic foundation of the Israelite society: one strong male god, a moral male self and a woman who is always in a state of being controlled. The connection between the R and his god is executed via sexual intercourse, rape, humiliation and beating – all of which are the element of masochism as an art of power.

To conclude this preliminary step: The use of the name Jerusalem can be viewed not only as an ancient Near East writings, but also as the eternal source of the Israelite self. If Yhwh is the ultimate leader, thus the ultimate patriarch, then Jerusalem is the eternal female. She was here before time, born at an abstract date and, despite the fact that she is hurt, besieged and under punishment, she will always be here, acting as the R¹ eternal female element. Assuming that the opposite of man is woman is not enough here and we should treat this male self as a self that can carry these gender definitions and uses them for his construction. Speaking only at the mythological level and not in the political social sphere, the use of pornography here is a tool to create a new *male* self through shame, guilt and excitement.

7.2.3 Chapter 16: In Your Blood Live!

Part I - On the Threshold 4-14

The state of Jerusalem in the beginning of the chapter is the state of ‘bare life’, a creature with no identity or name, with a broken and maybe even erased genealogy, and without any legal or juridical value. However, this status changes once Yhwh passes in the field and orders this creature to live in its blood (16.6). Jerusalem is in her primal state, in a place that has no cultural value – the field that is the threshold of the civilized society. Adding to these factors the facts that she is of foreign descent and that her parents did not want her alive may reconnect us to Agamben’s assertion in regard to bare life and the threshold of the law (p. 154). Jerusalem is outside the

law, and not even in the state of entering it. Her entire existence amounts to blood and filth, and she cannot speak since she is an infant. In order for Jerusalem to exit the state of bare life and to enter the state of legal existence she must embrace the law and define her self according to it. However, it is not up to Jerusalem to do so, but to the R, since Jerusalem and her feminine attributes are the tools for the R's construction. In this light, Jerusalem is the *homo sacer*, the woman whom the man sacrifices so he can exist.

But first Jerusalem receives her life; Yhwh passes by her, is it by accident? Did he mean to pass by her in the field? We do not know and it seems that his passing in the field is arbitrary, even his grace to her was arbitrary and it appears that he could have chosen anyone. But he has chosen Jerusalem, thus the R¹ in the making. This sovereign who chooses the R is also the sovereign that is chosen by the R. We can go back here to masochism as a technology of power (p. 109): the R creates the master, and the more his master dominates, the more powerful R becomes. A disgusting infant all covered in blood in the field is the lowest weakest point of the R^N existence as a subject, from this point R^N can only be more powerful.

And Yhwh commands or maybe blesses Jerusalem: *In your blood live, in your blood live!* (16.6b). According to Block the plural form of blood that is used in this verse and in accordance with the verses before, represents not only the blood of the infant but also the blood of the mother (Block 1997:480).

This plural form in Hebrew is not something that we should ignore: JPS, ASV, RSV, NRS, NIV all translate the word in its singular form, blood. One may assume that the English translations use the singular form since there is not really a plural form of the word blood, however the Yonatan translation also uses the singular form to blood. The Septuagint translates the word to the singular form blood despite the

fact that we can find a plural form of the word blood in Ps. 50.16. The same goes for the Vulgate that translates the word blood in its singular form, and the plural form in Ps. 50.16 (MT 51.16). Thus, in both languages the plural form does exist but the decision was made to treat the word in the singular form.

However, the plural form of blood in Hebrew here may have some more connotations. According to the HALOT the word דָּם has several meanings: blood in its standard meaning, of an animal or human (Gen. 9.6; 1Kng.21.19; Isa. 66.3). Blood of a newly born, Ezek. 16.22 (which in this verse is in the singular form and not the plural מִתְּבוֹסֶסֶת בְּדָמָה) menstrual blood Lev.15.19; and blood as the basis of life (Gen. 9.4). What is interesting here is that HALOT does not see the difference between the singular form of 16.22 to the plural form of 16.6-9 and treats both occurrences as the blood of birth (HALOT 1996:224-3). Gesenius interprets the plural form of the word blood as a term that denotes shading, killing, slaying or guilty of slaughter, אִישׁ-דָּמִים, a man of bloods, for example, is a guilty man (Gesenius 1979:202).

The fact that in the same chapter there is a usage of the plural form when Yhwh sees Jerusalem for the first time (16.6-9), and a singular form when Ezekiel retells her story to her in 16.22 shows us that the differences between the singular and plural form are not arbitrary. Block sees in this description the fragility of Jerusalem. However, this description of baby Jerusalem in her blood that connotes many different kinds of blood continues and deepens the understanding that Jerusalem is primal. In my opinion, Jerusalem is wallowed in different kinds of *bloods*: her birth, menstrual, her mother's blood, and even an indication of the blood of a guilty murdering man, as was explained by Gesenius. These elements must die or rather

cleanse so the new Israelite self could be constituted as a moral one. In this light, the primal un-cultural, bare life homo sacer Jerusalem must be sacrificed in order for the R^N to be R^I . Moreover, this process happens in a story that is all pornographic.

After the link between the reader's male self and the feminine (R^{MF}) and the sacrificial role of Jerusalem is established, the technology of pornography starts to function. Jerusalem grows, her breasts become firm and her hair sprouts. However, she is still naked (16.7b). Only when Yhwh passes by her again does he realize that she is fully-grown and her time to make love has arrived. He covers her with his robe, cleans and anoints her, gives her jewelry and dresses her with beautiful garments, all by declaring: *I entered into a covenant with you by oath — declares the Lord GOD; thus you became Mine* (16.8b). Zimmerli states that the fact that Yhwh passes at any time he wishes and that he is present at all times, points to his sovereign freedom (Zimmerli 1979:339). Adding 16.8b to this statement, in which Yhwh enters Jerusalem to his covenant and makes her his own, will nominate Yhwh to be the ultimate sovereign. He is everywhere and he is the law, its creator, supervisor and its executioner, he is the one that is in the law and outside the law. In a way, he is the ultimate paradox as was expressed by Deleuze and Guattari: 'Sovereignty only rules over what it is capable of interiorizing' (Deleuze and Guattari 2005:445). And here is Jerusalem, not naked any longer, out of the field and inside the matrix of Yhwhist law. She had left the state of bare life and entered her political existence; law defines her now so well that she is fit for royalty (16.13b). Jerusalem has become a statue of beauty and an adequate rhetorical tool for pornography that will excite and create guilt and shame at the same time.

It is a Whore! Vv. 15-35

This section of the chapter portrays the sins of Jerusalem that can be divided into two: harlotry and murder, all in connection to idolatry. The verb, זנח, ZNH, to be a whore or to fornicate, appears no less than 18 times in this section, proclaiming two different types of whoring: whoring of Yhwh's gifts (vv. 15-22), and acting as a whore for other men (vv. 23-34), all through the eyes of the betrayed hurt husband who has done everything within his powers to make her a queen. What does Jerusalem do exactly? She takes Yhwh's gifts, reshapes them into penises and fornicates on them; she even gave them Yhwh's food and clothes (vv. 17-18). She kills her children, Yhwh's offspring, and gives them as food for the images that she had created (vv. 19-21). She has sex with Assyria, Egypt, and Canaan, without asking for money, and she opened her legs to every man around (vv. 22-31). Indeed, Jerusalem committed almost every immoral sin in the book, or to sum it up in one sentence: she betrayed her husband. However, this is not the worst crime she committed; Jerusalem was the worst kind of whore, for instead of asking for money, she bribed the other men to have sex with her! Jerusalem couldn't even follow the accepted prostitute-client relationship. This statement may lead us to two understandings: firstly, Jerusalem did not need any money since she had plenty from Yhwh. Secondly, Jerusalem is the ultimate deviant woman who has no morality and no acknowledgment of the law, even the simple unwritten law of prostitute-client relations. Jerusalem is the ultimate nymphomaniac and the male reader is becoming excited. Jerusalem also resisted her social role as a commodity; women, as was presented by Irigaray (1985c) and Roberts-Hughes (p. 156) were products in the male economy. They had a price that a man paid to buy them from a different man. In this

case Jerusalem also broke this law and offered herself for free, completely ignoring the male economic system. There is no doubt; this woman needed to be tamed.

As mentioned in appendix number three, Brenner states that the use of pornography ultimately is expected to promote religious and political reform by the creation of shame and guilt and by the acceptance of the message it conveys (p. 328). The political reform is not only at the imagined community level, but first and foremost it is at the level of the creation of the self, in which the tool to create the Israelite male self is the erotic in the shape of a deviant woman.

R, who has been carefully erased and rendered R^N in the previous unit, is learning to accept the master and to love him. R^N is filled with guilt and waiting for Jerusalem's punishment, which is actually his punishment. In order for the R^N to go through the transition and to become R^I via R^{MF} , Jerusalem, represented as the feminine deviant part, needs to be scarified, hence the use of the erotic according to Bataille. The feeling of guilt makes the R not only accept the message of the text but also grateful that the sovereign accepts him to be under his powers and law. Moreover, the basic covenant element between the R and his god is sexual intercourse, thus the father is also the lover. Yhwh is a classic dominatrix here, he is created by his subject (written by Ezekiel and accepted by the R) and he is the one that tames her. The sexual intercourse and later the beating and punishment of the city woman by other men, is the R's way of taking part in the story by accepting Jerusalem's punishment and identifying with the men.

Show that Bitch! 16.36-43

The punishment is coming. The R^N is sexually excited and at the same time consumed by guilt and shame, identifying with his lord, understanding that he is Jerusalem and ready to participate in the destruction of this part of his male psyche.

Three different punishments are inflicted on Jerusalem: 1. She is stripped naked and is shown to all the men with whom she had committed sexual intercourse (vv. 37-39). 2. She is stoned by קָהָל and her body is pierced by the sword (v. 40). 3. Her house is set on fire and other punishments are executed on her in front of other women (v. 41). The sexual fantasy ends with Yhwh's statement: *When I have satisfied My fury upon you and My rage has departed from you, then I will be tranquil; I will be angry no more* (16.42). And just like a furious jealous husband who has beaten his wife with no mercy, his fury calms down and he loves her again.

To the fact that commentators mix metaphors and reality and try to treat the metaphor as a prophecy, Day responds:

The text doesn't condemn Jerusalem for literal adultery, but the commentators do. That the commentators have persisted in reading the passage as depicting punishment for literal adultery even though that reading is so clearly wrong is persuasive evidence that they have indeed taken up the subject position of Yhwh as aggrieved and enraged husband. In making sure the little whore got what was coming to her, the commentators have not only put her to death for adultery, they have also killed the metaphor. It is cold comfort indeed to be able to say, on the basis of the available evidence, that adulteresses in ancient Israel did not suffer the same fate as that invoked in Ezekiel xvi upon personified Jerusalem (Day 2000:308).

Commentators treat the public that has gathered to watch and take their place in the stoning of Jerusalem as an intervention of reality in the metaphor. Joyce, for example, claims that we can see the 'metaphorical language beginning to break down' (Joyce 2007a:133). Day shows that male commentators' assertions about the public performances of the stoning of Jerusalem has nothing to do with the reality of the Near East, and any attempt to see in vv. 40-41 a form of reality is a plain mistake. She concludes by saying that 'it is simply unacceptable scholarship to assert that qahal in Ezekiel xvi refers to an Israelite judicial body' (Day 2000:303). What is the purpose of the crowd then?

Foucault claims that the right to punish is one of the prerogatives of the sovereign, and his absolute power over life. Punishment is also a way of demanding retribution that is both personal and public, since the physic-political force of the sovereign is, in a sense, present in the law. In that case the public execution has a juridical-political function. The public punishment and execution is a way for the sovereign to exercise his powers and to show the ‘dissymmetry between the subject who has dared to violate the law and the all-powerful sovereign who displays his strength’ (Foucault 1995:45-6). We do not know if the imagined crowd was Israelite or foreign, but we do know that Jerusalem’s punishment was a great spectacle; such a spectacle that modern researchers decided that a story like this was actually a reality. However, using Foucault to understand the purpose of the crowd, or the ‘spectacle of the scaffold’ as he puts it, only strengthens the understanding that this story is a metaphor and not a reflection of some ancient Near East reality, and it serves as a mythological system that creates a strong identification of the R^N with the rising sovereign.

Foucault adds:

... Although the sentence must be equitable, the punishment is carried out in such a way as to give a spectacle not of measure, but of imbalance and excess; in this liturgy of punishment, there must be an emphatic affirmation of power and of its intrinsic superiority. And this superiority is not simply that of the right, but that of the physical strength of the sovereign beating down upon the body of his adversary and mastering it: by breaking the law, the offender has touched the very person of the prince; and it is the prince- or at least those to whom he has delegated his force- who seizes upon the body of the condemned man and displays it marked, beaten, broken (Foucault 1995:49).

The fact that men are those who inflict the punishment on the woman, even though they took part in the sin, allows the R^N to detach his self from Jerusalem and to become R^M . After understanding that he is Jerusalem, being sexually aroused and feeling guilty, thus becoming R^{MF} , R can be the one who punishes Jerusalem. By

doing so R will have the ability to punish and kill a part in his psyche and keep only his definitive part – manhood. Moreover, R can cleanse his guilt and change sides. He is a woman who commits the sins and the man who punishes her for that, R in this phase is in the midst of a gender turbulence that will calm at the end of this unit.

7.3 Who am I? What am I?

If we would like to summarize the concept of metaphor in one sentence, we can say that metaphor conveys the idea that A is B and describes a word/concept by a different one.³² Or as Ricoeur puts it:

The rhetoric of metaphor takes the *word* as its unit of reference. Metaphor, therefore, is classed among the single-word figures of speech and is defined as a trope of resemblance. As figure, metaphor constitutes a displacement and an extension of the meaning of words; its explanation is grounded in a theory of substitution (Ricoeur 2003:1).

The process used to understand metaphor is called *mapping*; there is a set of systematic correspondences between the source and the target that allows us to understand the concept of A through B or vice versa. There is a distinction between conceptual metaphors and metaphorical linguistic expressions. In conceptual metaphors, one domain of experience is used to understand another domain of experience; A is B, *God is Love*, for example. This is also called Tenor and Vehicle. The tenor is the subject (A) and the vehicle is the object in which his attributes are borrowed (B). To know a conceptual metaphor is to know the set of mappings that applies to a given source-target pairing. It is these mappings that provide much of the meaning of the metaphorical linguistic expressions (or linguistic metaphors) that make a particular conceptual metaphor manifest. In order for us to understand a

³² This short analysis is based on the works of: Snævarr 2010; Sacks 1979; Lakoff and Turner 2009; Kovecses 2002; Black 1972.

metaphor such as *the head of the family* we need to possess a certain base of knowledge that will allow us to understand the target and the source. We have the understanding that the head is the higher place in our body and when we hear the sentence: *the father is the head of the family*; we map the head to the father and understand the metaphor. In this case, explaining the metaphor is a very easy task, since the knowledge base is given, but how can we explain this metaphor: *la mort est une femme*. The mapping to this known French saying, ‘death is a woman’, can be explained grammatically, our knowledge base denotes us the fact that the word death in French is feminine hence death is a woman. To know a metaphor is to know the systematic mapping between the source and the target, to know the system of knowledge that allows us to connect between the death and the woman, using the example I have given. In different terms, a metaphor may be defined as understanding one domain in terms of a different one.

Max Black opens the preview to his book *Models and Metaphors* by arguing: ‘To draw attention to a philosopher’s metaphors is to belittle him— like praising a logician for his beautiful hand-writing’ (Black 1962:1). Many books have been written on the literal aspects of metaphors but only few discussed the philosophical aspects of the knowledge organization in the human experience and most importantly, on the political aspects of a metaphorical language. I will not continue to analyze the different aspects of metaphor and the role of metaphor in the literal field, but will try to understand the discourse that allows the mapping process that takes place in the human understanding, and especially its effects on the reader of the book of Ezekiel.³³

³³ For a full and comprehensive review of the research of metaphor in the Hebrew Bible see Brettler 1989.

This mapping process, in which a knowledge base is used to explain the human experience, is what interests me here the most.

Dijk-Hemmes states:

The process of metaphorization of a woman to a sign for something else enacts a form of disembodiment of the female subject. The imagining of woman as something else betrays habits of definition within a frame of reference that is dominated by the interests and the perceptions of the 'first' sex (Dijk-Hemmes 1993:167) .

Although I fully agree with Dijk-Hemmes on the political value of such a metaphorization, I cannot agree with the insinuation that the female was a subject before the metaphorization process. Both the male and the female are constructs in constant making; hence, we cannot assume something that was before the text, but as something that is in the making while reading the text. As Newsom wrote, no prophet in the Hebrew Bible wrote in such an extensive metaphorical language as Ezekiel (Newsom 1995:191). This understanding correlates well with the assumption that the book of Ezekiel first and foremost is designated to change a discourse. Adding to it the metaphorical use and understanding, the book of Ezekiel is designated to change the mapping process, the base of our knowledge and the way we convey purpose and meaning. The metaphorization of the woman and the martial metaphor is presented in other books in the Hebrew Bible such as Hosea and Jeremiah, and Jerusalem is portrayed as a woman also in Nehemiah and the book of Laments.³⁴ However, the extensive use of metaphors in the book of Ezekiel may generate a few more understandings. Foucault claims that there are notions and statements that allow 'the sovereignty of collective consciousness to emerge as the principle of unity and explanation'. These notions allow a group to organize a concept of life, 'to master

³⁴ Hos. 1-3; Jer. 2-3, 13; Lam. 1-2; Is. 1:21-26.

time through a perpetually reversible relation between an origin and a term that is never given, but is always at work'. And he calls to question these ready-made notions and statements while understanding the different forces that take part in this formation (Foucault 2003:16-17). The words that we are using, the formation of sentences and the statements that are part of the general discourse are constructed in an ever-changing power/knowledge process, aimed at forming a subject and ascription of the bodies with the political *âme*, ascription in which the moral self and the law that constitutes it is a very important factor. In other words, the statements and notions are the production of historical memory and the recovery process from trauma that will lead to a new clean R^I.

7.4 Chapter 20: *Ausnahme*

Ch. 20 portrays the process of *Ausnahme*, exclusion and inclusion, as presented by Agamben appendix number two (p. 324). The history of Israel continues now, and out of an eternal woman, the city of Jerusalem, there comes a nation – a group of people that are delivered again by Yhwh and are led to the Promised Land. They are exiled again, this time to a metaphysical desert so they will be categorized, purged and go back again to the Promised Land, creating a somehow cyclical history of crime, exclusion, punishment and inclusion. In chapter 16 Jerusalem was excluded from her community and was left to die in the field, she was saved thanks to Yhwh and was included in his covenant, only to be excluded, punished (or maybe purged?) and included again. Here too the process continues, but this time it is being exercised on the individual that is already part of a nation. While in chapter 16 Jerusalem reenters the juridical realm of Yhwh, in this chapter many individuals that are part of the social body will find their death, leaving only a few that are eligible to be part of the covenant.

The mention of the name Israel confers a meaning (p. 96), and the name's use as a tool functions in two directions – to allow the R^N to identify with the name Israel and to reject it at the same time. In compliance with the analysis of chapter 16, if Jerusalem is the deviant female part of the R's *âme*, then the name Israel here is a site where all cultural political mythologies will flow, including the deviant qualities. This paradigm meant to allow the R^N to understand that the deviant qualities depicted as the *other* are part of his *âme* that needs to be in a constant sacrificial state. Hence, the assumption here is that the protagonist in chapter 20 is not a woman but a male, due to his values as the manifestation of the law and to the punishments (or non-punishments) inflicted on him.

Exclusions and inclusions are made to different sections of the populations that are not part of the constituted social body, refugees for example. However, the exclusions in Chs. 16, 20, and 23 are not performed on the enemy or on the other but on Israel itself, on subjects inside the camp that their juridical existence is constituted as the political *other*. This process aids the reformation of the Israelite *âme*, and in the creation of a new *âme* that eventually will be the political instrument that controls the bodies. The process of *Ausnahme* is not a process backed by 'real' historical events. The desert of the people does not exist, nor does Jerusalem fornicate on golden phalluses, however it does exist in the *âme* that constituted the one who reads the text. This process, together with other processes and technologies discussed, are those which make the constitution of the R^I, and the identification of so many with the *âme*, hundreds of years after this book was signed, sealed and delivered.

Fathers and Mothers

The prophecy in ch. 20 starts with a formula that was used in ch. 8: a specific date, Ezekiel sits (in his home?) and the elders of Israel come to him (20.1). Yhwh does not

want to respond to their inquiry, designates Ezekiel to be a judge against them and commences telling the story of Israel as a nation/community (20.3-4). The designation of Ezekiel as a judge changes the nature of the prophecy and makes it a trial in which the people of Israel are being judged, thus strengthening the mythological history of Israel as a juridical process aimed at creating a political moral self under the law.

The command for Ezekiel to become a judge is followed by another command, to tell the people, hence R^N, the sinful history of their fathers. The mythical ahistorical self that was described in chapter 16 was a self with feminine attributes. This time it is the turn of the male ancestors of the R^N to act as his foundation. In this manner, the historical story of the fathers is similar to the story of Jerusalem. They are both based on apostasy and the call to repent is strongly present. Despite this similarity there is a fundamental difference between Jerusalem and Israel. Jerusalem's ancestors are foreigners while Israel's timeline goes (or maybe starts) with Jacob. Bowen concludes her review of chapter 16 by saying that the relationship between Jerusalem and Yhwh is unequal: 'within this unequal relationship the role of the subordinate partner is obedience and submission. The dominant partner is considered justified in using whatever means necessary, including violence, to enforce that obedience' (Bowen 2010:91). However, we will see that the punishment of the sons of Israel is not as severe, at least visually, as the one given to Jerusalem. They are reselected and others are left behind (20.35-38), the process is done behind the scenes *so that it might not be profaned in the sight of the nations among whom they were* (20:9); exactly the opposite from the punishment of Jerusalem.

The history of Israel in this chapter is divided into four parts: Israel in Egypt (vv. 5-9); Israel in the desert (vv. 10-17); Israel's second generation (vv. 18-26); Israel in the land (vv. 27-29). The present times of Israel close this chapter and

enfolds within a new reborn generation that is constantly being made and judged over and over again in the mythical ‘desert of the nations’ (vv. 30-44). Three generations are described here, the first generation in Egypt, the second that enters the land, and the third that is the self in the making. The blood of the R^N is the blood of Jacob; hence R^N learns that he has roots that directly link him to the name Israel. All that is left to be done is to be punished and accept the law so R^N will be constituted under the law, and ultimately join Yhwh and Ezekiel to be rendered R^I .

The Geography of the Law

The first point in the geography of law is the house of Ezekiel, making him the heart of the law, or maybe even the temple of it. The elders of Israel come to Ezekiel to seek answers; instead they receive a trial that ends with a new generation that R is part of. Yhwh’s law is Yhwh himself, and every attempt to participate in a foreign law, i.e. to worship other gods, is to leave the juridical domain of Yhwh, to be outside the law, hence to be in a state of ‘bare life’. In this state the individual can be punished and eliminated, while other individuals are allowed to be reconstituted only when they return to the domain of Yhwh’s law. The same process was acted on Jerusalem; her bare life state was outside Yhwh’s law: She was naked in the field, and became an entity once she was under his law, and punishment was inflicted on her after she had left the domain of Yhwh’s law (ch. 16).

This approach can be viewed also in chapter 20, the first generation of Israel was chosen in the polluted geographical location of Egypt, in a temporary position of being outside the law, while Yhwh seeks a land for them. At that point no specific law was given to the first generation apart from the prohibition of breaching the first contract – belonging to Yhwh. The punishment of the first generation is vague compared to the one that was inflicted on Jerusalem: *Then I resolved to pour out My*

fury upon them, to vent all My anger upon them there, in the land of Egypt (v. 8b).

However, Yhwh changes his mind and he is concerned with creating ‘too much of a show’ in Egypt. Instead, Yhwh brings them to the desert: *gave them My laws and taught them My rules, by the pursuit of which a man shall live* (v. 11). The history of Israel and their abominations against Yhwh are similar to the ones that Jerusalem committed and have one thing in common – they broke the covenant. Nevertheless, the history lesson changes its tone here, now Israel receives laws and rules. Following the rules will constitute the Israelite and will provide him with life, breaking them will mean death. The law that grants life is given at the threshold, between the polluted land of Egypt and the Promised Land, when the Israelites are still in the bare life phase. Once law is given to them, they are constituted as subjects that are part of the law, and life is granted to them, a matter that will be noticed as chapter 20 progresses. It seems that throughout this unit the only one that is severely punished is the woman Jerusalem, while the men get the option to repent. This difference is the thread that weaves the *âme* construction throughout the unit. Jerusalem and later Samaria are almost in the cultural representation of animals. They have no law, are led by lust and sexualities, and their main violation is in the betrayal of Yhwh. These are the feminine attributes of the *âme*, and the foreign aspects of it that constantly need to be killed.

Or as Brenner puts it:

In the metaphor, female sexuality is objectified as irregular and deviant. It is animalistic, ‘natural’, earthy. The metaphorized female creature is motivated neither by love nor by any other acceptable human social convention. She/it is motivated by lust. In contradistinction, male sexuality is represented by God’s behaviour which, by definition, is politically, socially and morally correct. Since the ‘woman’ is explicitly qualified as the legal possession of her male/God (vv. 20-21), her sexual conduct violates his rights; she is therefore punishable by public exposure, a measure for measure for publicly degrading herself. The same

description recurs in ch. 3: the ‘woman’ is in nature, her passion wild and unquenchable, her behaviour shameful (Brenner 1995c:262).

The second generation, which is the main protagonist of this chapter, takes center stage from 20.18 until the end of the chapter. The second generation continues to follow the pattern of its ancestors and defiles Yhwh. Yhwh decides to avenge his name but changes his mind. Then Yhwh speaks indirectly to the present generation of Israel that is in front of Ezekiel, while citing their thoughts: They want to worship other gods. It is almost as if they want a divorce (v. 32). This will not happen according to Yhwh. However does he punish them severely? Yhwh says that he will exile Israel to a special desert without specifying any geographical location. There, he will judge them face-to-face and: *I will remove from you those who rebel and transgress against Me; I will take them out of the countries where they sojourn, but they shall not enter the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the LORD* (v. 38) – Yhwh purges the sinning Israelites. The process commences with exclusion and the removal of the sinners from their political existences, and continues to annihilation once they are outside the law of Yhwh. The non-sinners are permitted to return to the Promised Land and are commanded to remember the sins.

R, who takes part in the process of his constitution and in return constitutes Yhwh as his sovereign, wishes to be considered as one that was saved and delivered, as the Israel who will return to the Promised Land. R^N already witnessed what may happen without the protection of Yhwh when reading chapter 16. Now all that is left for R^N to do is to feel shame and guilt – shame for the behavior of Jerusalem and guilt as was presented by Agamben in appendix number two (p. 324), the gratitude for being kept in the law. This is the phase when R^N becomes R^{MF}, a male reader that splits into two different entities in order to become a new one. R^{MF}’s gratitude to

Yhwh for not excluding him can happen only when R^{MF} receives or rather accepts Yhwh's laws. The more R^{MF} feels guilt and shame, the more R^{MF} will accept the punishment inflicted on his R^F dark side, the more he will be thankful for the sovereign to be accepted under his law. This equation not only strengthens the sovereign but also defines and redefines R^M as an entity of law. Another process that is performed here is the *Ausnahme*, the exclusion, turning individuals to objects in their 'bare life' state and thus drawing the line between the social body, the entity that can be regarded as a population and its limits, which is outside of the social body. It also gives R^{MF} the ability to identify with this social body and actually constitute it.

This abstract desert has become the place to which Yhwh can exclude; it is the threshold of the law and also of the Promised Land. And here the matrix of the law and of the male *âme* becomes more precise and unified. The male *âme* is the law whose origin is Yhwh and its geographical location is the Promised Land. Now the male self does not have only a history, mythical and present, but also a future and a location for this future. The woman stays in her primal state; she is not defined by the law, but only by her relations with Yhwh.

7.5 Chapter 23: Justice for All?

The history of Israel continues in ch. 23 depicted as Jerusalem and Samaria, representing the two nations. Although their sins have more to do with international relationships they are similar throughout the three episodes: they defiled Yhwh's law, turned to worship other deities, and sacrificed their children to them. The women in chapter 23 receive the same punishment as the woman in chapter 16: A crowd of people stones them, swords cut their bodies, and their house is burnt. Adding another element that was not in chapter 16, their children are also burnt, and they eventually die, ending with the verse: *They shall punish you for your wantonness, and you shall*

suffer the penalty for your sinful idolatry. And you shall know that I am the Lord GOD (23.29). Hence, in contradiction to Jerusalem, there is no reconciliation for these two sisters; they end up dead. Samaria and Jerusalem are called by different names: Oholah and Oholibah. These names allow the R^{MF} to be more aloof. In this manner it is easier to kill an entity that has no direct connection to the identity in which R^{MF} identifies with. Thus killing these women in a pornographic act allows the R^{MF} to live in the law given by Yhwh and in the blood of these women. This notion leaves Jerusalem of chapter 16 as R^{MF}'s only metaphysical connection to Yhwh and as the souvenir of his mythical adulterous past to which he is allowed to return, indulge in, and use for the constitution of his male *âme*.

One must ask; why was the punishment given to the male Israelites different from Oholah and Oholibah? The women are blamed twice for burning Yhwh's children (16.20; 23.27) while the Israelites are blamed in 20.26 in a very different manner. Yhwh says that he gave the Israelites rules that are not good (20.25-26), to be more precise, Yhwh says: *Moreover, I gave them laws that were not good and rules by which they could not live* (v. 25). The rules of Yhwh are not good enough? What are these rules exactly? *When they set aside every first issue of the womb, I defiled them by their very gifts* (v. 26a). Moreover, this is the only place in the Hebrew Bible that Yhwh is the one that defiles.³⁵ Bowen writes: 'elsewhere in the Bible child sacrifice is generally condemned. The notion that God demands this of Israel is totally alien to the tradition. Ezekiel's revisionist history goes over the edge of plausibility to absurdity' (Bowen 2010:116). She concludes by that Yhwh is using shock therapy for

³⁵See Block 1997: 636-641; Zimmerli 1979:411-412; Greenberg 1983, 368-370; Eichrodt 1970: 270-273.

the next generation, a conclusion that I have some difficulties accepting. Patton asserts:

For the author of Ezekiel the experience of the fall of Jerusalem caused a radical re-interpretation of Israel's legal and historical traditions. For Ezekiel, the exile of all Israel was not punishment for the sins of their parents, but was the result of cultic, social and political violations of the exiles themselves... Ezekiel knows the exodus, knows it as the first event in a long disastrous history. Then exodus, such as it is, will not be led by humans, but by God, will not include new law (which is moved to a post-entry event at Zion), but judgment, and will end at a land whose permanent abode for a non-mediated presence of Yhwh stands at the center of a nation re-organized politically, economically and religiously. The result of this restored presence of Yhwh, served by proper priests, whose holiness is ensured, ultimately renders even Ezekiel obsolete. The prophet's presence fades away at the end of the book, replaced by the name, 'Yhwh is there' (Patton 1996:89-90)

Patton claims that at some point in time it was legal to sacrifice children to Yhwh, and Ezekiel desires to change this notion. 20.25-26 are not easy verses to decipher, and each commentator tries to understand the meaning of bad laws given by Yhwh from his own perspective, from Justin the Martyr until our own days (Block 1997:637).³⁶ However, it seems that many scholars neglected one important issue, since they did not refer to the gender of each protagonist in chs. 16, 20, and 23. All the protagonists sacrificed children, yet it is only the women that are punished while the men (Israel in ch. 20) suffer no consequences for their actions, since Yhwh himself declares that it was his fault. As far as women are concerned, Yhwh does not need to change the law and go through one of the most radical theological transformations ever encountered in the Hebrew Bible. While Oholibah and Oholah are killed for the sake of male continuity, Yhwh absolves the Israelites by changing the law, and by so doing, cleans

³⁶ See for example Lust 1996:209-224 who discusses the relation between Exod. 6.2-8 and Ezekiel, and claims that there is a possibility that the author of Exodus used some elements from Ezekiel.

the social self. This line correlates well with the rest of the book; Ezekiel recreates the sovereign Yhwh by fixing his laws.

The book of Ezekiel may or may not use traditions that were before its time. However, this point is not as important since the book does a well-defined act: It creates a nation/community with a leader that is not flesh and blood. Put differently, the book creates an eternal Israel that despite having a clear geographical location does not need a leader to define it. The book of Ezekiel produces a political *âme* that can control a body and lead it to be self-governed, without realizing that this 'self-government' is nothing other than a well-constructed social order with discourse, limitations, and wardens, who make sure that the body will not leave its prison. In this case, if the R needs new rules in order to clean his self then the book of Ezekiel will provide them for him. After all, the historical event portrayed in the book is so radical that no means are too small to resolve it. *Judge them* (20.4) says Yhwh to Ezekiel, stressing the fact that law was meant to confer meaning and political existence, and that without the law there is no self. This self is a male self, whom the woman has nothing to do with, but to act as a tool in his construction and his eternity.

Two genders portray the history of Israel: the woman as Jerusalem, Oholah and Oholibah as Jerusalem and Samaria, and the male as the nation of Israel, represented by the elders. These two genders create together the male's *âme* that will be the political instrument for the sense of subjectivity of the R^I. The woman is the part that is responsible for the sexual/relationship and love with Yhwh, while the male self gets his image by accepting the law, binding his self to Yhwh by a legal contract that in dire times can be negotiated. The male legal contract is based on the absolution of the sins of the woman, hence, the metaphorical language of the woman is two

folded: It is meant to create a deviant past for the R and at the same time, it is the emotional connection between the R and his sovereign.

7.6 Note to Self

Another approach that may be reviewed here is the discussion of individual responsibility. Reviewing the way modern researchers discuss individual responsibility will show a history of ideas and thinking. From a clear line of favoring the fact that Ezekiel is the one that is mainly responsible for the invention of individualism as opposed to corporate responsibility in the early twentieth century, to different assumptions in the late twentieth century, stating that individualism was not a notion invented by Ezekiel and the paradigm is expressed throughout the entire Bible. The main idea of researchers favoring individualism in the book of Ezekiel is that the events of the destruction caused individualism to flourish. Davidson for example states that ‘God and the individual will become the two factors in the individual heart’ (Davidson and Salmond 1904:283). Cooke writes that ‘the responsibility and freedom of the individual lie at the root of moral living; to have proclaimed this as the outcome of God’s justice and desire for man’s recovery was Ez.’s great achievement’ (Cooke 1936:196). As research progressed, the notion that individualism was unique to Ezekiel was narrowed down and was eventually neglected. Lindars, for example, asks to completely erase the concept that ‘Ezekiel marks an advance in Jewish thought about the significance of the individual’, and concludes his analysis by stating that individual responsibility is actually an allegory for the nation as a whole (Lindars 1965:452, 466).³⁷

³⁷ For a full review of the individual tradition and Ezekiel debate see: Lapsley 2000:19-23 ; Matties 1990:113-130; Joyce 1989:79-87.

When modern researchers come to examine the notion of corporate personality as opposed to individual responsibility, they tend to treat the 'textual subject' as something that is distanced from them, as a historical matter that happened years ago and does not affect them. Treating the textual individual as the 'crowd of listeners' is not sufficient, and in some cases may yield historical incoherencies. Hence, analyzing the individual in the text is lacking since the Israelite subject is always in the making and this individual responsibility can only be understood when the R takes part in its constitution. Lindars may be right in his assumption; however, the moral self that is created here does not serve only the 'crowd' in Ezekiel's time, but the R that is the moral self in the making. In this light, there is a need to elaborate on the meaning of the hermeneutics of the self as was presented by Foucault in relation to personal retribution and the constitution of the subject, and his moral interpretation of the law. Let us first then elaborate on the structure of the male's *âme*.

7.7 This Sex that is not One

The process of metaphorization of woman to a sign for something else enacts a form of disembodiment of the female subject. The imaging of woman as something else betrays habits of definition within a frame of reference that is dominated by the interests and the perceptions of the 'first' sex (Dijk-Hemmes 1993:244).

Dijk-Hemmes wants to understand chapter 23 from a F (female) perspective as opposed to a M (male) perspective. She tries to understand ch. 23 from a feminine point of view and to understand how this chapter affects the reader. Since ch. 23 gives a clear warning to women, she assumes that the text is intended also for women as well as for men. Her analysis and her methods of interpreting the text, highlighting male domination and the male readers subscription to the text was courageous in

1993, and a very important milestone in understanding male domination, historically and present day, specifically male biblical commentators.

Greenberg, who criticizes Dijk-Hemmes directly in his commentary writes that: ‘There can be no doubt that such readings are authentic expressions of the pain and outrage experienced by feminists searching Scripture for reflection of their constructions of reality and meeting with Oholah and Oholibah...’ after acknowledging their pain (as it suits the M dominant reader) he continues: ‘At bottom, what feminists criticize is not what the texts meant to those who composed and received them in their historical context, but what the text means in today’s context...Whether aiming to savage Scripture or to salvage it, feminists are judgmental...They write to promote a new gender reality...Their project differs fundamentally from the (quixotic?) historical-philological search for the primary, context bound sense of Scripture...’ (Greenberg 1997:494) In short, feminists are *raping* the text and trying to give it meanings that were not there before. They just do not understand that beating a woman and cutting her body to pieces is only a metaphor, *only words*. He ends his discussion by saying that he has no intention of discussing feminism any longer.

I wonder if Greenberg read and understood Newsom, whose review of Ezekiel’s oracles and metaphors Dijk-Hemmes relies on: ‘Metaphor derives much of its convincing power from the fact that it does not allow its hearers to be passive but requires them to participate in the construction of the metaphorical meanings’ (Newsom 1984:189). One cannot deny the fact that Greenberg takes part in the metaphorical meaning; moreover, he sustains the meaning that Dijk-Hemmes wishes to expose.

The following examples will show us how deeply male readers were influenced by the deviant woman pornographic metaphor and took part in its construction. Eichrodt writes: ‘If here, and still more in ch. 23, he [Yhwh] indulges in frantic exaggerations as he pictures the more indecent and disgusting features of harlotry, we must recognize that this is solely due to the fury of a mind in agony with unbearable suffering’ (Eichrodt 1970:212), thus promoting domestic violence. Block writes: ‘the hell that awaited her was not the creation of some demonic force or external power, but of her own making... If the text had begun at v. 36, one might understandably have accused God of cruelty and undue severity. But the zeal of his anger is a reflex of the intensity of his love’ (Block 1997:504). Indeed, the bitch deserves it! J. B. Taylor explains it further: ‘The feeling of nausea which a chapter like this arouses must be blamed not on the writer of the chapter nor even on its contents, but on the conduct which had to be described in such revolting terms’(Taylor 1969:171). Gowan continues further by embracing the technology of masochism (p. 109) and writes that chapter 23 is ‘one of the Bible’s strongest statements about unconditional election based solely on the grace of God’ (Gowan 1985:66).³⁸ All these M readers may show us that the Hebrew Bible is not frozen in time and every interpretation is a political one. The same way that Foucault never intended to examine Greek and Roman history, but the genealogy that has led to the creation of this so-called present subject (p. 60) In the search of M readers for the ‘real meaning’ they are actually searching for their self’s R meaning, by giving their self a past and hence a political future.

³⁸ For a full comprehensive discussion on male readers and assertions to chs. 16 and 26 see Mumby 2008, 156-205; especially 201-205; and also Runions 156-169.

Dijk-Hemmes claims that chapter 23 forces audiences to identify themselves as Yhwh's wife. By doing so, the audience is forced into seeing the stupidity in Oholibah and Oholah's actions and thus to feel shame. This factor exposes the M to humiliation and also, at the same time, allows him to escape: 'the escape of identification with the wronged and revengeful husband; or, more modestly, identification with the righteous men who, near the end of the text, are summoned to pass judgment upon the adulterous women' (Dijk-Hemmes 1993:254). Shame and guilt are indeed the basics of this chapter but, in my point of view, they do not construct only the male audience but the R^M. According to Bataille (p. 328), the male in his desire to resist his discontinuity sacrifices the female and thus grants himself eternity by connecting the sexual taboos to death and to the feminine part of his *âme*. Hence, the women in these chapters are not actual physical women but a tool created by the male imagination, a pornographic fantasy designated not only to establish his domination, but to actually [re]create his self. Earlier argued that Ezekiel is written as a book (p. 50) thus speaking to the eternal R^I that is created while reading the book. R^I participates in its construction by embracing the woman as an element in his *âme* that he must sacrifice in order to achieve a continuous existence. The R^M embraces the feminine part of his *âme* by using the woman as the outside, as the demonic root that must be tamed, controlled, and killed in order for him to live within the law. However this law is the sovereign Yhwh, who is [re]created in the text to be a focal point of the R^I and to stand strong through times.

Without the law there is no subject, thus the use of the rhetoric of the trial in this unit. In the trial, the woman is the part of the R (hence R^{MF}) that is used to draw the lines between the outside and the inside of the law, between what is the new legal subject (the male) and what is the excluded legal subject (female). Agamben writes:

‘Law nourishes itself on this exception and is a dead letter without it. In this sense, the law truly “has no existence in itself, but rather has its being in the very life of men”’ (Agamben 1998:22). The moral self, or the law that constitutes the moral self needs the problematization of sexual practice. Hence the extensive use of pornography or in Brenner’s words: ‘pornography is expected to promote religious and political reform’(Brenner 1995b:259-60). Indeed, a religious political reform is being promoted. In between chs. 16, 20, and 23 there are allegories, proverbs and theological lessons about how the moral self should act. However, these moral lessons cannot influence the R unless his *âme* is well located inside of the law. Jerusalem, Oholah and Oholibah are women that represent a masculine nation led by men for men. This matrix of masculinities has in it the feminine aspects, which are used to establish the moral code and the borders between the inside and the outside, and to promote shame and guilt. All of this eventually leads the R to accept his sovereign and to be grateful for his inclusion in his law, and ultimately, becoming R^I.

To sum up, the feminine in the *âme* portrays the (sexual) union between the R and his sovereign; it is also the dark side that betrays this union. This part of the *âme* is used to connote the theological political crisis in the social body of the R^I. By sacrificing it, the R^M receives something bigger that can constitute his self – the law. By subscribing to his sins and accepting his history, the R^M feels shame and guilt. He participates in the exclusion of his ‘dark side’; drawing lines between the outside and the inside of the law and thanks his sovereign for including him in his realm of law. The R^I has two sides, the feminine side - the primal dark side; and the law - the man, the cultural.

The R uses the woman as a tool and treats her as a currency in the male market. The ‘man’ keeps the ‘woman’ at bay for cultural reasons. It is he that has constructed

her since she has neither voice, nor an ability to write and no material possessions. The woman has nothing to do with the construction of her image in the Hebrew Bible. She is invented over and over again as the sacrificial shrewd, as the lamb that is being cut to pieces, stoned and burned just for the sake of the male to overcome this disastrous history that had come upon him.

Eventually, he eliminates the feminine aspects of his *âme*, as will be seen in the end of the book (chs. 40-48), where land and temple are no longer feminine but masculine.

7.8 R^F

Greenberg asserts that it is not the man who rapes the women but the women who rape the text. This understanding only shows us the power of male pornography, fantasy and the role of the erotic in the construction of the male self. After all, it is the book of Ezekiel that allows the existences of Greenberg and other males, from Hannaniah, son of Hezekiah to our own times. This moral self that is bound to the law could not have been created without the invention the sinful woman.

Irigaray claims that as a mother the woman stays on the productive side of nature, and is essential to the reproduction of the male, especially when it comes to bearing children, thus the mother and her products, the children, must be marked by the father name - the male law. As a part of his law they can be traded in the male social order. Irigaray adds that 'society is where man produces himself as man, where man is born into "human", "super-natural" existence' (Irigaray 1985a:185). This deviant woman that had sexual intercourse with every foreign man and deity and sacrificed Yhwh's children, disturbed the male order. She damaged her goods and traded them without male permission and was punished severely. After her punishment she entered the

covenant again, marked by the law of Yhwh, and ready to be a commodity-producing object with the goal of maintaining a male social order.

We may witness some feminists' critics who subscribe too deeply to the role that was created for them in this book. In my point of view they should not analyze the woman as an ontological subject, but as an element that is a part of the male self. Only by breaking this male moral self can we start deconstructing the economy of women as goods and fight the male pornographic fantasies that are meant to nourish and constantly build his self.

If Yhwh's temple is, symbolically, a female body, then that temple is always in risk of pollution, either through menstruation or through illicit sexual activity. Ultimately, the metaphor of Jerusalem as wife is itself a problem, always threatening to transform Yhwh's marriage into a marriage between the Holy and the unclean. Ezekiel therefore depicts Yhwh as ultimately driven to destroy his hopelessly polluted temple (Galambush 1992:88).

7.8.1 To Do Things with Words

Although the metaphorization of women has been much discussed in the previous pages, there is still a need to further examine the metaphor, its role, and its understanding in the human psyche.

Brenner argues:

From the perspective of *human rights*, the 'prophets' are reported as speaking against social injustice – to be sure; but slavery is accepted as a matter of fact phenomenon and as a vehicle for religious metaphors (the chief of which is the slave/servant metaphor in deuterio-Isaiah). The conventional social hierarchy, god-adult male-adult women and children and slaves-other chattel, is seldom questioned. Figurations of women and children are often used symbolically and metaphorically. In our efforts to understand the text, we often forget to question this usage, which amounts to objectification of weaker societal segments (Brenner 1997a:137-8).

This important argument needs to be evaluated in the light of the use of metaphors in this unit and the purpose these metaphors serve. Moreover, there is also a need to

explore the political value of the metaphor and its place in the discourse, and how the correct knowledge is produced with regard to what has been said earlier, (p. 169) and with accordance to Foucault's works.

Fuchs in her article 'Prophecy and the Construction of Women' discusses how the feminine or the woman is constructed in relation to truth, and writes that 'their utterances do not reflect the reality that is constructed in the text' (Fuchs 2001:54). She reviews the different female prophets throughout her article, and asserts that the female prophets lack any voice or language of themselves. When they speak, their speech is false and unreliable, as a part of a larger narrative in the Hebrew Bible that presents the females prophets as deceiving, conniving, sexual sinners, and predators. Fuchs continues: 'The female body is associated with danger and pollution, and woman as metaphor is constructed as the appropriate victim of male violence because of the symbolic equation of the male with the divine' (Fuchs 2001:66). This equation must be preserved, and the paradigm that the male's word is God's truth cannot exist unless women are excluded. The way this paradigm works is by recognizing female agency in order to make it minor, insignificant and ultimately sinful, 'all in order to insure the unperturbed continuance of the andro-theistic dialogue of monotheistic religion' (Fuchs 2001:68). Fuchs concludes her argument using Irigaray's metaphor about the feminine speaking organ, by saying that the feminine lips, the ones that truly speak in the discourse, are not located in the woman's face, but in her vagina, hence the use of Pornoprophetics.

Fuchs claims that the text has to recognize female agency in order for it to disparage and erase her political value. Fuchs's assertions about the importance of exposing the exclusion of the feminine voice from the discourse are highly important to this discussion. However, can we safely assume that feminine agency actually

existed in biblical times? Theories that accept a sense of agency and treat the subject as something that exists *Causa Sui*, are somehow lacking in my point of view. Instead, the subject should be viewed as something that is always in the process of subjectivation. On this note, the feminine and the woman have a very important role in the construction of the male discourse and in the creation of the male-divine matrix, this role of course is connected to the political use of the metaphor.

Jost, by tracing Assyrian influence on women prophets in Ezek. 13, claims that the women may have prayed to Ishtar, thus Ezekiel severely fought them in order to eliminate their influence. She concludes: 'If the thesis is accurate we would be looking at a connection between the worship of a goddess, here Ishtar, and women's religious power' (Jost 2001:76). Jost gives us another example of assuming female agency, even if the political goal of her article is to promote feminine political power. One cannot easily assume agency and must instead investigate the process that connotes a sense of self. Shields discusses the way in which the woman's body is built in the rhetoric of Ezekiel 16 and argues that the chapter is structured in I-you language, the 'I' representing Yhwh's speech and the 'you' representing the female figure, Jerusalem. This language constitutes Yhwh as the subject, and the woman as the object thus denying her the ability to speak, and the reader never gets to hear the woman's viewpoint (Shields 2001a:140). She stresses how the woman is objectified as property of the husband and as something that is unclean and polluted by default. She continues by showing the way in which the woman's being is constituted by the privileged character of Yhwh and how the reader subscribes to this process, while calling to question the position of Yhwh as a privileged protagonist male.

In her self-response Shields adds:

The author/compiler of Ezekiel had a difficult dual task: on the one hand, to establish that God was indeed still God despite the defeat of Judah; and on the other hand, to provide a theological justification for the humiliation and exile of Judeans to Babylon. He was doing, in my students' terms, 'constructive theology'. In many ways he succeeded beautifully: the portable throne-chariot which made YHWH present in Babylon, and which was depicted as leaving the city defiled in Chs. 8-11, but which returns to the rebuilt and cleansed city and temple in Chs. 40-48, is one example of how old ideas that God had chosen Jerusalem and would maintain it inviolably forever were blown apart by new imagery and rhetoric (Shields 2001b:154).

Shields concludes her self-response with a call to deconstruct the figure of Yhwh. The importance in this statement is the connection between the construction of Yhwh and the construction of the Judean community. This 'constructive theology' should not be regarded as a theology aimed to reconstruct Yhwh but to reconstruct *Man* himself. As mentioned in the first chapter (p. 105), Yhwh is not the direct target here but *Man* who is the founding brick of society. However this *Man* needs a god to constitute himself, hence the construction of Yhwh. If we really wish to have new, 'constructive theologies which are non-violent and non-abusive' (Shields 2001b:155), we need to deconstruct *Man* and the discourse that constitutes him, a discourse where its political manifestation is a male-god matrix, in which the woman is a tool, a metaphor, a political myth, and sometimes superfluous. Brenner offers a way to read these prophetic texts:

...Can we learn to define certain passages in the Hebrew Bible as **abusive**—not only because our personal circumstances are different from the ancients' and keep changing, thus altering our readerly locations all the time but, simply, because the texts we are teaching **are wrong in our eyes**. They are wrong for our Western society as it is evolving. They are wrong for a democratic way of living. They are wrong for liberal education. They were probably wrong for their own times, whenever that might have been; there are indications in the 'prophetic' texts that the 'prophets' were not popular in 'their' own times. Perhaps we should ponder the question why, rather than assume that they were always right and their target audience always wrong (Brenner 1997a:140).

This form of resistance is necessary for our current time, and we cannot and must not subscribe to the prophetic text in such totality. Feminist interpretations of the Hebrew Bible, some of which have been reviewed here, do exactly this. However, it is difficult not to incline to feminine agency. The marital metaphor in particular, and the extensive use of the woman's metaphor in our daily life in general, is so rooted in the cultural-political sphere, that it is almost impossible not to subscribe to it. This assertion exactly is what leads us to discuss only the male *âme* and the feminine as part of this *âme*. That is to say that the feminine is a male invention, created to sustain his existence and to aid with the constitution of his god as political focal point. In order to break this unbearable chain of subjugation and subjectivation we must rob this system of mythologization from its meaning. We need to strip its political implications and leave it naked and exposed. All in order to promote a better more democratic cultural-political system that changes the way we perceive the moral self and the male-female-society matrix.

If we keep on speaking sameness, if we speak to each other as men have been doing for centuries, as we have been taught to speak, we'll miss each other, fail ourselves. A g a i n . . . Words will pass through our bodies, above our heads. They'll vanish, and we'll be lost. Far off, up high. Absent from ourselves: we'll be spoken machines, speaking machines. Enveloped in proper skins, but not our own. Withdrawn into proper names, violated by them. Not yours, not mine. We don't have any. We change names as men exchange us, as they use us, use us up. It would be frivolous of us, exchanged by them, to be so changeable (Irigaray 1985b:205).

7.9 The Riddle, the Allegory and the Self

Reviewing chs. 17-19 and 21-22 as chapters that promote the correct discourse and the right and wrong knowledge will help us to better understand the R^M subscription to chs. 16 and 23.

7.9.1 Chapter 17: The Cedar and the Vine

Chapter 17 starts with Ezekiel telling the R that Yhwh speaks to him:

The word of the LORD came to me:

O mortal, propound a riddle and relate an allegory to the House of Israel (vv. 1-2).

This command of Yhwh to Ezekiel denotes the process, in which the book of Ezekiel recreates or maybe updates, the mythological system that conveys meaning. Block compares Yhwh's riddle to the one Samson gave the Philistines in Judg. 14.12-19. He adds that although the reader might know how to decipher the riddle, it is not that evident that the audience of the oracle actually succeeded in understanding this allegory. Here lies the importance of the second part of the chapter and its authenticity as the interpretation part of the allegory. Block draws the outline of the chapter and divides it to four: Fabulous, or the allegory (vv. 1-10); Historical (vv. 11-18); Theological (vv. 19-21); Ideal (vv. 22-24), in a rising literal action (Block 1997:522-6). One part is the allegory; second part is the truth and moral. A is B – the connection between the two main units of this chapter, the allegory and its riddle to the answer is very visible and the coherence can be seen clearly:

The word of the LORD came to me: O mortal, propound a riddle and relate an allegory to the House of Israel. (17.2)

Then the word of the LORD came to me:

Say to the rebellious breed: Do you not know what these things mean? (17.12)

This parallelism that can be seen throughout the chapter is an example of the use of metaphors in the book of Ezekiel. We can see the mythological language in which Yhwh speaks, and the explanation of this language. In this manner, chapter 17 is very different from chapter 16. While in chapter 16 Jerusalem is portrayed as a deviant woman and is treated accordingly, here the people, or the house of Israel, is depicted in a mythological way that turns into a historical, political-theological analysis. Different commentators explain the metaphor in the historical aspects and its relation to King Zedekiah, his exile to Babylon and his relations with Egypt, relations that were one of the political reasons for the destruction of Jerusalem (Block 1997: 539-48; Zimmerli 1979: 364-8). However, my goal here is not to discuss the allegory and the interpretation of it, but the use of this metaphorical language in the new discourse that the book of Ezekiel wants to form.

Two eagles play a part in this story, the ‘greatest eagle’ (vv. 3-6) and a ‘great eagle’ (v. 7). The first eagle is very active and also splendid looking, while the second is smaller and passive. The first eagle is the one who plants the top of a cedar tree in Lebanon that becomes the vine. However, the vine turns its branches toward the passive eagle, the less magnificent one who did not take part in the planting nor in the nourishing of it. This allegory may puzzle not only the ‘audience’ of the book, but also the present time reader, of whether the first eagle is a good eagle? Should we feel compassion for him? Yhwh’s questions and answers negate this feeling, the first eagle is Babylon and the second is Egypt. The vine is in exile and it sends its branches toward Egypt for help that will never come. Yhwh will punish the king of Babylon for his act, even though the vine, which we know now, is Israel, flourished. The rhetoric changes in the last verses of the chapters, where Yhwh will take a set from the lofty top of the cedar and will plant it on the top of the highest mountain in Israel. This

sprig will become a mighty cedar tree and birds will be in its branches, and all trees will know that only Yhwh is the one that plants trees and nourishes them. Block solves the riddle of Ezekiel by connecting it to the Davidic house of Israel. The sprig of cedar that Yhwh will take from Babylon will be a king from the family of Jehoiachin, and it is he who will flourish in the land of Israel, thus promoting idealist times for Israel. Block continues and says that four theological implications can be seen here; the first is the cry to Egypt instead of for Yhwh, and the understanding that in times of need, Israel must cry to this god. Second, Israel must remember that the covenant is binding at any time. Third, Yhwh is the sovereign over history, and fourth, Israel may violate the commitment to Yhwh, but he will not (Block 1997:551-4). A few more elements need to be viewed here. Firstly, this allegory that does not have judgment and anger characteristics, but actually bears within a great hope, comes exactly after one of the most violent chapters in the Hebrew Bible, completely changing the tone and the message. Secondly, although Israel is the 'audience' that the message is conveyed to, the ones who are being punished here are the foreign kings, while Israel receives his blessing and assurance of a prosperous future. Thirdly, Israel starts here as a male character, continues to female and then becomes male again.

Newsom States:

Metaphor derives much of its convincing power because it does not allow its hearers to be passive but requires them to participate in the construction of the metaphorical meaning. In this process, though, there is a sense of "virtual experience" (Ricoeur's phrase) which can be mistaken for literal truth. Perhaps more dangerous even than the brilliant metaphor is the dead one whose constructed character, whose is-and-is-not nature, has been forgotten (Newsom 1995:193).

Reviewing Block's analysis of ch. 17 shows us that this chapter deals more with the limits and features of the new moral self, than with the sins of Israel, and

offers retribution and hope. Who is this moral self, is he the same one represented in ch. 16? Are the vine and Jerusalem one? The first eagle goes to Lebanon and takes the treetop of the cedar tree. Seventy three times the word cedar, עֵדֶן appears in the Hebrew Bible, all with relation to strength and masculine magnitude. When the greatest eagle picks the crown of the cedar tree we receive a metaphor of Israel as a Cedar – Israel is a great Man. When this cedar is brought to Babylon something very interesting happens to it, it becomes a vine; this נֶחֱלָה has feminine attributes throughout the Hebrew Bible (p. 150). From a proud cedar, Israel has become *a spreading vine of low stature* (v. 6), connecting the metaphor to chapter 16 and to deviant woman Israel. In the end of the chapter, Yhwh takes the lofty top of the cedar and plants it, this time in the mountain of Israel and this cedar becomes a noble one. *Every bird of every feather shall take shelter under it, shelter in the shade of its boughs* (v. 23); this act also teaches us that the greatest eagle of them all is Yhwh. Indeed, as Newsom stated, the most brilliant metaphor is the dead one, and this is the calling to revive it: when Israel is bad, it is a woman, when it is good and has promising future, it is a man. These are the metaphorical elements for the production of the R^{MF}. The book of Ezekiel in its quest to create the new R^I needs to create a new discourse and new truths; hence it creates a new mythological system. It starts with the allegory, asks questions to promote thinking and answer the rhetorical questions according to the new metaphorical/mythological system. The position of the woman Israel in this chapter is clear. The vine in Babylon and her reaching out to the king of Egypt connotes adultery and betrayal and in a way is very similar to the behavior of Jerusalem in chapter 16. They both prostitute men who did not invest any efforts in persuading them. The metaphor is becoming clearer: only Yhwh is the husband, only

women betray, and the future covenant between Israel and his god will be based on male morals and codes of behavior.

7.9.2 Chapter 18: When They Say Repent, I Wonder What They Mean

Chapter 18, as opposed to the vivid and illustrated chapter 17, is not a metaphorical one, nor an allegory one. It is rather a dry and informative speech that is by itself a complete negation of the metaphor of the Israelites that was cited in the beginning of the chapter. The review of this chapter focuses on three issues: the *Man* as the basic unity of Israel, the discourse and the metaphor, and the constitution of the male moral self.

18.1 and 18.2 correspond in one very important matter: They denote the hierarchy of the correct sayings. 18.1 is a usual statement of Ezekiel: *The word of the LORD came to me*. Against it stand the sayings of the Israelites: *What do you mean by quoting this proverb...“Parents eat sour grapes and their children’s teeth are blunted”?* A correct saying and a metaphor, the correct saying is the word of Yhwh, spoken by Ezekiel, the wrong saying is the metaphor cited by Israel. Ezekiel, the maker of metaphors, asks the Israelites not to subscribe to a metaphor. V. 3 completes this line with the same alignment: נִאֻם אֲדֹנָי against, הַמִּשְׁלָּה the stressing and re-stressing that the correct speech belongs only to Yhwh and never to the people.

Instead of conveying a message in the same way of chs. 16 and 17, Ezekiel speaks almost in a legal way, classifying sins and virtues, and in a sense, becomes a second Moses (Block 1997:557). Ezekiel divides the Israelites into three generations; every generation has its own attributes, the first is righteous vv. 5-8, his son is evil vv. 10-13, and the grand child is righteous just like his grandfather vv. 14-19.

Although in first reading, this chapter speaks only on the repentance of the individual, one must ask: how can we speak about individual responsibility when this

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entire book speaks about the creation of a nation, its leaders, its moral codes and behaviors, and the borders of the land? Block adds: ‘to identify a new doctrine of individualism as the principal agenda of the chapter is to confuse subject with theme’ (Block 1997:557). However, one cannot neglect the importance of the use of the individual in this chapter, and the analysis will focus on this usage. All characters in this chapter are men, the first one is called אָדָם, and so are his son and grandson who are referred to as men. Moreover, one of the virtues of the first man is not to defile another man’s wife, and not to approach a menstrual woman – sexual misbehaviors that may be perceived already as something that belongs to the woman’s realm. The list of virtues and sins is constructed by the same hierarchy for all of the three men: First are the relations of the man and his god, then a man and his commodity (the woman) and his sexual conduct, third are the relations between a man and a man. After explaining the individual responsibility and the right to repent, and after 24 verses of a monologue from Yhwh to the individual, the tone of the chapter turns into a dialogue, and a second voice plural with a clear interpellation: *Be assured, O House of Israel, I will judge each one of you according to his ways* (v. 30). The English translation of the JPS lacks the volume and scale of this verse in its interpellative sense. V.30a may be divided into three segments, each concludes the line of this chapter:

אִישׁ - בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל - נֶאֱמָר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה

The house of Israel is one man, or in other terms, is built by small bricks or units of Man that are constituted by the words of Yhwh. We may conclude the argument whether this chapter concerns personal retribution or not, by saying that this chapter concerns the construction of the Israelite body by many, maybe infinite small Israelites bodies. The virtues and the sins here create the moral self and the moral code that will ultimately construct the Israelite social body. In this manner the woman

has nothing to do with this construction. Not only is she muted; she is also a part of man-to-man relations, a commodity that one must not steal. The call and the promise of v. 31 seals this chapter and the role of the male in the Israeli social body: *Cast away all the transgressions by which you have offended, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit, that you may not die, O House of Israel.*

The transgressions that need to be casted away here are the feminine metaphors, adultery and betrayal. Once the man casts it away, he can be cleansed and receive a new heart and a new spirit – a new *âme*. In this case, the woman becomes superfluous after she was used as metaphorical vehicle to convey the wrong virtue in the male's psyche.

Ch. 18 can be read as a chapter of hope, a glimpse of light in this dark and disheartening book, it gives the right to repent, and the hope for a better future.. However it can be read also as a very dreadful chapter for the woman and as an educative chapter for the man, encouraging him to continue with the taming of the woman and the treating of her as a commodity. Indeed, the society and culture that is being constructed here with the new heart and a new soul is a society of men. It is a male economy in which man can freely repent himself and reinvent his self with the aid of the feminine element in his *âme* that forever, so it seems in this book, will be negative.

The man in this chapter starts his constitution by the law, and becomes a political entity. R^{MF} is constructed as a moral self now, and learns the boundaries between the sins and the virtues. R^{MF} understands that the right speech is always the one of Yhwh, and learns how to speak Yhwh's language. He receives a new mythological system to understand the reality, a system in which the woman will always be a sign of a sin and a threat and needs to be tamed. In chapter 16 Yhwh

commends Jerusalem to live in her blood, in her filth, in her shame. V. 32 concludes chapter 18 with the same command: *Repent, therefore, and live!* However, this time it is designated to the Man who does not live in his filth but in his new spirit and heart, and that always has the right to go back to the law and reconstitute his self. The R^{MF} thus becomes a clean repented R^M.

One must wonder just as Leonard Cohen did in his song: *when they said repent! I wonder what they meant.*³⁹

7.9.3 Chapter 19: Mother

In a first look, chapter 19 may be viewed as an odd chapter, it has two different metaphors that are linked loosely, and is presented as a dirge that does not have the known characteristics of one. It starts with a command *to intone a dirge over the princes of Israel* (v. 1) and the R should participate in the sad message that the dirge conveys. Block asserts that although this chapter is introduced as a dirge it lacks any term that constitutes a lament and it is better to treat it as a parody. He continues and writes that the chapter is a riddle about the dynasty of Judah. On its outcome It forces the reader to reflect on the relationship between the fate of Judah's last king, and the personal responsibility of the individual that was presented in the previous chapter (Block 1997:594-6). Hence, this chapter first and foremost deals with the fate of the Davidic dynasty. However, something is lacking here. If the dirge is not an actual dirge and it doesn't address one person, then why does this chapter start as a dirge and conclude by saying that this is a dirge (v.14)?

³⁹The future, lyrics by Leonard Cohen.

Beentjes might be able to answer this question:

An important new aspect introduced by the prophetic *qinah* is that the dirge is no longer addressed to a single individual (actually deceased), but is addressed to a larger entity, e.g. a city, a people, or a country. These entities nevertheless are addressed by the prophets as an individual. Larger communities are personified as a single addressee: 'Virgin Israel' (Amos 5:2), the King of Tyre (Ezek. 28:12-19), the King of Egypt, Ezek. 32:2-16 (Beentjes 1996:23).

Trying to understand the role of the mother in these two metaphors, Beentjes argues that in some cases in the Hebrew Bible the noun 'mother' is referring to a political entity and the most obvious ones are in the book of Ezekiel itself (16.44-45 and 23.2). Hence, although the chapter might seem to be a lamentation, it has some different features that promote the R to take part in the interpretation of the metaphors. Moreover, this chapter connects the R not only to Israel as an entity that R needs to reject and accept at the same time, but also to the leaders of Israel. Thus forming a direct connection between the R, the social body of Israel, the leaders of this social body and its ultimate leader - Yhwh. In short, this chapter connects all men, while the thread that weaves this connection is a new use of the woman as a metaphor, this time as a mother.⁴⁰

19.1-2 may show us the connection between the R, the Israelite social body and its leader. The chapter opens with an order *to intone a dirge over the princes of Israel*. Who is commanded? Is it Ezekiel or could it be that this verse is a direct calling of Yhwh to R without Ezekiel's mediation? Could it be that the R^M needs to intone a dirge over the leaders or maybe even over his *self*? Moreover, in v. 1 the calling was to lament over the princes of Israel in the plural form, and in v. 2 the

⁴⁰ Since I accept Beentjes' understanding on the mother as a noun for a political entity and I do not wish to decipher the metaphor itself but the system of knowledge that produces it, I will not refer to Hamutal as the lioness, as Greenberg did for example (1997:357).

referral to the mother is in the singular form, and the question, ‘what is your mother?’ has the loading of a judgmental calling. *What is your mother?* The answer to this question is in the form of a metaphor – the mother is a lioness. Moreover, this lioness lies among other lions, and among the young lions she raised her cubs. Greenberg searches for the meaning of ‘lion’ in the Hebrew Bible and finds that the lion figure here is mainly negative, since in most of the places in the Hebrew Bible the lions are portrayed as enemies. This understanding may show us that the victims of the young cub who devoured humans are actually better than the ones he slayed, and may allude to the moral superiority of the foreign nations over Israel (Greenberg 1983:356-8). In addition, the fact that the lioness lies among other lions may connote a promiscuous sexual activity and goes well with chapters 16 and 23. The mother that was in charge of raising a cub that will rule over Israel had actually raised an immoral cub, which not only devoured men, but also had sexual intercourse with the widows of the men he devoured (v. 7). The end for this cub was to be captured by the king of Babylon and to be imprisoned *So that never again should his roar be heard On the hills of Israel* (v. 9). Indeed, a devastating end to a strong and presumably unbeatable leader. The questions asked in the beginning of this part have not yet been answered. What is the connection between the mother, the social body and the R^M?

Beentjes adds:

By all these data one reaches the conclusion that there was an ancient metaphorical saying: ‘Judah is like a lion’. The fact that similar metaphors circulated relating to Jacob-Israel, Gad, and ‘the Rest of Jacob’ (Mic. 5:6-7) is a strong indication for the stereotype of this image. Ezekiel was familiar with the Judah-lion-metaphor, and in a rather creative way uses this motive as a pattern in the first half of his dirge (Beentjes 1996:28).

The connection of the R to his mother, thus the evil woman is becoming clearer. Judah is the lion, the R^M's mother is the lioness, and his leader is like a fierce cub with immoral features, all equates to the new metaphor – R^M's mother is the source of this immoral behavior. The eternal feminine motherly roots are actually the source of this evilness, and it was she who was laid among other lions and raised an immoral leader.

Another element that needs to be regarded here is the fact that most commentators refer to the presidents of Israel as the kings of Judah, despite the fact that it is not stated anywhere that Judah is the goal here, nor is there an actual use in the name Judah.⁴¹ In other words, the commentators took part in the decoding of the metaphor by using Genesis 49.9-12, where Judah is depicted as a lion – thus becoming the audience of Ezekiel. However, as earlier showed, (p. 96) the use of the name of Israel for both kingdoms has a strong political impact. It allows the R to identify with one name and one entity, and to take part in the creation of this unified nation so he could become R^I. The fact that the presidents of Israel are the subjects here allows the R that is in the state of R^M to continue with the process of rejection and acceptance of the name of Israel before fully becoming R^I. Hence: Judah is Israel is a Lion. The restitution of the Israelite social body will be for only one entity and that is the eternal Israel. In this light we can see how the name Judah is actually being gradually diminished in order to form the name Israel.

Not only is the cub punished here but also the mother. V. 10 continues with the interpellation of the R^M: *Your mother was like a vine in your blood*. The mother who was a lioness and raised bad leaders is now a vine in the R^M's blood. The use of the

⁴¹ See for example: Block 1997: 598; Joyce 2007a: 147; Eichrodt 1970: 251; Greenberg 19349.

vine metaphor was explained earlier (p. 194) and we can see a connection to ch. 17. The mother is a vine that grows on water, rising high, and *it was conspicuous by its height, By the abundance of its boughs* (v. 11b), just like her lion cub. And just like her lion cub she was punished, she is now planted in the desert, fire consumed her and nothing was left of her. The use of the woman as a tool to convey meaning and purpose that ultimately creates a body of knowledge that constitutes the male's self, continues here in the same tone. Now, not only does evil denote feminine, the woman is also the root of this evil. She is the one responsible for it. Moreover, while the cub, the male, the king, is punished by being imprisoned, there is still hope for his salvation and for his voice to be heard in the mountains of Israel. On the other hand, the vine is being burnt, referring back to the rhetorical questions of chapter 15, what use is there with a burnt vine (p. 150)? Nothing. The woman here again, receives her punishment, of death and destruction.

R^M has a new moral self that he needs to subscribe to and maintain, this moral self has deviant elements depicted as feminine. The R^M takes part in the killing of these elements so he can participate in the constitution of his new self. R^I is not a vine, a woman who forever will be sexual, promiscuous and deviant, but a cedar, tall and proud, moral and righteous, under the sole supervision of Yhwh. This mother that is in his blood, will be remembered as the immoral part that needs to be eradicated, and forever will be used for such a purpose.

7.9.4 Chapter 21: I am Your Sword

Chapter 21 will not be analyzed extensively in order to focus and maintain the line of this unit – the gender structure of the male *âme*. However, a few matters should be

taken into consideration here. In 21.5⁴² Ezekiel answers Yhwh's command to prophecy against the Negev by saying *Ah, Lord GOD! They say of me: He is just a riddle monger*. This answer might sound like a protest, as if Ezekiel wishes to change the form of the prophecies. Yhwh does not answer back and commences with a new prophecy and with a new allegory of the sword of Yhwh. Newsom states:

While Ezekiel's original audience may have lacked appreciation of his metaphorical style, the prophet stands a good chance of getting a sympathetic hearing (for his rhetorical technique at least) from modern readers. During the past generation there has been a new perception of metaphor as more than elegant decoration of information that could otherwise be communicated in a straightforward manner. It is now generally understood that far from being merely decorative, metaphors have real cognitive content (Newsom 1995:191-2).

Newsom started her analysis with v.5 but did not continue analyzing its meaning: why does Ezekiel protest and why does not Yhwh answer? Departing from the 'historical' review of Ezekiel and treating the audience as a name that R^M needs to accept and reject, may result in a different understanding that will also be connected to 22.1-16. By protesting, Ezekiel opposes the disdain in metaphors and allegories and in fact teaches the R^M not to accept the thinking of the 'audience', thus promoting his own discourse and his new base of knowledge. In fact, it is not the audience that disdains Ezekiel here; it is the R^M, now in the process of acquiring this new base of knowledge and metaphorical thinking that scorns the audience. Ezekiel confronts this 'audience' this name, this abyss, as it was called by Derrida (p. 96), and by so doing he erases a discourse that may oppose his own. In 21.5 Ezekiel reflects on his own calling, more so, he confronts the people who resist the new discourse formation. By repeating their words he opposes them, he is telling on them, so to speak, and erases their resistance. This understanding correlates well with 21.11-12 and Ezekiel's sign

⁴² All verse number in chapter 21 will be according to the Masoretic text.

act to this audience that is referred to again in third voice plural - they; they and not me. They do not know the word of Yhwh and his new base of knowledge, they need endless sign acts and metaphors to understand something that the R^M is in the process of full realization.

The next matter is the extensive use in the metaphor of the sword. Bowen relies on Eisler's book *The Chalice and the Blade* (1987) and writes that there are two models of deity: one that gives life, the mother; and one that holds the power of the sword, the father (Bowen 2010:132-3). As stated earlier, the mother is represented as a bad one who does not possess the good motherly qualities, and educates her son to be immoral. In this manner the feminine model of the deity is foul, thus leaving Yhwh as the only model. Yhwh is the ultimate Man who has all the male qualities in him, and he is the one that will bring destruction upon his people. Moreover, this chapter may act as prelude for the unit to follow 24-33, the wars of Yhwh, in which Yhwh fights against the foreign kings, demonstrating his glory, his weapons, and his might. All of this will result eventually In a male matrix, in which the woman has no value and no place. Put differently, a market of men, a society where man reinvents himself according to historical needs while using the woman as a metaphor, a vehicle to convey messages and man-made myths designated to create his structure.

7.9.5 Chapter 22: The Land, the Blood and the Social Body

Chapter 22 can be divided into three different sections that complement each other:

The bloody city vv. 1-16

The melting pot vv. 17-22

The judgment of the land vv. 23-31

The main concern in this chapter is not the sins of Jerusalem and their implications but rather the connection between the body, its cultural and gender perception, and its connection to the cultural representation of the land and the city.⁴³ The first oracle in this chapter discusses the bloody city Jerusalem, and we can witness in this oracle some similarities to chapter 16 and a prelude to 23. In chapter 16 the blood was Jerusalem's life given by Yhwh. However, in this oracle, Jerusalem's blood portrays her sins and ultimately her penalty: *I will scatter you among the nations and disperse you through the lands; I will consume the uncleanness out of you* (22.15). The city of Jerusalem will be cut to pieces and scattered among the other nations, just as Jerusalem in chapter 16 will be punished by other nations.

The second oracle may seem a severe punishment with no hope for the people of Israel, or as Blenkinsopp describes it: 'in the second discourse (vs. 17-22), Ezekiel takes over a familiar prophetic metaphor that of smelting metal in the furnace. The process of separating the metal from the alloy or slag could serve as an apt figure of purification and refinement, as it does in Isaiah (Isa. 1:22; 48:10). Both Jeremiah (Jer. 6:27-30) and Ezekiel, however, speak of a process from which nothing survives except the slag which serve no useful purpose' (Blenkinsopp 1990:111). So does Eichrodt who compares Isaiah and Ezekiel and writes that while Isaiah describes a process that 'eventually purifies the silver and separated it from the dross...Ezekiel has no hope of any such result' (Eichrodt 1970:313).

Consequently we can see that there is no hope for Israel, however if we carefully read v. 19: *Assuredly, thus said the Lord GOD: Because you have all become dross, I*

⁴³ I would like to add that I will not refer to the origin of the bloody city in the book of Nahum (3.1) but will analyze the connection between the bloody city and the bloods of the women in this unit.

will gather you into Jerusalem. We may see a different aspect that was somehow neglected. In v. 19 Yhwh says that he will gather all the dross into Jerusalem and in v. 22 he is repeating this action by saying:

בְּהַתִּיךְ בְּסֶרֶף בְּתוֹךְ בּוֹר בֵּן אֶתְכֹּו בְּתוֹכָהּ

As silver is melted in a crucible, so shall you be melted in it (22.22a).

The feminine construct בְּתוֹכָהּ connotes the city of Jerusalem as a woman and the people of Israel as a man. In that sense, the oracle may not give hope to Jerusalem but it gives hope to the male Israelite. By fusing the male, imaged as a metal and dross, into the woman (her Jerusalem), the male not only receives hope but mainly a body. Galambush showed in her study, that the temple is represented as male and the city as woman. The city is polluting the male body and needs to be eradicated, while the male body needs to be repaired in order to be holy again (p. 188). Hence, the bloody city, Jerusalem, the one that received her life from her bloods and died because of the bloods, is punished in order that the male can acquire her cultural position. In relation to masochism as an art of power (p. 109), the male subject possesses the feminine at the same time as he possesses the masculine, so he can acquire his new power as power to the powerless (R^{MF}). The fusion of the dross to the city is the acquisition of the female persona of Jerusalem, and the control of the feminine. In this way, it is an important step with the identification of the new male body with the city of Jerusalem and with the future Israel. In other words, the male's *âme* is in search of a body now; the temple and Jerusalem are the R^M needs to complete his process. In this sense, the temple and the city are not the female but rather the male that use the feminine to build his self a new adobe.

The last oracle connects the city with the land thus closing the line between the land, the people and the city. Ch. 22 may well connect the two episodes that are the

frame of this unit, 16 and 23. The R^M that becomes the social body, with the use of pornography and sexual violence is being finalized here. The punishment in chapter 23 will no longer be just a punishment to a deviant woman, but will actually be a punishment to the R^M who will subscribe to this punishment and will gain his masochist subjectivity accordingly. The woman is the sacrifice, the blood and the site on which a man is born, and even though he is severely punished, he will not die and his body will stay intact. The melting of the male body into the female allows its purification, as does the changing of the name of Israel from a deviant woman to a righteous man. In this manner, it is not a bad punishment but hopeful in chapter 22.

7.10 Theory Revisited

The essential political problem for the intellectual is not to criticise the ideological contents supposedly linked to science, or to ensure that his own scientific practice is accompanied by a correct ideology, but that of ascertaining the possibility of constituting a new politics of truth. The problem is not changing people's consciousnesses—or what's in their heads—but the political, economic, institutional regime of the production of truth. It's not a matter of emancipating truth from every system of power (which would be a chimera, for truth is already power) but of detaching the power of truth from the forms of hegemony, social, economic and cultural, within which it operates at the present time. The political question, to sum up, is not error, illusion, alienated consciousness or ideology; it is truth itself (Foucault 1980b:133)

The process of mapping in Ezekiel is doubled; it changes the source and the target, and builds a new mapping system. The book of Ezekiel actually changed the way we perceive metaphors by altogether reconstructing the source and the target of the metaphor. So strong was the mapping process in the book of Ezekiel that male scholars did not really bother with the sins themselves and their meaning but mostly with the 'deserved punishment' of the woman.

The book of Ezekiel in its quest to create the new Israelite man self-created a new discourse and new truths, thus promoting a new mythological system. It first started

with the allegory, then asked questions to promote thinking, and finally answered the rhetorical questions according to the new metaphorical/mythological system. The position of the woman and the meaning of the metaphors is becoming clearer: only Yhwh is the husband, betrayal is feminine and the future covenant between Israel and his god will be based on male morals and codes of behavior. The R, which was neutralized in the first unit of the book, took part in a process that paved the way to be new Israel, R^I . To become R^I , the R^N went through a process of interpellation, using a metaphorical language as a tool to regain a broken masculinity.

The language of men became the language of truth, a domain fully controlled by men for men, where Ezekiel actually speaks god and the woman speaks lies, or even worse, women speak not from the lips in their face but from the lips in their vagina.

The strong violent pornography that is presented in this unit achieved its purpose. The woman's blood becomes the source of the R^M , and masochism as an art of power is being manifested here in all of its might. By subscribing to his sins and accepting his traumatic history, the R feels shame and guilt. He, as R^{MF} participates in the exclusion of his 'dark side', by beating the metaphorical woman that is an integral part of his *âme* and at the same time being punished and beaten by his master. As a consequence he became stronger, drawing lines between the outside and the inside of the law, thanks to his sovereign/father/dominatrix for including him in his realm of law. The process of the constitution of the R^I is the process of the recovery from trauma. From here on, the R will gradually exit the state of trauma until fully assuming his R^I identity. The union between the R as the new man and his god is created through a violent sexual act that is manifested as textual pornography. This sexual union gave birth to a contract of laws between the R and his god in which the R himself is taking part in its constitution. In other words – the process started as a

physical sexual relationship and ended by a constitution of a new *âme*, a heart that will be the adobe of the new Israelite body.

This political act is so strong and embedded in Western thinking that biblical researchers neglected the problematization of the sexual acts, and treated them as a given sin. 'Sex is boring', writes Foucault (Hubert 1983:62), and we should not care about sexual conducts but why they are problems. We should grasp at the roots of the moral self instead of strengthening them, and we should question the scientific quality that biblical studies claim to possess. The main focus in the analysis of this unit was not only to demonstrate the use of pornography and metaphor as techniques of power that constitute the R^M , but also to stress the problems of commentators' subscription to the so-called truth of the text. Many male commentators, by supposedly discussing the textual meaning, are actually asserting their own discourse, and continue deepening the knowledge base that is we use to 'understand' the metaphoric language.

We must break this metaphorical language and remap it. Barthes, in his discussion on myths, mythological systems and their effects on the human reality, wrote that myth cannot be fought since any discussion about myth will only make it stronger. Consequently, he stressed that we should rob the myth from its original meaning and build a new meaning on top of it (Barthes 1972:134). This is the goal here, to act upon the text, to grasp its roots, and to stress over and over again, that the truth that we perceive as such is another element in the matrix of power and in the complex and vast system of mythologies, in this case of metaphors. Indeed, Hannaniah, son of Hezekiah saved the book of Ezekiel and thus saved his self and all future R^I , whether it is the Jewish, or the Christian one. One should ask, do we still need this identification process, and if so, what for?

Or as Barthes so adequately puts it:

What the world supplies to myth is an historical reality, defined, even if this goes back quite a while, by the way in which men have produced or used it; and what myth gives in return is a natural image of this reality. And just as bourgeois ideology is defined by the abandonment of the name 'bourgeois', myth is constituted by the loss of the historical quality of things: in it, things lose the memory that they once were made. The world enters language as a dialectical relation between activities, between human actions; it comes out of myth as a harmonious display of essences. A conjuring trick has taken place; it has turned reality inside out, it has emptied it of history and has filled it with nature, it has removed from things their human meaning so as to make them signify a human insignificance. The function of myth is to empty reality: it is, literally, a ceaseless flowing out, a hemorrhage, or perhaps an evaporation, in short a perceptible absence (Barthes 1972:142).

Part III

Chapters 24-39: My flock, Flock that I Tend.

From R^M to R^I

*A man wakes up in the morning feeling like a nation
And all that he encounters blesses him with peace.*⁴⁴

8. My Land, My Body, My Soul

Nations, like narratives, lose their origins in the myths of time and only fully realize their horizons in the mind's eye. Such an image of the nation — or narration — might seem impossibly romantic and excessively metaphorical, but it is from those traditions of political thought and literary language that the nation emerges as a powerful historical idea in the west. An idea whose cultural compulsion lies in the impossible unity of the nation as a symbolic force (Bhabha 1990:1).

As was claimed by Boyarin (p. 40), the name Israel has become a sign that is not only used by the Rabbinical movement, Jews in general or the state of Israel; it is also used by Christianity, denoting *Verus Israel*, the true Israel, or the Israel in the spirit. Hence, there is a need in this aspect, to examine not only the constitution of the R but also of the nation of Israel, of its borders, and its characteristics.

The nation of Israel described to us in the Book of Ezekiel was not actually manifested as the book describes, it is rather a mythological foundation for a future nation and an imagined community. Anderson in his book *Imagined Communities* offers a definition to the nation: 'it is an imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion' (Anderson 1991:6). He continues and adds that 'If nation-states are widely conceded to be 'new' and 'historical,' the nations to which they give political expression always loom out of an immemorial past, and, still more important, glide into a limitless future. It is the

⁴⁴ Morning, morning, lyrics by Amir Gilboa 1973, my translation.

magic of nationalism to turn chance into destiny' (10-11).⁴⁵ Indeed, the sign of the nation of Israel lives in an immemorial past and a limitless future. It offers endless interpretations for the imagined community and functions as a base for such a creation. My intention here is not to review the different ways and methods of constructing a nation, nor to find the cultural roots of nations, but to stress the political function of the book of Ezekiel. This book does not produce a self for the sole function of creating a self, but rather creates a nation, one that has an ultimate sovereign and that is designated to live forever.

Anthony D. Smith lists six attributes to an ethnic community constituting the foundations of a nation: A collective proper name, a myth of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more differentiating elements of common culture, an association with a specific 'homeland', a sense of solidarity for significant sectors of the population (Smith 1991:21).

It is not only the book of Ezekiel that has created this concept of a nation, however, one cannot ignore its vital role in the production of such a concept. Gender is a fundamental part in the national identity (p. 207), and the process of ascription to the message of chs. 16, 23 by the male modern scholars may also be viewed as a process of subscription to the imagined Israel, whether it is Jewish, Protestant or Catholic.

Hence the importance of this prelude to the second part of the book of Ezekiel; from now on, R^M becomes R^I , a small body becomes a part of a large body with one ruler. If the first part of the book was mainly prophecies of doom and punishment in which the subject, although connoted a male Israel, was signified feminine; the

⁴⁵ More on the subject see: Smith 1987, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2004, 2008.

second part is primarily prophecies of restoration. In this light, we will start to witness a process in which the subject and the city of Jerusalem will be rendered masculine. This national R^M is not 'ready' yet and is situated in a 'gray area', an identity without a land that can be utilized for the creation of a full national identity – in short, an exiled identity. In other terms, the exilic element is the key element for the creation of this new R^M that connotes to the good male Israel. Allen writes that in the book of Ezekiel 'life is repeatedly defined in terms of returning to the land' (Allen 1990:xxiv). However, the questions that should be asked here is, who will return to the land, and what are the qualities that this land possesses?

After the destruction of bad Israel, there is a need now to draw the borders of the new Israel and the new Israelite R^M. This process first starts from the outside, the 'external other' and continues to the 'other from within', which is the Israelites who stayed in the land, or the inhabitants of the ruins. Brueggemann writes that 'exile evoked the most brilliant literature and the most daring theological articulation in the Old Testament' (Brueggemann 1997:2). This 'daring theological articulation' paved the way for the creation of Israel as we know today, Israel that has managed to survive over two thousands years of 'exile'; and to a different Israel that has not needed a land at all to exist - Christianity.

The analysis will not emphasize the exiles' condition in Babylon and how they historically acted and lived in Babylon.⁴⁶ It will rather focus on the cultural connotation of being an exile, and of the use of the exile as a political tool for the construction of a new national identity.

⁴⁶ See: Noth 1960:296; Coogan 1974; Strine 2013:177-226.

8.1 Chapter 24: A Death with no Sadness: The Final Purge of the Woman

Chapter 24 acts as the last unit in the prophecies of destruction, and may also be regarded as a bridge between both parts of the book.

Two oracles, or proves, are arranged in this chapter, in which the connection between them must not be overlooked. The chapter commences with a date: *In the ninth year, on the tenth day of the tenth month, the word of the LORD came to me* (24.1). In v. 2 Yhwh asks Ezekiel to: *record this date, this exact day*; signifying its importance. Ezekiel is the only prophet that uses the phrase עֲצָם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה, a phrase that throughout the Hebrew Bible is used only for monumental events: Noah's ark (Gen. 7.13), the exodus (Exds.12.51), and the law of Yom Kippur (Lev. 23.28). In the book of Ezekiel this phrase appears three times: at the beginning of the call narrative (2.3), here (24.2) and the Temple vision (40.1).

The phrase עֲצָם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה, signifies monumental milestones in the creation process of the new male *âme*: The beginning of the process - the calling of Ezekiel, and the end of the process - the utopic Jerusalem (See also Bowen 2010:146; Blenkinsopp 1990:104). In that note, the use of the phrase in chapter 24, gives this chapter and this unit political significance. It is a rhetorical act that promotes a stronger political value, making this chapter the bearer of a religious/national/ethnic memorial day.

This day is the end of a process, an end that is also a beginning, the beginning of the end, and the end of the end. From this day on, a new process will take place, and this process is culturally connecting the death of Ezekiel's wife to the destruction of the temple and the death of the deviant woman of Jerusalem. Indeed, an end, but is this end tragic?

The Boiling Room

The first part of the chapter functions as a metaphor, whereas the clues to the metaphor are to be found elsewhere in the book. Ezekiel is ordered to take a caldron, to put it on the fire and pour water into it. Then he is ordered to fill it up with the best cuts of the flock and cook it with their scum. The caldron will be cooked until all the flesh, the bones and the caldron itself will burn to ashes and nothing will be left of it, ending the allegory with a phrase that echoes chs. 16, 22, 23: *For your vile impurity – because I sought to cleanse you of your impurity, but you would not be cleansed – you shall never be clean again until I have satisfied My fury upon you* (24.13). The allegory is quite clear, especially with regard to the dating and the siege of the city: Jerusalem will be burned to ashes and its inhabitants with it. Echoes to this allegory and evidences to its relation to the rest of the book can be found in the following motives: 24.6 portrays Jerusalem as the bloody city as was shown in chapter 22 (p. 207). The depiction of Jerusalem as a pot can be seen in 11.3 *this [city] is the pot, and we are the meat*. The melting of the flesh echoes 22.22, and the final step of the purging of Jerusalem is very similar both in chapter 24 and 16.

24.13b... *you shall never be clean again until I have satisfied My fury upon you*.
16.42 *when I have satisfied my fury upon you and My rage departed from you, then I will be tranquil*.

These allusions promote the understanding that the allegory closes the first part of the book of Ezekiel – the purging of bad Israel and the preparation of the new clean R¹. The chapter continues with a second, and a quite bizarre oracle that at a first glance may be regarded as if it was pasted in an arbitrary manner. Yhwh will kill Ezekiel's wife while Ezekiel cannot grieve her death. We may agree that the sign-act in the first part of the chapter represents the destruction of Jerusalem and temple via

the connection between 24.16 and 24.21. However, connecting both parts of this chapter, and treating it as a complete unit will promote a tremendous value and will render it as one of the most important chapters in the book.

8.1.2 To Mourn and not to Grieve

‘The call to divine service cost Ezekiel his wife, the delight of his eyes’, Writes Block and continues, ‘in his reaction to his wife’s death, he was a sign for his people; but in his response to the hand of God, he is a model for all who follow in his professional train’ (Block 1997:798). What Block stresses, in other words, is that Ezekiel’s wife is killed to be a sign-act, while Ezekiel as a result, is becoming a better man, thus continuing his line of subscription to the text (p. 182). Other scholars do the obvious reading by connecting the death of Ezekiel’s wife to the destruction of the temple.⁴⁷ I believe that there is more to it; Ezekiel’s wife appears and disappears in a blow, as a written rhetorical fiction that serves as a tool for a sign-act, and one must stop and think, why Ezekiel’s wife?

Yael Shemesh argues that the order not to mourn the death of his wife was meant to keep the social order: ‘The magnitude of the impending national calamity is such that the exiles will be able only to moan to each other’. She adds that the grief of the exiles is not only on Jerusalem and the temple, but also on their own sons and daughters, and is performed in a quite uncivilized manner... ‘Indeed animal like’ (Shemesh 2013:40-1). Although Shemesh discusses a very important point, there is a need to differentiate between mourning and grief and between ‘national’ and personal pain. An answer to the connection between the units of this chapter can be found in Odell’s article ‘Genre and Persona in Ezekiel 24.15-24’ (1998). Odell tackles this problem in

⁴⁷ Bowen 2010:149; Blenkinsopp 1990:104-5; Joyce 2007a:167-8; Zimmerli 1979:509.

an anthropological manner regarding the persona of Ezekiel and its effects on the rhetorical discourse. However, I will treat only her insights on the order not to mourn. In 24.17 Yhwh commands Ezekiel to: *Moan softly; observe no mourning for the dead: Put on your turban and put your sandals on your feet; do not cover over your upper lip, and do not eat the bread of comforters*. When his wife dies the next day, the people ask him what is he doing and Ezekiel instructs them to do the same on the destruction of Jerusalem.⁴⁸ In fact, this is the first time that the Israelites will actually take part in a sign-act. So far all signs-acts were performed by Ezekiel and were narrated to the ‘R’ (p. 105), thus promoting a very important shift in the construction of the new Israelite.

Odell writes: ‘Taking off a turban or putting one on has little to do with mourning, but it has everything to do with status transformation’ (cf. 2 Sam. 12.30; Ezek. 21.25-26; Isa 3.20). Moreover, Odell claims that the question of the exiles to Ezekiel does not deal with the death itself, but with the actions to follow. ‘To assume that this passage is concerned with the expression of emotion is to miss this point. Turbans are indicators of high status; that all of the exiles should do as Ezekiel has done is to suggest that all of them share in the transition to this honored status’ (Odell 1998:632-645).

The exiles are in fact commanded to express emotions in 24.23; these emotions are not on the death of their children or the destruction of Jerusalem but on their iniquities, hence on their deviant past. The exiles become now the survivors; they leave a part of their selves behind and embark upon a new journey of retribution – from the people of Jerusalem/Judah/Israel, to a community of exiles. Before the exiles

⁴⁸ Since my aim here is to discuss the use of the woman in the construction of the male self, I will not elaborate on mourning rites, for more on mourning rites in the Hebrew Bible see: Olyan 2004; Pham 2000.

will be constituted as the new Israel and receive not only a new heart but also a new body, they need to depart from their old self – to leave the woman and her attributes behind. In this manner, I would like to differentiate between ‘grief’ and ‘mourning’. Grief is a personal sadness over loss. Mourning has more national aspects and does not necessarily mean an end, but in many cases exactly the contrary. It means a beginning, a painful one, but still a beginning that bears within it hope. We can connect the beginning of the chapter and the use of the special day paradigm and treat it as a memorial day. The dating of the day creates a point from which life is different, a division between the past and the future.

In the first part of ch. 24 the woman Israel, the bloody city, is being finally purged, and in the second part – the new Israel is being born. Therefore, the metaphor of the death of Ezekiel’s wife, the prophet that for the first and only time is mentioned by Yhwh: *And Ezekiel shall become a portent for you* 24.24a, is holier, better, nobler. His wife was scarified so he could be an example. In *her* death she gave him life. And so is the city of Jerusalem, in her death she gave the community of the exiles – life. Certainly, it is sad to see death, but it is also rejoicing to witness your own rebirth. Let us not forget that the image of the woman and her attributes were used exactly where they were needed, as deviant, and as the depiction of bad Israel. In the process of the reformation there will be no need for her, thus she becomes superfluous. Moreover, she becomes the waste, and the men, the community of exiles, the people of Israel, those who will never be killed (p. 198) become the good one, the new Israel.

National Memorials Days do not only implicate sadness, they also promise hope. The death of a soldier cannot be a personal death, it must be national death and with a purpose, to promise the continuity of the nation. A subject who assumes national/tribal/ethnic identity cannot grieve a death that is considered national (war,

bombing attacks, etc.) in a personal manner. Otherwise, the death of his/her loved one will be considered pointless, a matter that may tear down the social order as Shemesh indicated. *In their death, they have offered us life*,⁴⁹ proclaims an Israeli phrase that is mainly used in every Memorial Day. In her death, the woman of Israel has offered the reader life. R^M lives and grows from her blood. She has offered him the chance to redeem and repent, and to promote a new masculine identity.

In this light, ch. 24 is a focal point for the resurrection of the new male self. It ends a process of 23 chapters of construction of the 'R' and the R^M, and is the prelude to the shift of the 'R' from a personal to a national one. The temporary Israel becomes now an eternal one, a male Israelite that will last forever, one that no death can peril. The process that Bataille discusses (p. 327) comes to full materialization: The man kills his feminine part so he could gain an eternal life. The end of the chapter crowns Ezekiel as the sole leader of Israel, and also the exclusive voice of its discourse. Twice Yhwh says that Ezekiel will be portent for them, and the correlation to the death of his wife is no accident.

The male figure and his body become now the blueprint of the land, the city and the temple. But before the temple is rebuilt and the land regenerates itself, there is a need to define the borders of this land, hence the unit of the Oracles Against the Nations (OAN).

⁴⁹ A quote from the poem: 'If Your Soul Yearns to Know', of the Israeli national poet, Chaim Nahman Bialik.

8.2 Chapters 25-33: The Map of Israel: The Oracles Against the Nations

Anyone reading Oracles against the Nations (OAN) is probably doing so because (1) the professor assigned it or (2) he or she is writing a dissertation on the OAN. One reason for the disinterest may be that no one really understands them (Bowen 2010:151).

Bowen's opening to her review of the Oracles against the Nations (OAN) starts with some much needed comic relief, since no one can really understand and give a full acceptable answer to the question: Why do the OAN exist at all, and did the foreign nations actually know that they were being addressed by a representative of a very small nation with a defeated god?

Eight chapters in the book of Ezekiel are dedicated to foreign nations, nearly a fifth of the book. Adding to the count, ch. 35, the oracle against Edom, and chs. 38-39, the oracle of Gog from the land of Magog, will increase their volume to nearly a fourth of the book. What is the political/theological gain and goal in such an extensive amount of oracles, especially with compliance to the location of the OAN in the book, between the oracles of judgment to the oracles of restoration?

We can see some main characteristics of the oracles: seven nations are addressed: Ammonites (25.1-7), Moab (25.8-11), Edom (25.12-14), Philistia (25.15-17), Tyre (26.1-28.19), Sidon (28.20-23), and Egypt (29.1-32.32). The oracles against Egypt are equal in length to the rest of the oracles and are divided into seven different ones. The oracles against the six nations are edited according to the geographical location of the nations, placing Judah at the center: East, the Ammonites; southeast, Moab; south, Edom; and west, Philistia. In the entire unit of the OAN Babylon is not mentioned even once, yet its king is.

Some researchers draw a line between the OAN and ideological warfare, Hayes argues that in the Hebrew Bible speeches made against the enemy do not take the form of a curse, but rather of a speech of judgment (Hayes 1968:82). Blenkinsopp also argues that one of the roles of the prophet is to provide assurance of success before a military operation (Blenkinsopp 1990:108).⁵⁰ Other scholars treat the OAN as Israelite xenophobic nationalism, thus dismissing them as not important.⁵¹ It is difficult to treat the OAN in this way since no war ensues in the book of Ezekiel. I am more inclined to agree with Blenkinsopp who says that out of the broken community came a developed confessional community open to all people, giving Ruth as an example (Blenkinsopp 1990:108-9). So does Odell who claims that ‘the oracles against the nations are thus concerned, not with avenging Israel of attacks by the nations, but with the definitive separation of Israel from its past ways’ (Odell 2005:325). However, one cannot completely disregard these aspects especially in the light of portraying Yhwh as a warrior and as the defender of the new emerging Israelite nation. Bowen proposes to see the nations in the OAN as bystanders, who see horrors but refuse to stand against them:

This is not necessarily the ‘original intent of the writer(s), but it is an intertextual possibility...the major problem with this view is how to construe theologically the bystanders’ failure to respond. If the nations are judged for failing to respond to Judah’s distress, then the devastation may not be *all* Judah’s fault. The level of violence against Judah might have been reduced, if only the nations had not stood by idly. Nonetheless, considering the nations as bystanders helps make sense of the role of the OAN within the book of Ezekiel (Bowen 2010:152).

⁵⁰ See also: Crouch 2011.

⁵¹ See also: Raabe 1995.

Although Bowen's approach is fresh and new, one might find it challenging to understanding this analysis, the main question is the obvious question of why? Why even bother then with the foreign nations?

Hence, The OAN can be analyzed differently, as a tool designated to form borders and establish the outer frame of the newly emerged nations of Israel. In other words, the question of whether the OAN were really meant to address the foreign nations is irrelevant for this study. In this light I would like to understand how prophecy affects the process of the construction of the R^M, both personal and national against an element that is assumed as foreign. And how does it contribute to the construction of Yhwh as the only legitimate all-powerful leader. This paradigm must be taken into consideration while remembering that Yhwh has lost the battle since his temple, city, and nation has been destroyed.

Four leaders are presented here: The prince of Tyre 28.1-11; the king of Tyre 28.11-19; Pharaoh 29.13, 30.20-26, 32.1-32; and Nebuchadnezzar 29.18-21, 30.24-26, 32.11. Before analyzing their rhetorical role, there is a need to understand the cultural position of each nation as it portrayed in 25.1-27.36.

8.2.1 Chapter 25: Pick on Someone Else

Four different nations are addressed in this chapter – the immediate neighbors of Judah, which can connote the borders that define Judah. Judging each of these nations will not affect the nations themselves (most likely they don't know they are being addressed) but will promote better prophecies of condolences. Greenberg calls his review of chapter 25 'Against Four Bad Neighbors' (Greenberg 1997:518), thus accepting the line of the book of Ezekiel, and forming borders between the bad neighbors and the good Israel in the making. Calling the four nations surrounding Israel, bad, is assuming that all nations must ally with Judah/Israel and must never

betray it, or at least, try to resist its destruction, as expressed by Bowen. However, the destruction of Judah was justified according to the first half of the book, hence, this ‘bad’ neighbor cannot do anything to save Judah from its own destruction, so why are they bad?

The Line Between the Sons

The relations between the Ammonites and Israel are mentioned in several places in the Hebrew Bible: Judg. 10-11, 1Sam 11, and the subjugation of Ammon by King David 2Sam. 10.1-11.1, 12.26-31; 1Chr. 19.1-20.8. In all of these cases Ammon is being either occupied or beaten by the Israelites. The connection between the Ammonites and the Israelites is clear in the Hebrew Bible: they are relatives of the Israelites since they are descendants of Lot (Gen. 19.38). The similarity to the people of Israel together with the fact that Ammon is the first on the list, and that Ammon speaks more than any other nation, may yield some understandings. First and foremost, Ammon is very close to Israel and the borders between them are not so clear. Second, the crime of Ammon, rejoicing for the destruction of Israel may connote very close relations – the joy of the sons of Ammon is the delight of the arch-nemesis that always bears within the same qualities as his opponent. In fact, Ammon are the only ones who receive two prophecies, and both of them are accompanied with cries of joy. *Because you cried “Aha!” over My Sanctuary when it was desecrated, and over the land of Israel when it was laid waste, and over the House of Judah when it went into exile (25.3b).*

Yhwh’s punishment to Ammon – a full destruction and the giving of the land to the nation of בְּנֵי־קְרָם, functions here as a two-folded act. Firstly, Yhwh calms Israel in the making, R^M. Hence; his wrath against Ammon is actually his reassuring of the R^M’s existence. After beating and punishing the R^M he is now protecting him

from the mockery of the other. Secondly, Ammon's destruction clears the confusion between the sign Israel and the foreign entity, whose borders with Israel are not so clear, thus making the R^M understand that he is not the son of Ammon but the son of Israel.

Clearing the Borders

The rest of the nations in chapter 25 occupy the same volume of verses as Ammon. Moab's (25.8-11) history with the Israelites starts before the tribes of Israel occupied the land when Balak of Moab hired Balaam to curse Israel (Num. 22-24), and the tribe of Benjamin was oppressed by Moab (Judg. 3.12-20). However, the Hebrew Bible also mentions the kinship between Moab and Israel (Gen. 19.36). Hence, the borders between Moab and Israel are also not so clear. The evil that Moab did was a declaration: *Because Moab and Seir said, "See, the House of Judah is like all other nations"* (25.8). Initially it would seem that Moab had done nothing wrong, they were just stating a simple historical fact: Judah is like all other nations. Moab's punishment for this statement is rather obscure: *I will mete out punishments to Moab. And they shall know that I am the LORD* (25.11). As opposed to Ammon, they do not lose their land for someone else, but they will come to understand the supremacy of Yhwh.

Moab's statement may say more than just this plain text. First, Moab admits that before the destruction of Jerusalem Israel *was* unique and its status had changed. Moreover, Moab's punishment reaffirms the stature of Yhwh as the only viable god, and also tells the Israelite in the making, that there will be no use in trying to be like all the others. Israel will always be unique, and whoever claims the difference will be prosecuted and punished. In other words, wanting to be like other nations has a strong foreign element that will be followed by a punishment, whether you are an Israelite

who claims this (Ezek. 16.3, 20.5-8, 20.32) or a foreigner like Moab. One must never think that Israel is not unique or to be more precise - singular. Moab's statement may also function here as a barrier between us and them. It is the foreigner who produces statements that are similar to the statements of bad Israel, thus rendering bad Israel foreign – just like Moab, and just like Moab they will be punished by Yhwh. Another element is the dissymmetry between the statement and the punishment, Moab claims that Judah is like all the others and is being punished by understanding that Yhwh, the god of Israel is the only one, thus understanding that Judah is unique.

Edom's case (25.12-14) is vaguer than the one of Moab; Edom does not produce any statement but *acted vengefully against the House of Judah* (25.12). Although Edom had a few wars against the Israelites, and took the side of Babylon in the destruction of Jerusalem (according to Ps. 137.7; Lam. 4.21-22) we must not forget a very interesting fact about Edom given to us in Deuteronomy 23.8-9:

You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is your kinsman (8)

Children born to them may be admitted into the congregation of the LORD in the third generation (9).

This fact draws the line more closely, even though Edom is Israel's kinsman, once it counters Israel, it will be destroyed. The message is clear: No one can go against Israel, especially not against Israel in the making, the new and pure one.

The Philistines (25.15-17) were a major enemy of the Israelites; the Samson saga (Judg.13-17), for instance, is largely concerned about the battles of Judah with the Philistines. The Philistines are different in many aspects from the other three nations: First, they are named many times throughout the Hebrew Bible as עִרְלִים, uncircumcised (Judg. 14.3, 15.18; 1Sam. 14.6, 17.26 and so forth) thus denoting them as something completely different from the Israelites. Due to the bloody history

between the Philistines and Israel we may treat this oracle as an oracle of punishment to the other whom *in their ancient hatred, acted vengefully, and with utter scorn sought revenge and destruction* (25.15), and as condolences to the good Israel.

The new Israel will have a precise definition, its future will be bright without the ancient enemies and its borders will be well defined, marking a sharp distinction between us and them – the other from the outside and the other from within. Moreover, every nation had some connection to Israel, whether it was blood relations, or the definition of representing the opposite of Israel. The destruction of each nation (in this case, the bordered nations) is also the destruction of the foreign element in the identity of the new and good Israel, and the tool to make Israel singular. The Israelites are leaving the foul land to be cleansed and then to return. Once they come back, they will receive a land purified of foreign elements.

The four bordered nations, like the *other* are presented to connote an element that needs to be eradicated for the greater good of the new Israel, in this case the exilic Israel.

The present paper focuses on Ezekiel's message... arguing that through his ideology of exile Ezekiel established the community of the Jehoiachin Exiles as the exclusive people of God. Thus in retrospect, Ezekiel should indeed be considered both as their voice and as the constructor of a new exilic ideology (Rom-Shiloni 2005:1).

Although Rom-Shiloni discusses mostly chapter 33 and the relations between the exilic community and the community that stayed in the land, we can still apply this notion to the OAN. By defining the borders, the OAN outline the concept of 'exilic Israel'. They help constitute a special group, a middle step before becoming a nation, a middle step that may last for an undefined time, and can change its form once the time is right. These oracles are meant to create a concept of Israel that does not need

the land or any material definition to be called so. I cannot say if the initial intention was to create a fully elaborated theology of exile or to create a temporary one, what I can say is that Israel has become a product, a sign that can be used for a future need. It became a tool meant for the R^M to distinguish his national self from all the *other* selves.

Another element in chapter 25 that requires an examination is the status of Yhwh. Yhwh who is also being produced in the text, (just like the R^M) and is a component in the matrix of the R^M (p. 105) also needs to show his strength against the other. Since the exiles have no physical land or home, then the leader of this group must be everywhere. In this light, Yhwh needs to stretch his sovereignty and to reestablish it in the entire known world.⁵² Giving the *other* or the enemy a presence in the discourse that is meant to construct an Israelite R, is not something that we can take lightly. In this light, the introduction of the other in the book of Ezekiel was not only meant to define the borders of Israel and eradicate all foreign elements and purify it, but also to define Yhwh as a global leader that chooses the R^M.

Four physical nations with historical connections with Israel have been shown in Chapter 25, each one of them was punished and eradicated, promoting the purification of the new and good Israel. Now comes the turn of nations as metaphors - Tyre. The metaphor of the woman was used to constitute the image of pre-exilic deviant Israel (p. 189); the oracles against Tyre have a few similarities to the oracles against Jerusalem and we need to understand their purpose.

⁵² See also Hals 1989:182-3.

8.2.2 Chapters 26-27: Tyre: The Mystic City

From the land of the Philistines, Ezekiel continues along the coastline toward Tyre.

Chapter 26 opens with the same formula as chapter 25, and aside from the date, Yhwh declares Tyre's crime: *because Tyre gloated over Jerusalem, "Aha! The gateway of the peoples is broken* (26.2). Tyre's crime was rejoicing for the destruction of Jerusalem and her yearning for some profit from this fall. Tyre's punishment like other nations in chapter 25 will be a full destruction. The oracle of destruction in chapter 26 and the dirge of chapter 27 have many similarities with the depiction of Jerusalem throughout the book. Tyre's punishment has, to some extent, the same characteristics of Jerusalem's punishment in chapters 16, 23:

	Tyre	Jerusalem
Punishment	<i>I will hurl many nations against you, As the sea hurls its waves. They shall destroy the walls of Tyre And demolish her towers; And I will scrape her soil off her And leave her a naked rock (26.3-4)</i>	<i>I will deliver you into their hands, and they shall tear down your eminence and level your mounds; and they shall strip you of your clothing and take away your dazzling jewels, leaving you naked and bare (16.39)</i>
	<i>For thus said the Lord GOD: I will bring from the north, against Tyre, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, a king of kings, with horses, chariots, and horsemen — a great mass of troops (26.7)</i>	<i>They shall attack you with fleets of wheeled chariots and a host of troops; they shall set themselves against you on all sides with bucklers, shields, and helmets. And I will entrust your punishment to them, and they shall inflict their punishments on you.(23:24)</i>
	<i>Your daughter-towns in the country He shall put to the sword (26.8)</i>	<i>Let the assembly pelt them with stones and cut them down with their swords; let them kill their sons and daughters, and burn down their homes (23.47).</i>

Israel, depicted as a woman, was erased in order to create a better Israel in the form of a man. The Israelites, like Ezekiel, are ordered to grieve but not to mourn, since the death of the woman bears within a promise for a better future. In Tyre's case, her death bears within it only a consolation to the Israelites and a final cleansing of any deviant female characteristics in the geographical vicinity of the new Promised Land. The final part of the chapter, 26.16-21 is a dirge of the leaders of Tyre, this dirge that will continue in chapter 27 has only elements of grief, of a personal loss and not of a memorial day that promises hope for a better future: *How you have perished, you who were peopled from the seas, O renowned city!* 26.17b.

The leaders of Tyre, the rulers of the sea, the foreign men, are crying over Tyre their woman, understanding that they too are without a woman, thus a future. The woman Israel is dead to create a new Israel, but when the woman Tyre is dead, the men become redundant and unimportant. While the death of the woman of Jerusalem created a male nation and gave life to the Israelites; in her death, Tyre gave the foreign men death and nothing new to build upon. The foreign metaphorical element is being fully eradicated, leaving only Israel in the game and Yhwh as the only leader who creates a new masterpiece, a pure all male utopic nation. This complete destruction of Tyre in chapter 26 acts as prelude to the dirge on Tyre in chapter 27 and to the powers of Yhwh in comparison to human powers.

The dirge portrays Tyre as a ship, and perfect in beauty (27.3). Returning to the review of a metaphor (p. 189), a metaphor brings to the consciousness a multitude of positive and negative associations that require participation in the creation of meaning. Hence, we need to examine the cultural role of Tyre as a metaphor and not only discuss her crime and her international economic relations. Greenberg writes that Tyre's crime is hubris rising from her commercial skill and success, and 'after reading

chapter 27 the justification of Tyre's hubris is manifested' (Greenberg 1997:571); subscribing his *self* yet again to the text and justifying violence against women even if it is 'only' in the metaphorical level. Throughout the chapter Tyre is depicted as the ultimate beauty: *Your builders perfected your beauty* (v. 4b) says the dirge, echoing the words of Yhwh to Jerusalem: *Your beauty won you fame among the nations, for it was perfected through the splendor which I set upon you* (16.14). The comparison between these two verses demonstrates two ideas: Firstly, Tyre declares herself as beautiful while Jerusalem was declared so by Yhwh. Secondly, Tyre's beauty is manmade, while Jerusalem's was created by Yhwh. Another significant difference between Tyre and Jerusalem is the death and the cry for the loss of the cities. While the Israelites are ordered to mourn and not to grieve in 24.32, the people of Tyre cry for the ultimate loss and destruction of Tyre, ending with a declaration: *You have become a horror, And have ceased to be forever* (27.36). Wilson states that the crime of Tyre was not political, nor economical but theological.⁵³ He concludes his line by arguing that Tyre might seem like Jerusalem but she could never be like Zion. Moreover, Tyre even seems to be like Yhwh, in that it distributes the cedar of Lebanon to the world (28.2), 'but ultimately Tyre is not Yhwh, who thunders over the mighty waters, whose voice can shatter the cedars of Lebanon' (Wilson 2013:261).

Tyre was a precious flower of human achievement; she was the woman who was loved by all men. Tyre functions as a contra metaphorical symbol to Jerusalem, she is beautiful and very successful and all men want her. In that manner, Tyre must fall to condole the Israelites, the one in the making who waits to witness her future and to eliminate all competition with the New Jerusalem. Yhwh cannot afford such a

⁵³ Wilson relies on Strong 1993:174-184.

beautiful manmade city and he must destroy her to prove his strength and to show that only he can erect such a splendid city. Moreover, the use of the king of Babylon makes Yhwh the ruler of all, thus the destroyer of Jerusalem becomes Yhwh's tool.

Finally, Bowen writes that Yhwh is not involved either in Tyre's perfection nor its destruction, 'which raises an intriguing theological issue. This chapter presents the possibility that God had nothing to do with Tyre's success' (Bowen 2010:169). I find it difficult agreeing with her. It is true that Yhwh does not have anything to do with Tyre's success since she is manmade, and he might not appear in the dirge physically, however his presence is well noticed. The power of the sea, the waves and the wind are the nature that is in the full control of Yhwh (27.26-27). Not only does Yhwh control the king of Babylon, the destroyer of Jerusalem, he is also manifested in nature.

The cleansing of Tyre acts as another border cleansing and defining of the New Jerusalem. If in chapter 25 the borders of Israel were defined and cleansed, now the element of the foreign woman is eradicated. Tyre's destruction is vital for Jerusalem to be reborn as the only beautiful woman in the R^M's *âme* and to show that beauty and strength cannot be created by men, and that no man can win Yhwh, not by wisdom, nor by craftsmanship.

Chapter 28, where the oracles are against the prince of Tyre and the king of Tyre, continues this line.

8.2.3 Chapter 28: Constructing Yhwh: The Prince and the King of Tyre

Although Tyre existed historically, she was still depicted in a metaphorical manner. The same principal can be applied to the leaders of Tyre in ch. 28. In this light, the king and the prince of Tyre will not be examined separately, but as two aspects of the same king/leader that has two main characters: wisdom and beauty.

These two characteristics made the leader of Tyre grow stronger and stronger (in contrast to the image of Tyre) claiming to be a god: *I am a god; I sit enthroned like a god in the heart of the seas* (28.2). Odell argues: ‘the fact that Ezekiel addresses a mythical king, rather than a historical one, should not be overlooked. As the Primal Human, the king functions as an archetype of power, and embodies the perennial contrast between the mythic ideal and reality’ (Odell 2005:358). Indeed, one must not overlook the mythical values of the leader of Tyre and examine the oracle against the leader of Tyre as a metaphor. Zimmerli argues that the crime of the leader of Tyre is hubris. The beauty and the wisdom of the political body of Tyre is a gift from Yhwh. The leader of Tyre used this gift for his own wealth and ‘there has grown the bitter fruit of pride that makes men forget the only lord and giver of all created things’ (Zimmerli, Cross, and Baltzer 1979). The analysis of Zimmerli is not a ‘pure’ scientific assumption but an analysis in which metaphors created in the books of Ezekiel are already fully embedded in his review. Zimmerli does not analyze the way in which we perceive the crime of the leader of Tyre, but is subscribed to the immediate given meaning of the book of Ezekiel in the same way that other biblical scholars did in chapters 16 and 23 (p. 183). Some questions need to be asked here: was the gift of beauty and wisdom given to the leader of Tyre by Yhwh, and if so, why wasn’t it given to the leaders of Israel? Zimmerli’s assertion may resonate the notion of a universal Yhwh, but was Yhwh indeed universal before his creation in the book of Ezekiel?

It is not only Israel and the R^M that are created here, but also Yhwh himself. Yhwh that was constituted as a dominatrix in the previous chapters (p.105) is now being refined and receives his full image as the universal god of all nations – a process that Zimmerli reaffirms by ascribing to it.

The oracles against the leader of Tyre and the king of Egypt, with some references to the king of Babylon reestablish the identity of Yhwh and his role. The main characteristic of the prince of Tyre (28.1-10) is wisdom, and here I must stress that no reference is given that his wisdom is from Yhwh. The prince of Tyre uses this wisdom for his own good, accumulating power and wealth, thinking he is a man god (28.6). His punishment is similar to the punishment of Jerusalem in chapter 16, Yhwh sends foreign men on him and they *shall unsheathe their swords against your prized shrewdness* (28.7). The king of Tyre does not possess wisdom but beauty; however, this beauty is not an ordinary one but primal, as he was a blue print of the first man in the Garden of Eden (Zimmerli, Cross, and Baltzer 1979; Callender 2000). His beauty and his primal attributes made him proud, thinking that he is too much at the level of a god. His punishment was also severe; a fire came out of his body, burning it into ashes in the sight of a crowd (28.18). We cannot see any evidence in either of these cases that Yhwh gave the gifts of beauty and wisdom to the leader of Tyre, unless we are already well rooted in the discourse of the book of Ezekiel. Moreover, the king and prince of Tyre both own qualities that make them something they should not be. The prince of Tyre is using his wisdom to be strong and powerful, to be the lord of wars, an attribute that no man can have since there should be only one lord of war, that being Yhwh. His punishment is exactly the opposite of his political status: other foreign men beat him; men that he could have probably have concurred. The punishment of the king of Tyre also stands as the exact opposite of his situation - a fire burns him from the inside, destroying his precious primal body. It is not only hubris that caused their punishments, in fact, this oracle is not exactly about the leader of Tyre; it is rather about foreign elements of divinity that the R^M needs to grasp.

Tyre as presented here is a rhetorical tool meant to embed new metaphors and myths of the foreign elements in R's *âme*. It was created not only to draw the borders between the new Israel and all that is not, nor to create qualities and characteristics of the new Israel by negating the other. It is also or perhaps mainly a tool to create the new Yhwh. The new Israel cannot be new without a new god. Thus, destroying the city of Tyre is not sufficient; its mythical leader must be eradicated, so the R^M, just like Zimmerli, will understand that only Yhwh must own these qualities and no earthly man can be divine.

The oracle against Sidon (28.21-24), her purge, and the last 2 verses, 28.25-26, close the line of the limits of the new Israelite identity and reassert the position of Yhwh. V. 24 states: *Then shall the House of Israel no longer be afflicted with prickling briars and lacerating thorns from all the neighbors who despise them; and they shall know that I am the Lord GOD*. By purging the enemies of Israel, the book of Ezekiel purges all other foreign elements and teaches the R^M the meaning of a good new Israel. In this light, the foreign leader of Tyre is dead in order to keep Yhwh alive, to revive him, or to actually constitute him as a new all-powerful universal god. Going back to Odell, the king of Tyre functions as an archetype of power, this power is a foreign power that is purged by Yhwh. The elimination of this power is not strictly a punishment, but it is a way for the Yhwh in the making to accumulate all attributes of power, to swallow the foreign elements and possess them all. In short, the foreign leader is an element in the universality of Yhwh.

In this light vv. 25-26 are well placed. Jerusalem is punished in front of other men, and so is the king of Tyre (v. 18), and now Yhwh shows himself as holy in the sight of other nations (v. 25b). The sight of nations reaffirms the universal element of Yhwh and his new role as god of the entire world.

The process is about to be completed, however, there is one more foreign element that needs to be addressed, and that is Egypt and her king.

8.2.4 Chapters 29-32: Breaking Arms

Egypt is mentioned in the Hebrew Bible almost seven hundred times, and in almost every book. There is no argument that the role of Egypt in the construction of Israel and its cultural identity is vital. The name Egypt connotes not only the exodus and the breaking free from the bondage of slavery; it also connotes the prosperity of Israel in Egypt and the political change of the Israelite entity, from a tribe to a nation. It was a place of refuge (1 Kgs. 11.17-22, 40; 12.2); a place where Abraham and Jacob went to search for food (Gen. 12.10; 42.1-3), and where Joseph became only second to Pharaoh (Gen. 41.37-45). It is only logical that the book of Ezekiel gives Egypt the greatest amount of exposure. Moreover, the book of Ezekiel makes a connection between the exodus from Egypt and the future exodus from Babylon (Ezek. 20) and changes the political symbol of Egypt with the one of Babylon, shifting the power and importance from the old empire to the new one. It also changes the political structure and history itself, or to be more precise, the perception of history, by making Yhwh the only factor in the movements of history.

The oracles against Egypt are portrayed in a series of seven.⁵⁴ The analysis of the oracles against Egypt will not be a close reading according to the classic division of the seven units, but a more general analysis of the three chapters combined.

The oracles start with the known formula, a date followed by an accusation of the crime of the leader and the nation, in all cases the crime is the same: hubris. Pharaoh's hubris is the claim that he himself has created the Nile. His punishment is destruction,

⁵⁴ 29.1-16; 29.17- 21; 30.1-19; 30.20-26; 31.1-18; 32.1-16; 32.17-32

not a complete destruction like of the rest of the nations, but an exile followed by an exodus from Egypt and a reformation of its borders and political status: *It shall be the lowliest of all the kingdoms, and shall not lord it over the nations again. I will reduce the Egyptians, so that they shall have no dominion over the nations* (29.15).

Never again shall they be the trust of the House of Israel, recalling its guilt in having turned to them. And they shall know that I am the Lord GOD (29.16).

These verses serve as an important point in the usage of Egypt for the creation of the new world order and the new borders of future Israel. The fact that Egypt is not fully destroyed and that the message that Israel will never be able to lean on Egypt again, shows that Egypt here is not similar to Tyre, Sidon or all the other nations. It is not a nation depicted metaphorically, nor an irrelevant nation like Moab for, but an important political symbol meant to be used as a rhetorical tool.

Another important matter that is quoted at the end of chapter 29 is the role of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon and the connection between his role as the destructor of Egypt (and also Tyre) and the salvation of Israel. Twice in chapter 29 we see a connection between the destruction of Egypt and the salvation of Israel, wherever Egypt falls, Israel rises.⁵⁵ Moreover, the element that allows this process to take place is the same element that destroys Jerusalem and old Israel - Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. Another factor in chapter 29 that requires our attention is the direct connection between the salvation of Israel and the promise of Yhwh to open Ezekiel's mouth, endowing him with the ability to shape the discourse, and as the sole representative of the new Israel who has no king but Yhwh.

⁵⁵ See also Strong 2010, who compares between the death of Egypt in 32.17-32 to the rise of Israel in 37.1-14.

Chapter 30 continues with the same line of punishment against Egypt, and adds another element - Egypt's allies, hence, when Egypt falls it is not only her, but also all of the other nations that have relations with her. 31.1-32.16 are dedicated to Pharaoh and his symbolic stature, depicting his political end, while at the same time treating Nebuchadnezzar as almost the servant of Yhwh. The punishment of Pharaoh in 32.3-15 provides us with another important factor in the understanding of OAN and their value in the book of Ezekiel – Yhwh's powers. It was discussed earlier in the dirge on Tyre that Yhwh controls the elements of nature (p. 232). In this oracle we witness some more powers of Yhwh, beside his control over nature (32.4-6). Yhwh controls the sky and the planets: *I will cover also the sun with clouds and the moon shall not give its light* (32.7). This strong and beautiful verse explains to the R^M that all mighty Pharaoh has no powers, and nature is the strict domain of Yhwh. It also shows that the outside world is also in full control of his god, echoing the first exodus and the strike of darkness. The last oracle summarizes the entire OAN unit by dooming Egypt to be like the rest of the foreign nations mentioned earlier.

Eliminating Egypt and reducing her political status to a small and irrelevant nation is not only a punishment, it is rewriting history. It is the elimination of one of Israel's foundations. Destroying the leader of Egypt, and Egypt Itself, changing their political status, creating a minor 'sad' exodus to Egypt and making the king of Babylon the weapon of Yhwh, completely renders the character of Yhwh from just a provincial lord to the lord of the whole world. The R^M knows now that Yhwh does not only own the powers of nature, but he also possesses the powers of the universe and is in charge of all the political shifts in the world.

The OAN produce a new Israel that is a blueprint of the right Israel by cleansing all foreign elements and the political status of the foreign leader. Even if this Israel

does not immediately manifest, it will become the model of the correct nation, and most importantly, it makes Yhwh the only leader of this Israel, an eternal Yhwh to an eternal Israel. Moreover, it makes Yhwh the lord of the entire universe, a universal god to a particular nation.

8.3 Chapters 33-39: The Cleansing from Within

From the cleansing of the foreign elements from the outside, and consequently forming the borders of Israel, the book of Ezekiel shifts now its focus to the cleansing of the foreign elements from within.

8.3.1 Chapters 33: Sleeping with the Enemy: the Definition of Israel

Rom-Shiloni argues that Ezekiel creates a community of exiles and continues by focusing on ‘the ideological process of self-identification within each of the two Judahite communities, and on the inner disputes raised between them in the wake of coping with the crisis of partial exiles from Judah’ (Rom-Shiloni 2005:4-5). After establishing the definition of the terms *other* and *otherness*, she stresses that Ezekiel empathizes more with the exiles than with the people who stayed in Judah.

To conclude, the anonymous quotations in Ezekiel suggest that those who remained constituted their national re-identification using ideological strategies of division. They applied past traditions and established concepts to their community and thus built their present legitimate status as the people of God; and they designated their exclusive status through de-legitimation of their sister community of the Jehoiachin Exiles. Although not exiled abroad, even if temporarily estranged from its lands (Jer 42:12), the community of Those Who Remained had an interest similar to that of the Exiles in re-building an exclusive identity. They were, furthermore, anxious to bar those who had left the land of Judah from belonging to the people of God (Rom-Shiloni 2005:15).

Ezekiel, according to Rom-Shiloni, forms a new theology to negate this process and becomes an advocate of the exiles. With his knowledge of the Holiness Code and of the Deuteronomistic ideology, Ezekiel treats the exiles as more moral, than those who remained on the land, thus denoting the exiles with greater prestige. This process according to Rom-Shiloni ‘constitutes an exilic ideology which enables continuity of national existence in exile and promises restoration to the Exiles’ (Rom-Shiloni 2005:43). Despite the fact that one cannot ignore these two very different groups that

came from the same nation, there are a few matters that need further discussion. The first is Rom-Shiloni's understanding of the identity of the people. Rom-Shiloni constantly regards the people as *Judahites*, and in this sense as the historical Judahites. However, one must ask, why use the name Judah, if chapter 33 solely uses the name Israel, the land of Israel, and the house of Israel? 'Historically' it is Judah that is discussed here. However, one must treat this book as an event more than a historical book in order to fully understand its meaning and its theological significance. Zimmerli writes: 'In Ezekiel's person it becomes clear what God's word is. It is event which moves the world and itself becomes history' (Zimmerli 1983:194). Discussing what really happened and the different positions of the people of Judah will leave us only with some statistical historical assumptions that are eventually backed up by a political process of subscription to the text. In short, 'Israel' is a sign that is carefully being constructed in the book, and this process of construction reaches its climax in chapter 33, right after the purge of all foreign elements that might affect and stain the new Israel.

The second matter is the reason for Ezekiel's theological move: How did it happen that people who see themselves as a part of Israel, and rightly so, are condemned, excluded and completely abandoned? How does a brother become an enemy? And most importantly, why? We do not know Ezekiel's impact on history, nor what happened between these groups. Likewise we do not know if these sayings were written as an event long after the exile and the return to Judah. In this manner, why didn't Ezekiel write a different theology that could have offered the inhabitants of the ruins repentance just like the exiles?

8.3.2 The Personal is Political

It is difficult to discuss the meaning of the term ‘political’ in a short subchapter since it is a field of studies of itself, and the definitions of this term vary from a definition of the role of the state, to that of the role of society and its connection to the state.⁵⁶ The term ‘political’ may be viewed here as the total sum of relations between subjects in a certain community and the role of the subject in his/her constitution. differently In other words, a subject who declares his self as something that is part of a bigger self, (community, religion, tribe, nation, etc.) becomes a political subject. In this manner, there is a need to examine the process that had lead the subject to become political, in Foucault’s terms - to trace the genealogy of the *âme* that takes possession of the body (p. 64).

There are indeed two groups of Israel that may have close relations to each other. Blood relations are one and the most obvious one of them. However, history is not the concern of this research, what is of concern is the way it is depicted and the usage of the event in the construction of the sign ‘Israel’. I assume that the main reason for Ezekiel to prefer the exiles, the historical level, was of course based more than on pure theology, and a social economic analysis may work well here. After all, Ezekiel was a priest, hence a part of the hegemony, and so were the exiles who were the elite of the people and had the control of the means of production. Clearly the battle here was between the poor who, in suddenly, became the owners of lands and property, and the exiles that became poor and lost everything. One could only imagine the amount of property and assets left for the remaining Israel to plunder, and I can safely assume that the people who stayed and took over the land were not ‘inhabitants of

⁵⁶ For a review of the political in the narrow and wider sense see Mason 1990

ruins'. Having said that, I would like now to go back to the process that I am illustrating in this chapter and to understand how the subject becomes political.

Carl Schmitt in his book *The Concept of the Political* (2008) argues that the definition of the political is the differentiation between friend and enemy. The distinction of friend and enemy denotes the utmost degree of intensity of a union or separation, of an association or dissociation. It can exist theoretically and practically, without having simultaneously to draw upon all those moral, aesthetic, economic, or other distinctions.

The political enemy need not be morally evil or aesthetically ugly; he need not appear as an economic competitor, and it may even be advantageous to engage with him in business transactions. But he is, nevertheless, the other, the stranger; and it is sufficient for his nature that he is, in a specially intense way, existentially something different and alien, so that in the extreme case conflicts with him are possible. These can neither be decided by a previously determined general norm nor by the judgment of a disinterested and therefore neutral third party (Schmitt 2008:26-7).

Schmitt offered this paradigm as a definition for the state as the sovereign. This definition can be extended to the theological process in the book of Ezekiel since the book encourages the creation of a new concept of an Israelite nation. Although this nation does not have the same characteristics of the modern state, it still has some of the definitions of a nation - the same people united by blood and juridical norms under one sovereign. In this light, the creation of two-separated groups is not just a historical bi-product but also an important tool for the constitution of the new Israel.

We may witness in ch. 33 a process of denunciation and acceptance of the correct sign of Israel by Yhwh from the first verse almost to the last. In 33.2 Yhwh commands Ezekiel to *speak to your fellow countrymen*, thus saying that they are the people of Ezekiel more than his. Although we may clearly see this rejection in 33.7, 12, 17, 25, 27, 30, we can still witness a different process of acceptance where Yhwh

speaks directly to the House of Israel: *Turn back, turn back from your evil ways, that you may not die, O House of Israel* (33.11b). And also 33.20, sealing the process with a full acceptance of Yhwh in 33.31 where Yhwh calls them my people, עַמִּי. Vv. 2-20 offer the community of the exiles a way to repent through individual responsibility in contrast to chapter 18 (p. 198). They also constitute the role and responsibility of Ezekiel as the looker, as the one who needs to warn them. In other words, these verses denote the importance of the law in acts of repentance.

The responsibility of the individual and the constitution of Ezekiel and his duties are not the only matters that need to be reviewed here, but also its connection to the second part of the chapter. In the second part, Yhwh himself speaks to the remaining Israel and interpellates them as the inhabitants of the ruins. What is their crime? The inhabitants of the ruins actually have a valid theological stand: They are the ones who stayed in the land, and their justification in verse 33.24 provokes an important element in the identity of the new Israelite: *Abraham was but one man, yet he was granted possession of the land. We are many; surely, the land has been given a possession to us.*⁵⁷ The use of Abraham connotes more than the understanding of the Israelites' history, it also connotes blood relation, a matter that the theology of chapter 33 wishes to counter. As opposed to the community of the exiles who are treated as a community of individuals who form a group; the community of those who stayed in the land have no individual status and no hope for repentance, they will all die, whether it is by the sword, beasts or plague. These people have no classification by law and they are not a part of it, hence they are in the state of bare life that allows

⁵⁷ However, it is difficult see a clear difference between their sins and the ones of the community of the exiles that will be proclaimed in 36.17 for example. This stand strengthens the argument of this review. For the sins of the people who stayed in the land and the connection between their sins and the Holiness code, see Strine 2013:183-90.

their purging (p. 154). As was said, the enemy does need to be physical, it can also be theoretical, and the inhabitant of the ruins serve this purpose well. They function as the enemy from within, stating that a blood relation is not enough. To become Israel one must be constituted by the law, and accept its representative – in this case, Ezekiel. In this light, it is not a battle between two groups, in which Ezekiel chooses a side, but rather a creation of an enemy-friend paradigm. A dangerous enemy from within that serves as a political concept for a nation, and whose rhetorical purpose is to draw the line between the new Israel and the old one. This new Israel cannot exist only through a bloodline from Abraham, or by a connection to the land, but it has to be constituted by law. This theology is revolutionary since it allows a theoretical spiritual existence of a nation that does not need a land, a physical sovereign or a monopoly on the means of violence. In fact, this theology creates a nation that can be in a permanent state of temporality, a blueprint for future nations and of communities in a state of exile.

To conclude, chapter 33 treats the way Yhwh sees his people and the way a personal self is constituted as the correct Israel. The process starts describing the people of Ezekiel and ends describing the people of Yhwh. To be a part of Yhwh's people one must be repented, but his repentance is according to the law. To say it differently, for the R^M to be rendered R^I , he must be constituted as political, as a part of society. The people who stayed in Israel are not depicted as true Israel and were not interpellated as such, despite the fact that their claim is valid – being Israel by blood. But being Israel by blood is not enough; one must go through the process of political constitution and of accepting the law and being a part of the new political community of Israel. The inhabitants of the ruins are the enemy element in the political, an enemy

from within who holds all the negative qualities of the one from without; all by simply claiming that they are the ones who owned the land.

Another important factor in this process is the exile element, the exile in the book of Ezekiel is not a historical event in which the House of Israel needs to recover from, but an element in the basic existence of Israel – one cannot be Israel unless he bears within his self the political theological signification of the exile. It is not from exile that Israel is recovered; it is exile that creates Israel in the first place.

This process of politicization and the affirmation of the political R^M as a self that is constituted according to Yhwhist law intensify in chapter 34.

8.3.3 Chapter 34: The Shepherds and the Eternal Leader

It may be better to understand YHWH's recovery and protection of his flock less as an expression of YHWH's love and compassion for his people (expressions which still remain absent from the text) and more as part of the demonstration of divine might that characterizes the restoration oracles more generally. The logic of the oracle is therefore of a piece with the refrain of ch.36: 'it is not for your sake, O Israel, that I am about to do this, but for the sake of my holy name' (Mein 2007:502).

Ch. 34 opens with the known formula: Ezekiel is commanded to prophecy against an entity that did bad, their crime is proclaimed, followed by the punishment and the word of Yhwh. The entity who did wrong here are the shepherds of Israel; they will be punished because of what they have done and what they have left undone. They took the meat, milk, and wool from the sheep, exploiting them for their own comfort (v. 3), and they also sacrificed the fat animals. This may refer to the attempts of removing those who might challenge the leaders' authority. The sheep were not fed (v. 3); they became 'weak' and 'sick' (v. 4), and the 'injured' may have suffered broken limbs from wandering through rugged terrain instead of on safe paths. This behavior will result in Yhwh taking over his flock, gathering them from all corners of

the world, bringing them back to their own land. However, it is not sufficient for Yhwh to bring back his flock to the Promised Land, he will also judge them and decide which animal deserves repentance – between the fat animal and the lean one, between the one who eats on the account of the other, and the one that is feeble. After the judgment, Yhwh will appoint a new/old shepherd to them - David, with a promise for peace, prosperity and security; ending the chapter with a decoding of the flock-shepherd metaphor: *For you, My flock, flock that I tend, are men; and I am your God — declares the Lord GOD (34.31).*

Fourteen times in this chapter Yhwh declares the people of Israel as his own flock (vv. 6 8, 10, 11, 12, 15, 17, 19, 22, 30, 31) thus continues the line of the constitution of the correct Israel, and making it clear that the R^M that is now Israel belongs to Yhwh. Schwartz states: ‘this is not the remorse of a court of law, where, having finally been persuaded to confess his crime, the condemned is sentenced and the process of rehabilitation begins; it is rather a permanent condition intended to satisfy YHWH’s righteous indignation’ (Schwartz 2000:64). In other words, it is not enough to render the R^M as personal or political, it is also necessary to create Yhwh himself; this chapter stresses this notion. Yhwh claims full ownership on the R^M and becomes his leader. Indeed he appoints a new leader, however, this leader becomes more abstract and leaves room for interpretation and definition of who this new David is. Moreover, this chapter continues with the creation of the eternal Israel, the blueprint that may be used at any given moment for almost any political historical end. If in ch. 33 the nation became eternal, in ch. 34 the leader becomes such and in the following chapters, so will the land.

8.3.4 Chapters 35-37: Taking Over the Land

Chs. 35-37 close the theological line of the constitution of the R^M and can be analyzed in comparison to different units that have been reviewed so far.

Ch. 35 proclaims doom against the mountain of Seir. Seir in the Hebrew Bible parallels Edom (v. 15 in this chapter; and Gen. 32.3; 36.8, 9; Deut. 2.4-8). If we go back to the analysis of the OAN, we may recall that Edom is very similar to Israel, they are the closest neighbors, and the borders between these two nations are not always clear (p. 226), in this light it is important to purify not only the land of Israel but also the land that resembles Israel the most.

Before continuing analyzing the purification and the cultural meaning of the mountains and the land of Israel, there is a need first to discuss the perception of a land not only as a geographical space, but also as a reflection of the self. Foucault speaks of sites that are counter-sites, that function as utopic sites even though they may physically exist, naming them heterotopia. The difference between utopia and heterotopia, according to Foucault, is the concept of the mirror of the self:

In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent: such is the utopia of the mirror. But it is also a heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy. From the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there. Starting from this gaze that is, as it were, directed toward me, from the ground of this virtual space that is on the other side of the glass, I come back toward myself; I begin again to direct my eyes toward myself and to reconstitute myself there where I am (Foucault 1986b:24).

Heterotopia allows the R^M to constitute his self by seeing his self in the mirror of a place.⁵⁸

The face of the land is your face, says an Israeli song:

*From the top of the mountains, from the end of the dessert
I will ask for all of her wonders
And no one has ever solved
The riddle of her face, yours and mine.*⁵⁹

Indeed, it is the R^M that wishes to see his self when Ezekiel speaks to the mountain of Seir and to the land and mountains of Israel. Zimmerli notes, in that spirit, that the mountains of Israel could not be viewed as such without the nation of Israel (Zimmerli 1983:239). Hence, the mountains and the land function here as a metaphor for the people of Israel and Edom, or as a mirror for the R^M self.

After punishing the mountain of Edom, Yhwh continues and punishes the mountains, land and the people of Israel. Stevenson argues in her very vivid and colorful article, 'If Earth Could Speak' that Seir and Israel are beaten by Yhwh in a form of violence that resembles domestic violence, denoting the restoration of the land as an abusive cycle (Stevenson 2001:159-170). The similarities between the two heterotopias are that both entities commit sins but only one survives. Moreover, the future of Israel is exactly the opposite to that of Edom. While Edom is desolated, Israel will flourish, while the mountains of Edom are being emptied of life, the land of Israel will be filled with humans and animals. The mirror that reflects the R^M foreign self, the heterotopia named Edom will no longer exist. Therefore, the new Israel will

⁵⁸ Since my line of argument treats the land as a Heterotopia as was presented by Foucault, I will not treat other elements connected to the land, such as ecology and land ownership. For studies on this subject see: Kelle 2009; Habel 2004; Galambush 2004; Carley 2004.

⁵⁹ The Face of the Land, פני הארץ (the face of the land in Hebrew has two meanings – the face and the topography of the land) lyrics by Ehud Manor, my translation.

not have the ability to constitute his self, according to the heterotopia of Edom, but only through the one of Israel. The face of the land is the reflection of his face, and this land is only the land of Israel, the land of Yhwh.

Ch. 36 culturally connects the land, the people, and Yhwh, bringing to an end the process of the purging and constitution of the R^l. 36.17 announces the sin of the people of Israel: *O mortal, when the House of Israel dwelt on their own soil, they defiled it with their ways and their deeds; their ways were in My sight like the uncleanness of a menstruous woman*. The people of Israel are thus doomed to be exiled, followed with an exodus and a promise for a brighter future. However, this bright future comes with a purification process in which Yhwh will sprinkle pure water on them, acquire them with a new heart and a new spirit and will *cause you to follow My laws and faithfully to observe My rules* (36.23-27) all for the sake of his name.

Bowen states that there is no definitive explanation for the choice of menstruation over different ritual impurities (Bowen 2010:222), however, the choice of this impurity correlates well with the rest of book, especially with the depiction of the woman as sexually deviant. As earlier mentioned, the woman lives in her blood while the man lives under the law (p. 161). In order to be a good Israel, the R^M must be constituted by the law, leaving the woman behind as a bi-product of evolution, and as a metaphorical element that needs to be purged for the sake of male continuity. The men in ch. 36 committed sins that are impure and depicted as the blood of the woman, echoing Jerusalem of chapter 16. Going back to Stevenson, Yhwh punishes not only the people but also the land itself, cleansing it from impurities, beating her, using domestic violence similar to chapter 16 and then returning the men back to a pure land and reconstituting them under his law.

In v. 18, Israel is also accused of shedding blood, thus pairing the menstrual blood with the shedding of blood. Bowen claims that ‘referring to both types of uncleanness suggests that both a ritual of purification and purgation are necessary for Israel to be clean’, (Bowen 2010: 222) and compares these verses to 20.38 and 22.15. Two processes happen here at the same time: the first is the purge of the woman and her sins, and the second is the purification of the people by donning them a new heart, new soul, and the law. The land functions as a component in Israel’s salvation. It is also fundamental for the construction of Yhwh, since the R¹ god cannot exist without a land, which is the heterotopia that will function as a mirror for his constitution. The heterotopic land, will later function as the base for the utopic Jerusalem and Promised Land in chs. 40-48 (p. 272). Stevenson rightly criticizes the book of Ezekiel and its domestic violence. This is the violence of the masochist man who is willing to become fully subjugated just so he could regain a sense of masculinity and will be able to constitute himself as one. Moreover, the connection between Israel and Yhwh is clear in chapter 36, R¹ becomes Yhwh’s flock and people, and Yhwh is the leader (vv. 9, 12, 28, 37, 38). Hence, chs. 35-36 mostly deal with the construction of Yhwh as the ultimate male and leader. Yhwh may stress it over and over again that he is doing it for the sake of his name, but we must not forget that Yhwh is a written character and as such, functions as a construction tool for the *âme*. Hence, it is for the sake of the R who is now on the brink of full materialization: His lord is the ultimate one, and he has a prosperous land that functions as a heterotopia. Moreover, his feminine side is fully eradicated; he has clear borders, and an enemy that functions as the political concept of his *âme* – a Promised Land indeed. However, the process is not yet complete, and after receiving a new male heart, male soul and a male logos - the law, one also needs to receive a new body.

8.3.5 Chapter 37: A Nation that Matters

The major part of the book of Ezekiel comes now to a closure - from despair to hope, from destruction to rebuilding, from death to life. A new life is given to Israel and to the R, but not just a physical life; the R^M now fully becomes a nation, and acquires not only hope but also a future. R^M is now R^I.

The hand of Yhwh takes Ezekiel to a valley (37.1), which might be the same valley in 3.22 where Ezekiel proclaimed death and destruction on Jerusalem. Yhwh shows Ezekiel the bones, and Ezekiel yet again speaks to the reader, saying they were many. Ezekiel continues and says that Yhwh asked him a question 37.3: *He said to me, 'O mortal, can these bones live again?' I replied, 'O Lord GOD, only You know.'* This assertion given by Ezekiel emphasizes the discourse of Ezekiel: The future of Israel depends on the knowledge, will, and word of Yhwh. Yhwh does not answer Ezekiel back but immediately commences with the resurrection process. It seems as 37.3 refers to 24.10 where the bones of Jerusalem were charred.

Will these bones live? With Yhwh's command, manifested by Ezekiel's words, the bones are gathered together and become a physical body. Ezekiel continues and says: *I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had grown, and skin had formed over them; but there was no breath in them* (37.8). Ezekiel calls the wind from four corners and puts breath into them and witnesses how empty bodies become a vast nation. The JPS translates רִיחַ as breath, so does KJVS and ASV.⁶⁰ However I would like to offer another Interpretation to this term by continuing the line of the review of this word (p. 77). רִיחַ is a word with many different meanings and connotations in the Hebrew Bible. The BDB gives five different meanings of the word: 1. Breath of the

⁶⁰ See Block 1989:27-49 for a review of the term רִיחַ in the book of Ezekiel.

mouth or nostrils. 2. Wind. 3. Spirit. 4. Spirit of the livings, or of god. 5. Desire or will (BDB 1996:924-6), in the case of Ezekiel the BDB asserts that רִיחַ, in this chapter is also breath.

In my view רִיחַ may also be perceived as mind or will in the book of Ezekiel: Ezekiel is taken against his will (3.14), Yhwh knows all that comes of the mind of the house of Israel (11.5), the prophets are doing all that comes in their mind 13.3, and so is the house of Israel (20.32). Hence רִיחַ can also be will or mind, as also stated in the BDB, and this meaning can be extended to this chapter. In this case Yhwh's mind may be interpreted with the new laws and the new heart he is giving Israel, connecting this magnificent vision to the promise of the second oracle *And my servant David shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in mine ordinances, and observe my statutes, and do them* (37.24). Hence, in these three verses the use of the word רִיחַ may be reviewed as the mind of Yhwh that enters the hollow bodies, the English translation is my suggestion:

וּבָשָׂר עָלָה וַיִּקְרָם עַל יָהֶם עוֹר מִלְּמַעַלָּה וְרוּחַ אֵין בָּהֶם
וּרְאִיתִי וְהִנֵּה-עַל יָהֶם גְּדִים

37.8 *I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had grown, and skin had formed over them; but there was no mind in them.*

וְהִנְבֵּאתִי כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוֵּנִי וַתָּבוֹא בָּהֶם הָרוּחַ וַיְחִיּוּ וַיַּעֲמֻדוּ

37.10 *The mind entered them, and they came to life and stood up on their feet.*

37.9 connects three different meanings of the word רִיחַ from breath in the beginning of the verse, to wind in the middle of it, to mind at the end:

Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, O mortal! Say to the breath: Thus said the Lord GOD: Come, O mind, from the four winds, and breathe into these slain, that they may live again.

This might be quite a radical theological explanation but I do see its validity, especially in accordance with the line of this research. What the empty bodies are receiving is more than breath that is connected to the wind; they receive a unified coherent mind, directly from Yhwh with connection to the natural elements and the breath. In short, the bodies receive the male logos.

We can also see here a connection to 2.2 וַתָּבֹא בִּי רוּחַ כְּאִשָּׁר דִּבֶּר אֱלֹהִים וַתַּעֲמֵדנִי עַל-רַגְלִי

While JPS translates this verse as spirit: *As He spoke to me, a spirit entered into me and set me upon my feet*, and the verses in chapter 37 as breath, I see no reason to do the same. As was discussed, Ezekiel is the embodiment of the logos, Yhwh speaks him; he ate the scrolls and kept it his body, thus giving Ezekiel the sole ownership of the discourse (p. 77). The dialog in verse 37.2 between Ezekiel and Yhwh is the conclusion of this act. Yhwh opens the mouth of Ezekiel not only for him to speak but also for him to create life. In this manner, Ezekiel is not just a prophet but he is the vessel in which life comes through. Ezekiel's speech is the speech of Yhwh; it is Ezekiel that summons the will, the mind and the law of Yhwh. New Israel cannot be a complete one without the laws of Yhwh. As was analyzed earlier (p. 198), the new R^I that is all male, must live and be constituted by the law. The vision of the dried bones affirms this notion, thus closing the transformation process of the R^I from a deviant female that lives in her blood to a spiritual, juridical R^I who lives according to the law of Yhwh. The logos that was given to Ezekiel by Yhwh and was in his sole ownership

is transferred and becomes a part of the new male Israel. I would like to stress again that there is no intention here to make a connection between the meanings of the logos in the book of Ezekiel and the meaning of the logos in the New Testament. The use of the term logos is only in accordance with the philosophical level as introduced in appendix number one, as a term to describe a central thinking that is validated by a political metaphysical point (p. 311).

In the second unit (37.15-27), Yhwh commands Ezekiel to take two sticks, write the names of the northern and southern tribes on them, and join them together. Then Yhwh declares that he is the one who will take the two sticks and join them together in his hand. The symbolic act is further explained as Yhwh's restoration of the people of Israel to their land. Yhwh unites Israel, and Ezekiel gives them laws. Israel matters in the discourse of Ezekiel through the words of Ezekiel – for the reader to become a R^I, he needs to be within the boundaries of Ezekiel. Yhwh might be the Supreme Being, but it is Ezekiel who is the leader and is endowed with the spiritual powers of Yhwh.

A new Israel is produced here and rendered as an eternal nation that does not need a physical king (although David is ordained to rule it) or a physical army, but instead the spirit of Yhwh and a prophet to lead it. The transformation process of Israel is finished - a new Israel, a new god and a new leadership. The new Israel is created from blood and ashes and constituted by the law. The law is now higher than blood, and the domain of the male is the one that leads, rules, and sets the way we think, a *malestream* indeed (p. 44). R^I, the new Israel, needs to have faith in his continuity, to read and reread the book of Ezekiel and embrace his constitution as an eternal nation, a utopic one who can challenge dire times, and laugh at history.

Odell and Block discuss the theological implications of chapter 37, and show that this resurrection is by no means only Jewish or Zionist. While Block discusses Christians traditions (1998:383-391), Odell quotes a sermon of James Carroll who connects between the vision of the dried bones and the American war in Vietnam (2005: 458-461). So powerful is the rhetorical value of the book of Ezekiel and its theological revolution, that Israel could have lived forever: one nation, under one god, one law, different from the rest of the world - for all eternity. So powerful that it could serve as a declaration of hope for the newly born Zionist state, and as a promise for an eternal future for every Christian.

The line of restoration, as well as the book of Ezekiel is about to finally close, and it will come to a full conclusion in chapter 38-39 and the imaginary enemies for the imaginary community.

8.3.6 Chapters 38-39: Imagine

When is enough enough? Exiled, scattered, gathered, purged, and finally resettled—only to be attacked and plundered yet again? Especially after the promises of chapter 37, the invasion of Gog seems redundant; yet for Ezekiel it is a necessary step in the restoration (Odell 2005:476).

Indeed, chs. 38-39 are rather peculiar, maybe even redundant at a first glance, since chapter 37 may be sufficient to close the line of the restoration prophecies. However, as Odell writes, it is a necessary step in the process of restoration, especially in the imaginary/metaphorical level of the constitution of eternal imagined Israel.

The story of Gog from the land of Magog and his plans to invade eternal Israel starts almost as a fairytale. A peaceful people living in a land restored from war, and who has no king, appear ripe for the plundering, and an evil and mighty enemy

desires to do exactly that. Gog is not alone in this venture; no less than seven allies join him: Meshech, Tubal, Persia, Cush, Put, Gomer, and Beth-Togarmah (vv. 5-6). These seven allies come from the northern and southern extremities of the known world and symbolize completeness. Together they form an 'axis of evil' whose alliance turns the battle into a 'world war.' However this story quickly changes when Yhwh tells Ezekiel to prophesy against Gog, claiming that Israel is Yhwh's people (38.14,16) and that the land is defended by Yhwh. Thus Yhwh comes to the rescue and disarms Gog. Weaponless, Gog ceases to be a threat to Israel and falls, and his troops' bodies litter the mountains of Israel, ravished by the beasts and birds. As if it was not enough, Yhwh goes to the land of Magog and destroys it completely. The people of Israel take the weapon of Gog and use it for fire for seven years without needing to cut even one tree, simply by burning down the weapon. Israel does not use Gog's weapons for a future war or for times of peace, instead, Israel has a complete faith in Yhwh. Maybe it is a fairytale after all, or to be more precise, a utopic vision of a future eternal Israel, a redeemed Israel, who was punished, cleansed, purified and reattributed as a new one.

Bowen explains this notion well:

Ezekiel's plan for restoration is consistent with the theology of retribution used to explain Israel's suffering...the defeat of Israel's future enemies will be a consequence of Israel's obedience. These are the only options Ezekiel provides for theologically interpreting Israel's historical situation. This theology, applied literally to Israel's subsequent history, reads thusly. The second Temple was destroyed for the same reason as the first Temple: as divine punishment of Israel's disobedience. The continuation of the Jewish Diaspora for nearly 2,000 years becomes a continued sign of God's punishment, and the Holocaust is God's final "cleansing" of the people. Conversely, the creation of the modern state of Israel in 1948 proves a cleansed and renewed people are gathered and restored by YHWH to their land. The wars of 1967 and 1973 offer further evidence of divine favor. The Arab League attacked a people restored from war, living securely in their land, and the Arab League was defeated (Bowen 2010:237).

The rhetoric of the book of Ezekiel serves as a tool for future generations. Maybe this is exactly what Hannaniah, son of Hezekiah saw when he was reading the book and what the R¹ sees now.

In 38.4 Yhwh portrays Gog as an army *clothed in splendor*, an attribute that was given to other feminine entities in the book of Ezekiel:

Tyre: *O Tyre, you boasted, I am perfect in beauty (27.3); Embroidered linen from Egypt was the cloth That served you for sails; Of blue and purple from the coasts of Elishah Were your awnings (27.7)*

Jerusalem: *You adorned yourself with gold and silver, and your apparel was of fine linen, silk, and embroidery (16.14).*

I do not argue that Gog is a woman, however his characteristics resemble the characteristics of Tyre and Jerusalem, thus echoing a feminine dangerous aspects, rendering the enemy as evil/woman. This notion fits the process that the woman and her images dominated in the book of Ezekiel. In the same way these chapters portray an imaginary eternal enemy, they also depict the eternal enemy as an entity with feminine characteristics; as was shown in the analysis of chapters 13, 16 and 23 (p. 161) and in the analysis of Tyre (p. 232).

Stavarakopoulou in her article ‘Gog’s Grave and the Use and Abuse of Corpses in Ezekiel 39:11-20’ (2010) claims that according to socio-anthropological and ritual studies, the living response to death and cadaver ‘constitutes a process effecting and maintaining the transformation of the deceased from a social person into a nonliving entity, enabling the living community to negotiate and reframe their relationship with that individual’. She continues and writes that the corpse represents the disruption of the changing social relationship between the deceased and the living. When the corpse is being abandoned (like in the story of Gog) it becomes culturally unplaced, thus

rendering the individual's transition 'into postmodern existence and marking at once the estrangement of the living from their dead, and the isolation of the dead from their living' (Stavrakopoulou 2010:67-71). Gog and his army were not buried but were left to be eaten by the animals (39.4); later on, they were buried by Israel in the Valley of the Travelers (39.11) גֵּי הָעֹבְרִים. This name connotes several meanings; first, the valley of the 'travelers' or the valley of 'the crossover' indicates the cultural use of the corpse as was presented by Stavrakopoulou. The death of the imaginary enemy and its corpses functions as the border between the living and the dead, rendering the living as eternal ones, constructed on the corpses of the enemy.

And they shall appoint men to serve permanently, to traverse the land and bury any invaders who remain above ground, in order to cleanse it. The search shall go on for a period of seven months.

As those who traverse the country make their rounds, any one of them who sees a human bone shall erect a marker beside it, until the buriers have interred them in the Valley of Gog's Multitude (39.14-15).

Further, the name עֹבְרִים in Hebrew resembles the name of the Trans-Jordanian mountain from which Moses overlooked the land and the Israelites crossed over (Num. 27.12-13; Deut. 32.49-50), thus reconnecting the exodus from Babylon to the exodus from Egypt. (see also, Stavrakopoulou 2010:79).

The valley of the crossover alludes to the changing in the status of Israel who is built upon the bones of the imaginary enemy; the foreigner in his death gives Israel life. This second understanding leads to the third one which also closes the line of the depiction of the woman as the enemy. The valley of the crossovers is a contra metaphor to the valley of the dried bones, and while Israel is resurrected from dried bones, the enemy is buried, eliminated and represented as bones. In fact, Israel

collected all the bones of Gog for seven months and buried each and every one of them until there was no longer any trace of Gog, and he becomes the right of passage to the eternal land of the living. Here we may go back to chapter 24 and the death of Jerusalem as a woman, and of Ezekiel's wife (p. 218). Connecting these cases to the death of Gog, that may attribute feminine in his appearance with foreign and evil, and will yield to the assumption that was repeatedly stressed: for the new Israeli man to live, for the R^I to be constituted - The woman must die. An all male eternal Israel was reborn in the valley of the dried bones at the same time a foreign, dangerous stranger was killed and buried forever in the valley of the crossovers. Yet again, the woman is not only the deviant and dangerous element in the male's *âme*, she is also the crucial element that needs to be killed over and over again in order for the male to receive eternal life – in her bloods R^I will live forever.

As Odell stated, the circle is now fully complete: Exiled, scattered, gathered, purged, and finally resettled, and I will add to that - transformed. A nation is born and so is its leader and his representative, an all men nation with the perpetual umbilical cord that connects it to eternal life – the woman and her attributes.

8.4 Theory Revisited

The analysis of 24-39 emphasizes the political process that renders a so-called individual to a political being. The feminine element, that in this book is a pornographic imagination, serves as a tool to construct the *Man* and the reader that subscribes to this construction. The feminine element is connected to the foreign one, and this element is necessary in order to draw borders between them and us, whether the foreigner is from within or from without. Moreover, this element is being purged through an imagined history and a narrative in order to produce a new future.

This new R¹ that is always in the process of becoming political, is a part of a group that can distinguish itself from other groups, and can overcome future threats. This group is a unique Israel that has been carefully constructed in these chapters, a pure Israel that had left its deviant past behind and is facing the future. It is a sign named Israel that can resist and stand against time, a nation that does not need physical constituents such as land, a ruler and a means of production and power. All that this nation needs is the written word and imagination.

In his article 'The Commemoration of Defeat and the Formation of a Nation in the Hebrew Bible' Wright discusses the emergence of the Israelite nation in the Hebrew Bible through the process of the commemoration of defeat, and concludes by writing:

...Rabbis realized, as the prophets of Israel had before them, that when the state was no longer an option, national life could nevertheless survive. Although one could no longer perform sacrifices at the Temple, one could at least study the cultic laws and recite the Levitical liturgy. When the land was not in possession or afar off, one could strive to live in it through the imagination with the help of the memories preserved in biblical literature. Under foreign rule, communities could seek to carve out spaces for themselves in which they could enjoy their traditional way of life, celebrating their national festivals, following their own calendar, building houses of study and worship, and practicing their own laws. In this way national life—or at least a national consciousness—could persist until the conditions were more propitious to the reestablishment of a Jewish state (Wright 2009:453)

Although we cannot treat the Israel that is being constructed in the book of Ezekiel as a nation in the sense of modern nationalism, it is still a very strong and profound element in the construction of the R¹. In fact, the reader that is being carefully constructed in the book of Ezekiel is a national one, and more so, it is an Israelite one. It is not of course only Israel, it is first and foremost a Man, a broken man who had lost everything he had, mainly in his collective memory, and is trying to reproduce a future while imagining the past. In her book, *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases*, Cynthia Enloe argues that the symbolic role of women in the nationalist

movement is downgraded to minor, to booty of war or as an icon that the man needs to defend (Enloe 2000:1-18). In any case, the real actors in a nation and its narration are men. Wright concludes that ‘nationalism has typically sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope’ (Wright 2009:473).

I have tried to expose and to challenge this masculine memory and the subscription process of different scholars to this memory. The book of Ezekiel is a complex memory imagining tale, and I believe that more than its theological value – as being a prophecy book and a part of the Hebrew Bible; it is primarily a political book, a nation and narration guide, a mythological corpus of past, present and future invention. With the power of its words, the book of Ezekiel managed not only to save Ezekiel, his god and the community of the exiles, but also to create a new concept of Israel and manhood – a new concept of a nation that, with some other books in the Hebrew Bible, has constituted one of the foundations of nationalist movements in the 19th century. These movements, in many aspects, are responsible for the political organization of human society, and are shaping and being shaped at the same time by the Hebrew Bible.

The Bible provided, for the Christian world at least, the original model of the nation. Without it and its Christian interpretation and implementation, it is arguable that nations and nationalism, as we know them, could never have existed. Moreover, religion has produced the dominant character of some state-shaped nations and of some nationalisms. Biblical Christianity both undergirds the cultural and political world out of which the phenomena of nationhood and nationalism as a whole developed and in a number of important cases provided a crucial ingredient for the particular history of both nations and nationalisms (Enloe 2000:45).

This original model of a nation has been implanted in the political *âme* of men throughout the centuries, and in some aspects the book of Ezekiel is one of the factors of such a condition.

Part VI. Heterotopia or the Birth of Pan-Israel 40-48

9. The Geometry of Israel

Similar to chapters 8-11, the last unit in the book of Ezekiel describes a vision of Ezekiel. In both units he is transported to the temple and guided by a man that leads him through the site. The man measures the space of the new temple while directing the prophet through the different sections, stating that everything Ezekiel sees is an object of proclamation to the house of Israel. Although this unit is similar, vision wise, to chs. 8-11, it is also different, since it posits as a positive mirror to the sins described in chs. 8-11. In this sense this unit functions as the epilogue of the book of Ezekiel, while challenging perceptions of time and space. In many ways, the unit closes the different processes of the book of Ezekiel, from the formation of the R^I to the creation of the new nation, and subsequently – the adjunction of the last element in the dispositif of the book of Ezekiel: Space.

Chapters 40-48 possess many challenges for scholars especially with regards to its authenticity, redaction levels, and its connection to the rest of the book. Block gives ten different elements in which the interpretation of the book can be different from one scholar to another: The nature of the text, the literary history of the text, the historical context of the vision, the declared genre of the material, precursors of the new temple material, the literary structure of the vision, the literary context of the vision, the relation between the priestly prescription in the Mosaic Torah and Ezekiel 40-48, fantastic and stylized elements in the vision, and the influence of Ezekiel's design on later writers (Block 1998:494-502). Niditch writes that most scholars do not see this unit as genuine, basing themselves on style and contexts. Instead, she offers to read this unit in a visionary context with relation to other units in the book, notably chs. 40-48 in the context of chs. 37-39 and the restoration of Yhwh's law and order

after the chaos of Gog (Niditch 1986:210-212, 220-2).⁶¹ Zimmerli implements his theory of the School of Ezekiel (p. 50) on this unit and argues that it was mainly written by Ezekiel's school. However, in his preliminary review of the unit he writes that this unit can be seen as a 'draft constitution' (Zimmerli 1983:549). Eichrodt, like Zimmerli negates the possibility that this unit can be traced to the prophet Ezekiel (Eichrodt 1970:551). Greenberg on the other hand, looks for parallels between chs. 40-48 and the rest of the book and claims that this unit came from the hands of Ezekiel (Greenberg 1984:181).

Dealing mainly with the authorship of the book fractures its mythological meaning and its perception and reception. Instead, I would like to continue the line of Kalinda Stevenson, and treat this unit as a rhetorical one designed to organize humans by land arrangements and architectural blueprints. In short, this unit will be discussed as a unit addressing human geography (Stevenson 1996:11, 161, 163). Foucault stated in his lecture 'of other spaces' (1986) that it is time to depart from the 19th century obsession over history and focus on the 'space turn', analyzing the human experience via the prism of space and spatial studies. Analyzing this unit via spatial studies and *Heterotopia* will yield different conclusions on its nature.

9.1 Space and Time and the Final Constitution of the Subject

A whole history remains to be written of spaces – which would at the same time be the history of powers (Foucault 1986b:22).

Whereas Stevenson discusses the creation of space as a territorial demand and rhetoric, we could also treat it in a different way, as the missing link in the structure of the R¹ *âme*. The place that Stevenson discusses is a physical historical one, which is

⁶¹ Scholars such as: Wevers 1969:207-10; Cooke 1924; Gese 1957.

created as a new domain of control and social arrangement for the community of the exiles. She treats the measurements of the temple, the city and land with a comparison of other measurements and blueprints of the ancient Near East. However, Israel and the community of exiles cannot only be treated as historical entities but also as a power/knowledge tool designated to recreate the R^I (p. 96). In this manner, it is not sufficient to treat space and its construction as a derivative of historical circumstances and a reaction to history. Space and spatial arrangement should also be treated as a way to reform history itself, and more so, to replace historical thinking. Stevenson argues that chs. 40-48 were written to answer a very urgent question: where is God? And that they were written in the context of the Babylonian exile:

These chapters in Ezekiel were written as a rhetorical response to the social and theological crises of a community in exile. These crises threatened the destruction of the community, as a community. In order to grasp the urgency of the exigence, and the passion of the response, it is necessary to understand the exile as a shattering social and theological crisis (Stevenson 1996:xxiv).

Stevenson's work is very important for the research of the book of Ezekiel in replacing the question of 'when' with 'where'. However, there is a necessity to go the extra mile in this rhetoric. It was emphasized previously (p. 243) that the exile was not actually a devastating event from which the new nation of Israel was reborn, but rather a key element in the existence of this new Israel. Put differently, the notion 'Israel', this symbol that denotes and connotes endless significations could not have existed without the exile, and owes its epistemological and maybe even its ontological existence to it. It is not the exile that erupted Israel, but it is the exile that created Israel in the first place. To be Israel, to be a part of Israel, and to be constituted accordingly, one must accept the exile as the cornerstone of its existence, since the eternal present of the exile is the element that endorsed the future and the past of

Israel. In this sense, the need to locate Ezekiel and 'his book' in a historical context is not only futile, but actually a second power/knowledge process that modern biblical scholars impose on the discourse of the book. Fracturing the historiographical notions and strategies, as Foucault discussed, is my attempt to shed new light and new perspectives on the book of Ezekiel, thus the significance of Heterotopia.

Foucault introduced the term Heterotopia in a lecture to architects in 1968, however, he later tried to delegitimize the term and never spoke of it again. The lecture was finally published after his death in 1986. The reason why Foucault tried to ignore this term is due to his departure from structuralism to post-structuralism, and his realization that Heterotopia cannot be a space that is cut off from the hegemonic notion of space and cannot function as an independent space of resistance. However, the term Heterotopia quickly gained popularity and has become a sought after term in human geography studies.⁶² Used by many different scholars, the term was reshaped to better fit post-structuralism, thus postmodernism, and received somehow a more refined meaning. Hetherington's definition is a fine example:

I define heterotopia as spaces of alternate ordering. Heterotopia organizes a bit of the social world in a way different to that which surrounds them. That alternate ordering marks them out as Other and allows them to be seen as an example of an alternative way of doing things...What I have tried to show, through both theoretical argument and illustration through a number of cases, is the spatial dynamics of these new modes of social ordering that have gone into the making of modernity. These new modes of social ordering, found in modernity's Other spaces are not something that have emerged as a completely blind process, nor as something completely planned, but have derived from ideas about the good society (Hetherington 1997:18).

Hetherington mainly discusses the production of spaces and their contribution to modernity, while applying theories of utopia. Such was the example of the *Palais*

⁶² Works such as: Tuell 1982, Siebers 1994.

Royal in Paris, that initially was a palace and the birthplace of Louis the 14th. It eventually turned into the first known ‘city mall’ and as ‘a space in which new processes of social ordering were tried out, it helped to define some of the ideas about the ordering of modernity’(Hetherington 1997:18). To sum up Hetherington’s argument, space is not an element that is only treated as a set of relations outside of society, but also takes part in the production of social relations, that in turn are produced by it. Space itself is a part of the power/knowledge process, since power is to be exercised in this well-constructed site that is mythicized in the self’s *âme*.⁶³ Hence, it is not the place itself that is the matter of investigation, but its role in the production of the *âme* and its position in the dispositif and the power relations in a given society. In that manner, we can say that ordering a space is also the order of the discourse, and the interpretation of the space is the reshaping of the discourse.

West-Pavlov who analyzed the concept of space according to Kristeva, Foucault and Deleuze, writes that spaces are to be understood as an ongoing, dynamic series of processes of which we ourselves take a part in.⁶⁴ Hence, just like the discourse and the *âme* discussed in the introduction (p. 64), the subject takes part in the construction of the space, in its production, and in its constitution, all in order to produce its self – thus the process of mythicizing space is crucial for the construction of the self. ‘Space is the agency of configurements, and the fabric of configurations is from the outset spatial. It is in those spatial processes of configuration and re-configuration that human life takes place and unfolds its unceasing dynamic’ (West-Pavlov 2009:22, 25).

⁶³ Also Lefebvre 1991; Ahlbäck 2001.

⁶⁴ See also Saldanha 2008:2090-3.

To close the review on the term Heterotopia, Foucault claims that ‘the heterotopia begins to function fully when men are in a kind of absolute break with their traditional time’ (Foucault 1986b:26). Hence, Heterotopia does not need a sense of time, nor history; in fact, it functions as an element in the dispositif that replaces time and history itself. Heterotopia could also function as a textual written site – a space with no space that challenges other spaces and that eventually may order the different ‘real’ geographical ones. Analyzing the book according to the 19th century historical discipline is only rooting and anchoring the blind readings to the text (p. 311). This unique temple, city, land that Ezekiel is creating offers a place of resistance to the notion of exile. This well-structured and highly organized heterotopia that is located in the midst of the chaos of exile, offers a logical judicial constitution manifested as a new space.

The vision can be divided into three sections. The first is Ezekiel’s tour of the temple complex (40.1–43.12). The second section (43.13–46.24) contains the rules that discuss the establishment of cult personnel, the institution of regular offerings, and the establishment of the ritual calendar. The third section (47.1–48.35) envisions the rejuvenation of the land and its allocation among the tribes of Israel.

9.2 Chapters 40-43.12: Squares of Holiness: The Blueprint of the Temple

Ezekiel, again, just like in 1.1 and 8.3 witnesses Yhwh’s vision while stating a date. Odell argues that the date is significant for the community of the exiles, since the future is not known yet and ‘despite the tension between present vision and future reality, the intersection of time and space underscores the certainty of restoration: even while the exiles remain in Babylonia, Yhwh has begun to reign in the land of Israel’ (Odell 2005:488). Other commentators analyze this date with relation to Leviticus 25.9, the year of the Jubilee, the count of Ezekiel’s commission, and the

beginning of the year (Zimmerli 1983:325; Block 1998:512-3). Much attention was given to the dating itself and its historical location, while the treatment of the phrase **בַּעֲצֵם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה** was somehow missing. It was earlier discussed that the term appears in the Hebrew Bible only in monumental events (p. 220). In the book of Ezekiel it appears three times: in the calling narrative 2.3; the destruction of Jerusalem, and the death of Ezekiel's wife 24.2; and here - the return of Yhwh and his order to his new well-organized city. In this manner, the date here functions as a national/communal date in the new Israelite calendar that does not only mark a historical reality, but a testimonial for a new era that will change the way R¹ perceives events. This phrase confuses history all together, even mocking it, and reestablishes the perception of history as an event that is a-historical and can always function in the *âme* of the new Israelite male as a monument in the process of its constitution. Hence, the date in this unit is designated to order the history of the genealogy of the R¹ *âme* and not necessarily correspond with 'actual' historical events.

After mentioning the date, Ezekiel is put on a very high mountain in the land of Israel and he sees a city in the south (40.2). Then Yhwh takes him to the city, where Ezekiel meets a man standing by the gate *who shone like copper. In his hands were a cord of linen and a measuring rod* (40.3b). The man speaks to Ezekiel and orders him to listen carefully to the measurements, *for you have been brought here in order to be shown — and report everything you see to the House of Israel* (40.4b). This report of the temple echoes the report of chs. 8-11. In both cases Ezekiel is taken to the temple to witness, and in both cases the temple is already built. In chs. 8-11 it is the old temple of Jerusalem, and in chs. 40-48 it is the new temple of the new city named 'Yhwh is there' **יְהוָה שָׁמָּה** (48.35).

While there are differences between the descriptions of the temples, 40-43.11 can be treated as a unit that is linked directly to chs. 8-11 and is actually its conclusion. In this manner it is important to note as Odell did, that the new temple already exists and functions, the description of its measurements is not an order how to build it but rather an account of a place, of heterotopia that functions as a self-reflexive tool and as a site for discourse ordering. Chs. 8-11 gave the spatial description of the temple from the outside to its core as an analogy to the discourse. Earlier argued that The Ezekielien discourse, the monotheistic way of thinking and ordering, cannot stand any marginalization, and that in chs. 8-11 the discourse is not only ordered, it is also widened and its limitations are in fact the infinite boundaries. No one is allowed to do, act or speak outside the discourse and must be inside of it; in fact, being outside the discourse renders the subject as *homo sacer* (p. 154). Another aspect of the temple description in chs. 8-11 is the sense of instability and of lack of order; chapters 40-43.11 come to fix this notion, and to create a strict rigid adobe to the discourse.

The temple description commences with the eastern gate (40.5-16) that is enormous and was meant to guard the temple. Comparing it to the first site that the prophet encounters in 8.5 shows that while in 8.5 Ezekiel already enters the temple, here he is outside the site, implying to the reader that this time the discourse is well guarded. Next, the prophet is led to the outer court (40.17-19) and from there, (40.20) moves directly to sketch the northern gate of the outer wall, followed by the southern gate (40.23-27). After the description of the gates, the prophet is lead to the inner court (40.24-37). 40.38-48 shift the attention from the measurements of the temple to the rooms of cultic personnel, detailing the tables of the sacrifices and where the animals will be slaughtered. 40.44-46 describe the priestly chambers and may connect

us back with chs. 8-11 as a counter mirror to the site of abomination in the defiled temples of Jerusalem; especially in regard with 8.11b where the elders of Israel gathered in a room and each man was standing in front of his creature while holding the censer in his hand and inhaling its smoke for the enjoyment of the image. The room in which these people were using was probably a storage room according to 1 Kgs. 6.5 (p. 123). This time, there will be no room for such abominations, exact details of how to worship Yhwh are given and it will take place in big rooms with windows. 40.47-41.4 gives us the interior measurements of the temple followed by the auxiliary measurements (41.5-12) – in which the thickness of the temple wall about 10 ft. denoting the importance of keeping the temple well graded. 41.12 describes a rather peculiar element in the temple the *בִּנְיָן*, this enormous structure does not have any known purpose while its dimension exceed the temple itself. We may assume that this structure represents the shift from a physical human monarchy to a more abstract figurehead led by Yhwh that will be introduced shortly. This structure might be regarded as a palace replacement and as an omen that will rule over new Israel, and will forever be in the realm and discourse of Yhwh. Next, the prophet is given the details of the interior decoration (41.15- 26) and the priestly chambers (42.1-13), followed by The Concluding Temple Measurements (42.15-20).

The structuring of the temple teaches us that the movement is from the outside to the inside, and from the walls and gates that are guarding the sacred from the profane. Located at the center of the sacred space is a space in which only Yhwh may enter. Every outward ring in this structure is less profane from the one inside it. From the outer court that is open to the public, to the inner court designated to the Levites, while the inner ring is open to the *Zadokites/Priests who have access to the LORD shall eat the most holy offerings* (42.13). Block writes: ‘A bird’s-eye view also

recognizes a central spine of sacrality, increasing as one moves horizontally from east to west' (Block 1998:573). From this eastern gate, from the most important vertebra of the spine, Yhwh enters.

The Return of Yhwh to His Temple (43.1-9) brings together all major events in the book and closes them into one tight narrative. Ezekiel describes to the reader, what he sees at the entrance of the eastern gate, using a phrase that can only be found in the book of Ezekiel פְּבוֹד אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, the Presence of the God of Israel. This phrase emphasizes, also with relation to the fact that the kingdom Israel ceased to exist over a century before the exile of Judah, not only the designation of Yhwh as the leader of Israel, but also the name Israel itself as one symbol for both kingdoms. It constitutes the *Pan-Israel*, a name that is the discursive site of a political *âme*, the tool that constitutes the reader as an all-male new Israeli, and the leader as Yhwh and his glory.

Ezekiel continues and says: *The vision was like the vision I had seen when I came to destroy the city, the very same vision that I had seen by the Chebar Canal. Forthwith, I fell on my face* (43.3), thus connecting all the occurrences in which Yhwh himself participated. Yhwh fulfills the themes of salvation in chs. 34-37 and returns to the ordered temple. His speech ends with an order to Ezekiel: *Write it down before their eyes, that they may faithfully follow its entire plan and all its laws* (43.11b). Thus rendering spatial arrangements into law and order, and completely negating the old feminine Jerusalem and Israel, constituting a new identity that is severely structured as a geometrical heterotopia of discourse. This shift from proclaiming to writing, changes the political function of Ezekiel. He is not a prophet whose words were later on put into writing, but a lawmaker, a constituter of a nation, and a constitution writer.

Tuell in his article ‘Ezekiel 40-42 as a Verbal Icon’ objects the notion that chs. 40-48 present a program of restoration with instructions to build a new temple. Instead he argues that firstly, it is impossible to build a temple like the one described in this unit since the structure is out of proportion, and secondly, that there was no command to build this temple (Tuell 1996:651-2). Tuell proposes to read 40-48 as a vision with comparison to the visions of the Kabod of Yhwh in ch. 1, and the initial temple vision in chs. 8-11. Both of these visions, Tuell argues, describe a static reality, not a future yet to come. In the same way, then, the temple vision of chs. 40-48 should be read as a present reality, not as a plan for the future. Tuell uses Rader’s research on the differences between writing and speech, as she argues that writing enables the composer to control and manifest in the mind of the reader a complex image (Rader 1982:187).

This is precisely what we see in Ezekiel 40-42. The reader of the text is able to experience what the prophet experienced, independent of the original visionary; however, this (admittedly indirect) experience is disciplined and controlled by the fixedness of the written text. “Only in writing,” Rader asserts, “can the inference-suggesting information be so carefully controlled and restricted even as inferring and imagining are given full rein.” The text of Ezekiel’s vision thus, could become an aid to devotional piety, like the icon in Orthodoxy (Tuell 1996:662).⁶⁵

Strong continues Tuell’s line and asks to reaffirm the notion that this is a vision focused on the present and maybe Ezekiel was a conservative priest after all (Strong 2012:211). The debate continues with Bunta:

⁶⁵ In his article Joyce discusses the same matter and heavily bases his arguments on Tulle’s argument, while asking to add a few more elements. Nielsen (2008:99-114) analyses the unit in the prism of theology, arguing that 40-48 came to answer the theological distortion of Ezekiel 1 in which the reader understands that Yhwh is everywhere. 40-48 comes to create order as an epilogue of a well-organized site for a book that starts with a somehow chaotic prologue.

The Book of Ezekiel seems to adhere to a certain ancient Near Eastern understanding of the divine world that does not differentiate between the divine presence in heaven and the divine presence on earth. Therefore, the entire dialectic of heavenly versus earthly is misplaced when it comes to the Book of Ezekiel, simply because this distinction seems to be unknown to the author of this biblical text (Bunta 2011:44).

Indeed, as long as biblical research stays in the realm of historicism, the debate about the real intention endures, and the Gordian knot will continue to tangle. A way for us to untie this knot and the text, is offered by Simon Bennett who proposes to approach the temple vision with the help of psychoanalysis:

We yearn for some geometric and arithmetic precision because our desires and passions are terribly imprecise, indeed at times verging on the chaotic and the unbounded. The beauty and elegance of mathematics inspire awe in us, contrasting with the persistence of a certain ugliness and lack of grace in our innermost world, let alone in the external social and political world. Geometry cleanses, orders, and puts strict, defined boundaries in place. The geometric dream attempts to resolve intractable human aggression, including the lust for power and the attendant injustices of that lust. It delimits the chaos of sexuality, replacing the messiness of family relations, procreation, and gender differences with clean lines and bodies. Right angle triangles are neater than family triangles. Measurement defends against pained awareness of the flaws and contradictions in our moral universe, but of course cannot definitively repair and reconstitute that universe (Bennett 2008:414).

Hence, the emphasis on geometry serves as a tool to calm disturbances, to order chaos, and to leave the PTSD stage. In his article, Bennett discusses five realms that need to be controlled by the geometric order of unit 40-48: 1. Visions, language, and symbolic acts. 2. Violence and bloodshed perpetrated by the people. 3. Sexual betrayal as an image of the people's betrayal of God. 4. Matters of the 'Old Self' and the 'New Self' of the people by measurement and morality. 5. The wildness of God; 'That you may know I am Yhwh' and 'for the sake of *my* name'.

Although Bennett's analysis concerns psychoanalysis, an approach that has not been used in this work, his review may be used here to conclude the line of chs. 40-48 as a Heterotopia.

9.2.1 The Final Frontier

Space creates identities, hence the self, thus analyzing the genealogy of the *âme* only with historical tools is not sufficient. In the second chapter I showed how Israel is connoted as female and as being rejected, and then created again as male (p. 207). This process of the self-creation happens in 'clean' spaces – the field where the baby woman Jerusalem is found, and the desert of the nations where the creation of male Israel according to law is taking place. In this sense, the space is not only space per se; it is a new construction of language and of reason. Therefore, we must not treat this unit just as a blueprint for a future temple or as a unit of a present temple, but also and maybe mainly, as a blueprint of a future, or possibly an eternal discourse. The space of Ezekiel is a space within space and within time – it is located between or perhaps against, the chaos and pollution of Babylon and the war against Gog, and the old temple that connoted feminine Israel. The new space, offered in this unit, is a space that originates from the older space and resists it at the same time. It is a heterotopia where the discourse becomes strict and the formation of the self may not be open for different interpretations.

The phrase **בַּעֲצָם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה** indicates a new beginning. However, this is not the beginning of the end but the beginning of time and space. It is timeless and *spaceless* and functions as a present-future plan. It functions as a present that may be implemented at any time in the future, and a future that may be perceived as a timeless present. The commanding of Ezekiel to write the laws in 43.11 locks the discourse and freezes it in a written utopia of law in which all humans are arranged

and categorized, a law that is connoted as a rigid geometrical space. These subjects are not the actual physical people of the exile, since, as in other parts of the book, Ezekiel is describing to the reader what he sees, and not to the exiles. Moreover, the commanding of Ezekiel to write the laws in front of their eyes, yet again establishes the fact that the exiles are not the main target of this unit. This understanding renders Ezekiel as the embodiment of the logos, fully securing his discursive role. The logos, depicted as words, was given by Yhwh to be kept in Ezekiel's body, and subsequently exits his body as laws immediately after the ordering of the discourse had finished, thus connecting all the elements of the dispositif together – Power, Knowledge and Space. The destruction of old Israel and its geographical location lead to the constitution of the new self. However, this new self is not individual; it is a part of a bigger body – Israel. After the temple and the land of Israel were destroyed there is a need to recreate this space again. This space, just as the name Israel, is designated to be eternal, hence the use of heterotopia in the description of the temple and the land of Israel. Not only is the *âme* eternal, but also its land and its heart, the city and the temple.

9.3 Chapters 43.13-46.24: All Together Now

While chs. 40-42 describe an empty temple, in the next unit the temple fully functions while Yhwh dwells in it. The unit is divided into three: the altar and its purification (43), the Levites and priests, (44.1-45.8) and the discussion of the *Nasi*'s role, rights, and regulations (45.9-46.24).

The Altar and Ezekiel – the End of History

Before the description of the law, first Ezekiel sees the altar (43.13-17) with its utopic dimensions,⁶⁶ and then he receives the first new rules and orders for the offerings. Odell poses a few matters concerning Yhwh's orders to Ezekiel with regards to the purification of the altar (43.19-27). Firstly, Ezekiel becomes a priest again, and more so, the founder of a new cult of priests. Secondly, since this vision is interpreted as an eschatological restoration in the future, also according to 38.8, then in this aspect, Ezekiel's role needs to be understood with relation to the exile and the return from exile, and in relation to history and perception of history (Odell 2005:503-4). Wevers also discusses this matter and says that these instructions resemble the process of consecration as in Exod. 29.36-37, 40.9-11, and Lev. 16.18-19. The person addressed by the oracle is, of course, Ezekiel. In this manner Ezekiel is being compared to Moses and actually portrayed as the new Moses (Wevers 1969:197). Wevers's argument, though clearly leading to the acceptance of the New Testament, and to Christian ways of reading the Hebrew Bible, still has some valid points. The correspondences between the exodus and Ezekiel's exodus were earlier discussed (p. 198). However, the fact that no date is mentioned for the purification of the altar, and the fact that the position is handed over to Ezekiel, shows us that history, or the perception of linear movement of time, is lacking in this unit. Will the purification happen in the near future? How long will it take to build the temple, or will it just descend from the sky? Will the exiles return shortly? Will Ezekiel live forever? In this regard, not only is there no need to seek for linear movement of time, but also we should treat the book as an alternative theological manifesto to history. We should

⁶⁶ The enormous size of the altar led to much debate regarding whether it existed or not, such as Meindert who claims that the blueprint of the altar does reflect the reality of the second temple, see: Meindert 1992:22-36.

regard the book as a text where the events, even though meticulously dated, are a part of a grander agenda – to disturb history and historical perception and to allow history to be revived every time a reader engages with the book. Ezekiel, whether he was a real man or not, is not the main concern in this reading, his persona and the way he is perceived – is. That is to say that Ezekiel functions now as something bigger than a physical prophet, he is a symbol that lives forever in the Jewish/Christian mythological system. We must not forget, the temple of Ezekiel was never constructed, not in our time, nor was it constructed in the time of Hannaniah, son of Hezekiah. On that note, the heterotopia of Ezekiel can be expanded to the entire book, allowing a fundamental discourse break and a real alternative to historical perceptions. Hence, seeking the historical Ezekiel, and the historical events may sometimes camouflage and cast a curtain of smoke on other interpretations and readings.

9.4 Chapters 44.1- 45.8: Gates, People and Leaders

What interest is there for contemporary readers in the vision of a worship community where some people are excluded, the majority are onlookers, a small group does the dirty work, and a very few get all the perks? (Bowen 2010:253)

Bowen's question is in order here, and also targets one of my main questions: why the book of Ezekiel is still a popular book? Block sees in this unit a reason for Christians to rejoice, as he claims in his own words: '(a) they have a mediator superior in quality and effectiveness to Moses and Ezekiel; (b) they have a permanent high priest who has direct access to the heavenly throne of God and who offers perpetual intercession on their behalf; (c) the blood of a perfectly unblemished sacrifice has purchased favor with God, and eliminated the need for any further sacrifices. God has provided a way!' (Block 1998:612-3). This example correlates well with the political function of

the book of Ezekiel – the book is not just an account of the words of the prophet given and written by him or his school etc. It is also a book that offers a new theology and a new way to constitute a society whether its outcome is Jewish, Zionist or Christian. 44.1-3 illustrates well this discourse ordering, the moment Yhwh enters the temple through the eastern gate is also the moment when the gate is closed and will never be opened again. However, only the *Nasi*, is permitted to enter this gate, although he is not allowed to enter it from the way Yhwh was, he still has the right to sit and eat there, hence, being a part of the logoscentrism. The figure of the *Nasi* is inserted in the text in a few places and I will elaborate on his image in due course. This unit also draws the line between all the different personnel that have the authority to work and take part in controlling the discourse.

In this section Ezekiel performs a separation between two groups: the Levites and the Priests, demoting the Levites and promoting the priests to a higher stature. Modern biblical research concerning this subject revolves mainly through Wellhausen's assumption that the separation between the two groups is an invention of ch. 44. Thus P assumes Ezekiel's division, and is later to Ezekiel and his book (Wellhausen 1994:121-55) . The debate over Wellhausen's assumptions continues, and scholars are now challenging this perception by saying that P might have been earlier than Ezekiel 44, and that Ezek. 44 is based upon Num. 16-18 (Duke 1988:73-5; Cook 1995). Milgrom tries to understand the distinction between the Levites and the Priests by arguing that the distinction is actually by Zadokite priests and the non-Zadokite priests. The sins of the Judean priest, the Levites are described in 22.26: *Her priests have violated My Teaching: they have profaned what is sacred to Me, they have not distinguished between the sacred and the profane, they have not taught the difference between the unclean and clean, and they have closed their eyes to My Sabbaths. I am*

profane in their midst. While the Zadokite are singled out for their loyalty in 40.45-46; 43.19; 44.15; 48.18 (Milgrom and Block 2012:147-169).

Yhwh also declares the position of the Priests in 44.23-24:

They shall declare to My people what is sacred and what is profane, and inform them what is clean and what is unclean. In lawsuits, too, it is they who shall act as judges; they shall preserve My teaching and My laws regarding all My fixed occasions; and they shall maintain the sanctity of the Sabbath.

This separation of the Priests from the Levites and from the rest of the world indicates the process of the centralization of the logos in which the discourse has a clear and rigid structure, and now it also has a designated group to manifest it in reality. Moreover, the priests that know the logos, like Ezekiel, are part of the discursive spatial structure of the heterotopia. Yhwh declares that he himself is their holding, *and no portion shall be given them in Israel, for I am their holding* (44.28). After appointing the Priests, Yhwh describes his holy location in which the priests live in the closest proximity to the temple, and the Levites in the second ring.

Apart from creating more boundaries between the groups, as Bowen describes, this hierarchy also teaches the R^I, that his position in this paradigm is minor. Firstly, the gate to the discourse is completely closed and only the *Nasi* is allowed to sit in it. Secondly, Israel is being reminded again of their sins, this time the emphasis is on the inclusion of foreigners in the cult of Yhwh. This proclamation against the house of Israel is a proclamation against the R^I, in stating that the R^I does not yet know the difference between the inside and the outside, and between the correct and wrong knowledge. Moreover, since the discourse is locked in a temple with a central gate that no one has the right to enter, the R^I must confer with the priests to judge him, and convey the discourse in the shape of laws. Laws, as were mentioned (p. 210), where

the tools in which the new male *âme* of the Israelite was constructed. Now, the R¹ learns the identity of the agents of the discourse and the correct speakers. The true speakers have the right to dwell next to the center of the discourse, the logos, Yhwh and the embodiment of Ezekiel. They are different from the rest of the world since they are fully separated by definitions of clothes, marriage and even eating rights. Indeed, as was earlier stated by Zimmerli, Ezekiel drafts a constitution, he orders a discourse, reshapes laws, and creates new speakers – thus granting the juridical male *âme* a sense of order, stability and means of constitution.

We now know the borders of the discourse, its shape, its main gate that only Yhwh will enter once, and that will be closed forever, the correct speakers and agents, and we perceive Ezekiel as the embodiment of the logos. The final ordering of the discourse as a heterotopia continues with the establishment of the *Nasi*.

9.5 Chapters 45.9-46.24: The *Nasi*

The use of the word *Nasi* in the Hebrew Bible outside the book of Ezekiel occurs a hundred and twenty six times.⁶⁷ ‘The identification of *Nasi* mentioned in Ezek. 40-48 is an intriguing issue on which a scholarly consensus has not yet been reached’ Writes Hwang (2009:183). He also argues that the term *Nasi* was used as a referral to a tribal leader, while a king was a leader of a national entity and great empires.

Biblical scholars usually tend to analyze the role and position of the *Nasi* in relation to the history of Israel and Ezekiel’s approach to the institution of monarchy. Duguid for instance argues that the terms *Nasi* and king can be used interchangeably

⁶⁷ Four times in Genesis, four times in Exodus, once in Leviticus, sixty times in Numbers, twelve times in Joshua, twice in Kings, 6 times in Chronicles, once in Ezra, and thirty six times in Ezekiel

and all references to past and future rulers use this term (Duguid 1994:12-31). Stevenson claims that Ezekiel's use in the term *Nasi* and not a king was a claim of Yhwh to establish his sole ownership on the land and nation (Stevenson 1996:123). Block's argument regarding the *Nasi* and the use of the plural form in this unit, is very interesting: 'The plural form *nesiim* proves he is thinking not of the *Nasi* of the future, but of the haunting figures of kings of the past' (Block 1998:655).

Who then is this *Nasi*? It seems that the *Nasi* is a devotee or a layman and not a priest. His responsibility and job description is to organize and take care of the material needs for festivals and holidays (Shabbat, Passover, etc.) in terms of livestock as sacrifices, grain and oil. He has a designated place of worship in the Temple, the eastern gate that is associated with Yhwh and the discourse. However, he may not enter the inner sanctuary and he is subordinate to the priests. In the same note, the *Nasi* is the representative of the people in the cult, or a mediator between the people and the priests. At the same time he is one of the people, and is to be identified with them in their worship. Boyle writes:

While he is a powerful, even pivotal, figure in Ezekiel's plan, the distribution of land holdings to priests, *Nasi* and the tribes works on a system of checks and balances for him. These checks and balances are intended to prevent corruption, intimidation and dispossession on his part since power lays the powerful open to self-advancement at the expense of others. He is not their equal but he is one of the people...No political role is assigned to the *Nasi* in the plan. No such role is needed in a theocratic state... Finally, in the plan, the placement of Temple sanctuary and royal residence are quite distinct. The *Nasi* is not the royal patron or protector of the cult, as was the case with the Davidic kings (1 Kgs. 8)...The *Nasi* emerges from the text then as a powerful figure but one whose role, function and privileges are qualified with regard to the text's principal focus, the identification and preservation of the realm of the sacred (Boyle 2010:15).

Boyle's aspiration to depart from historical context and to examine the role of the *Nasi* according to the text yielded this profound understanding. The *Nasi* is not a

leader, nor do we see here a plan of Ezekiel to undermine the monarchy. Put differently, the *Nasi* is a figure that locks the discourse of the R^I. The discourse is out of reach for the R^I, it is ordered as a sacred well-organized space in which Yhwh dwells in its center. It is locked by gates and only certain groups that are singled out from the rest of the population are allowed to enter its core. The *Nasi* is the link between the people, who are the sign designated to symbolize the R^I, and the discourse, which is the heterotopia of the temple. The *Nasi* is the representative of the R^I, hence his image is his image, and at the same time, he is not the R^I and not equal to him, allowing the R^I to ‘look up’ and to constitute his self accordingly.

‘The *Nasi* has privileged access in the Temple to the sphere of the Lord. If the holy is to be determined and described in Ezekiel’s elaborate plan in terms of location... then the *Nasi* enjoys access in all of these referents to the sacred. He is the principal lay worshipper and cult patron in this theocratic vision of society’ (Boyle 2010:16). However, the *Nasi* is not only a figure, he is an element in the R^I *âme*. The *Nasi* reflects the divinity in the R^I *âme* and functions as the link and connection between the well-constituted Israelite self and Yhwh. The *Nasi* does not have any part with the law, regulations and orders. He does not judge or purify the temple, however he can eat in the eastern gate right by Yhwh. The *Nasi* is a tool and a symbol in the new discourse, designated for the reader to identify with, and when he sits in the eastern gate so does the R^I. Hence, the R^I is not as minor as he may seem, since he has the *Nasi* to act as his mythological symbol in the utopia of Ezekiel, thus completing the creation of the new Israelite male *âme* and the constitution of new Israel at its new heart.

9.6 Chapters 47-48: All-Male Heaven

This marvelous picture of renewal would have stirred the heart of any true Israelite, especially one who had lived through the desolation of Judah and spent many years in exile (Block 1998:690).

This statement demonstrates not only the importance of these two chapters but also of the entire Ezekielien discourse. Who is this *true* Israelite and who actually lived in exile?

Ezekiel is being led again, this time to the area outside the boundaries of the temple, towards the river of life and the new Promised Land. From the main gate of the temple Ezekiel sees a small stream, starting at ankle deep and every thousand units becoming deeper and deeper in a geometrical fashion. This small stream that becomes a mighty river nourishes the entire land. Trees grow along its banks, endless amount of fish swim in it, providing a plentiful source of food, until eventually the river purifies the Dead Sea and renders it ‘wholesome’, וְנִרְפְּאוּ הַמַּיִם (47.8). The vision of the river ends with another description of the trees, this time they bear fruit every month (47.12b). The reason for these miraculous trees is the source of the river that has metaphysical qualities. The river flows from the temple, represented as the logocentrism that is closed by walls, located on the higher mountain, to the rest of the land. There is no need any longer to warn the R^I since his old subjectivity was fully purged, cleansed, and purified. All the feminine deviant elements in the R^I *âme* perished and all that is left for the process to be completed, is the nourishment of the land. In this case – the river nourishes the land, in which its source is the all-male temple. The stream of life is indeed a *malestream* (p. 44). The vision continues to describe the borders of the land (47.13-21) and its allocation to the twelve tribes (48.1-29), followed by the naming of the twelve gates of the city (48.30-34) and the

naming of the new city 48.35 - *the name of the city from that day on shall be "The LORD Is There."* Thus completing the process of the reconstitution of the male *âme*.

Scholars mainly analyze the connection between this unit and the Zion and Eden traditions (Wevers 1969:207-10; Zimmerli 1983:510-12; Eichrodt 1970:584-6; Bowen 2010:262-3; Block 1998:699-703; Darr 1987). However, a different theme can be discussed – the connection between the geometrical river and the river Chebar and the shape of Yhwh. In 1.1 Ezekiel is at the River Chebar in exile, there he sees the first vision of Yhwh and also the image of his god. While 47.1-13 are described in a very calm fashion, chapter 1 is highly unsettled:

1.4 a stormy wind came sweeping out of the north— a huge cloud and flashing fire, surrounded by a radiance; and in the center of it, in the center of the fire, a gleam as of amber.

1.13 with them was something that looked like burning coals of fire. This fire, suggestive of torches, kept moving about among the creatures; the fire had a radiance, and lightning issued from the fire.

The differences in rhythm and style between these two visions do not only calm the reader and reassure his restoration, they also calm Yhwh and his image. In exile, Yhwh's image was disturbed, described as mighty animals, and that the sound of their wings was a sound of gushing water or of an army (1.24). In 47.1-13 Yhwh does not need to be loud or dramatic, his new temple is restored, he dwells in the city that bears his name and his discourse is geometrically shaped. His form has also changed, from half animal half human, onto an abstract shape, manifested as life and abundance. We may indeed find allusions between 47.1-13 and the Zion tradition in Psalms 46 and the Eden narrative of Gen. 2.10-14. However, continuing the line of chs. 40-48 as a heterotopian account with relation to the rest of the book yields the

understanding that the geometrical notion of this unit and 47.1-13 was meant to restore the connection between Yhwh and his land. Yhwh that was created throughout the book now needs to be ordered and finally settled. He cannot be in peace without his land, as he also noted in 43.7: *this is the place of My throne and the place for the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the people Israel forever*. The land, or the spatial perception of the land is an important element in the construction of the new discourse and the new *âme*. Whereas Ezekiel is moving from place to a place, being carried to Jerusalem, or sitting in his home, Yhwh is unstable as he seeks a place to rest his feet. The connection between the people of Israel, the land of Israel and Yhwh is just like a Equilateral triangle – all verticals and angles are equally important and none of them can stand alone.

Assuming that chs. 40-48 are a vision and not an historical account, this heterotopia functions in the mythological experience of the reader by teaching him that he is a part of the perfect triangle, and for his salvation he must assume all verticals and keep them aligned. The Heterotopia as a self-reflexive element can be viewed in Block's statement that was given earlier. Although the Promised Land has clear and defined borders it does not need to be physically manifested for one to call his *self* – Israel. Likewise the exile, one does not need to be in Babylon in order to say that he was in exile, all he has to do is to imagine – just like the quote of Block that was given above, and just like Eichrodt's statement:

The same may be said, finally, about the breadth of the picture outlined here. The return of paradise, apparently at present limited to Palestine, is of its very nature a universal event embracing the whole world. So we may take it for granted without further demonstration that Palestine is a part that stands for the whole... What happens here spells a decisive change for the whole human race, as has already come to view in Gen. 12.3. But the prophets realize that if this is to happen at all it must first happen in Israel, and that they have been called for the main purpose of helping to bring it about (Eichrodt 1970:585).

It seems that both Eichrodt and Block see themselves as part of this new Israel even though they do not live in the physical boundaries of the Promised Land. Eichrodt sees his self as part of this new Palestine, and Block speaks of the true Israelite, while implying to true Israel. Doty in his book *Mythography* discusses the way people subscribe to myths and writes that Myths lead the person to participate in them and to see myths as part of his own self. “We are what me myth” and we are always in the process of becoming another realization of our potential selfhood, another enactment of the deities within (Doty 2000:56). Zion, heaven, Israel and Yhwh – it is all a part of the *myththems* that the R accepts and embraces as bricks in the structure of his *âme* – *Heterotopia* is just another technology in this everlasting process.

Another element that needs to be discussed here is the reference to the aliens in 47.22-23.⁶⁸ Bowen writes that ‘Aliens were those who, for a variety of reasons, had separated themselves from clan and home and placed themselves under the legal protection of others’, and continues and argues that aliens were some sort of guest workers together with widows and orphans (according to Deut. 24.17, 19-22; 26.11-13). The aliens can work in Israel but they cannot practice the Israelite religion there (Bowen 2010:264-5). Treating this unit in a historical perspective is likely to yield this assumption, but we can view the aliens also from a different perspective. Referring back to the friend-enemy paradigm that was presented earlier (p. 248), the cultural symbol of the alien functions here as a border from within. We cannot assume that 47.22 calls for assimilation of the aliens but to acceptance: *Strangers who reside among you, who have begotten children among you. You shall treat them as Israelite*

⁶⁸ Or in Hebrew גֵּרִים

citizens. Once the borders are fixed, and the city is well planned and guarded by twelve gates with the names of the tribes of Israel, it is easier then to form a border from within. In contrast to Jerusalem that fornicated with the strangers and thus lead to the destruction of the temple, this time the discourse is organized, fixed and excluded. This environment allows the R^I to counteract future invasions in the name of Israel – a highly sophisticated technic of exclusion. The alien or the foreigner may well be treated as one of us, but this element will always be alien to the name Israel, as something that needs to be accepted and not assimilated with. It functions as the sign that carries all the qualities that are not Israelites, more so, this alien has no right to be a part of the discourse or to be constituted according to it. The Aliens are the stop sign for the R^I, signifying to him where his community ends.

The aliens close the borders sketching process; the R^I has an inner border that he may not cross, since now he knows that although the aliens may be accepted, they will never be Israel. For high above, on the highest mountain, there lies a city, and at its heart, a well-constructed, well-ordered and guarded temple. A river of life nourishes the land and gives fruits and food for all eternity. And above all, rises the name of the master that has been carefully constructed with the active participation of the reader throughout the book. For the capital has a name that no one can break and no one can alter – ‘Yhwh is there’, יהוה שמה.

9.7 History and the Passion to be Israel: Theory Revisited

The analysis of this unit via heterotopia allows a better understanding of its theological perspectives. The well-organized spatial planning does not only create a new Promised Land, city and a temple, it also, or perhaps primarily creates an identity. For thirty nine chapters the R^I, its leaders and the discourse that enables its constitution, were shaped in a violent process of purging, eradication and cleansing of

the deviant feminine elements in the *âme* that represents all that is not Israel – in all aspects, from within and from without. Chs. 40-48 with its heterotopian style, allows the reader to accept a new pure and clean *âme* that is shaped as the land of Israel and nourished by the abundant river of the temple of Yhwh.

Every question of ‘where’ requires the question of ‘according to whom’. In different words, space implicates perspective, and thus it also involves identity. Consider: who is a Yehudite? An ally of Jerusalem leaders? A devotee of temple worship? A loyal Persian vassal? A consumer of Greek goods? A cousin of someone a few villages over? Identity is always problematic and always contested and conflictual...It is an extension of self over against the world and the other, and often space is part of this extension...All of these interrelationships are spatial and social; thus, they are all involved in the production of identity. Each identity element is a spatial practice; each could be mapped, if anything could be mapped (Berquist 2002:24-5).

Indeed, the R¹ is mapped and his face is the face of the land (p. 215). R¹ is a part of a Pan-Israel, a name that connotes a nation that despite having a physical geographical location with clear borders, can still function as an imaginary location, a myth or a tool that is intended to contribute to the formation of the self. Just like the date in this unit that proclaims a certain moment in time, but actually leads to eternity or to a non-historical history, so does space. It is very real, with borders, geographical points and natural elements, but it exists and does not exist at the same time, therefore allows an R¹ to create his self, according to historical needs. The spatial description of Israel permits the reader to identify with the geographical location, and to subscribe to the notion of Israel, regardless of whether it physically exists or not. The new allocation of the land to the twelve tribes and its new borders negates the old Israel in the form of Judah, and creates an Israel that bears within its name. The past, the present, and the future.

A Few aspects of substitutions are exercised here. First, Jerusalem is dead and there is no need to talk more about her. She is replaced by Yhwh while the city and the temple become an all-male discourse. This is in contrast to the temple in chs. 8-11, this time there are no fornications or prayers to different deities and there are no women in site. Moreover, the temple becomes the spatial figure of logocentrism. As discussed (p. 40), logocentrism indicates that the discourse and the sayings in the discourse have a center of thought, and that this center is metaphysical. The spatial arrangement of the temple demonstrates how this notion is manifested; 'knowledge is also the space in which the subject may take up a position and speak of the objects with which he deals in his discourse'(Foucault 2003:140). This space that was formed in the book of Ezekiel is rather rigid with clear borders and a core that the R^I cannot enter. However, the discourse, that from now on the R^I does not have an option to control or shape, is the eternal source of his nourishment and the good new laws. Another substitution is the notion of the enemy and the foreign. In the unit of the OAN, the foreign nations were punished due to their lack of acceptance of the supremacy of Yhwh (p. 224). In this unit it almost seems that Israel lives alone with no references to the other nations. The other nations were substituted by the 'aliens', these people that have the right to work, live, inherent inhabit, and dwell do not have any right to practice the new laws and discourse, thus deepening the notion of center and margins. From now on, Pan-Israel does not have any enemies and all that opposed the supremacy of Yhwh becomes a part of his discourse, an element designated to highlight the center and the *âme*.

Block writes:

Ezekiel gives no hint anywhere of expanding his horizons. He is concerned exclusively with the salvation of his people. Aliens are welcome in the community of faith (cf. 47:22-23), but only as they integrate into the physical people of Yhwh.

Ezekiel's city is open to the twelve tribes of Israel; he is silent on admission to anyone else. But for John the boundaries of the covenant have been burst wide open. Entrance to the city is gained through the gates of the twelve tribes, but the kingdom of God rests on the foundation of the twelve apostles (Block 1998:741) .

The theology of substitution offered by Block could not have been exercised without this unit s, and the process of the creation of the new Israelite *âme* in general. Whether Ezekiel meant to create a physical, ethnical all excluded Israel is not the main notion of analysis here. However, this new pure male eternal Pan-Israel, created in the book, is so powerful that it allowed the construction of new theologies and new religions, and of political, religious groups.

The new image of Israel presented here allows the reader to subscribe to the name Israel, to put his faith in the new supreme dominator and to be nourished by his river of knowledge and abundance. The R^I does not need to be in a physical land or at a certain point in time to be called Israel – all he needs is to read this book and to take part in the process of his constitution by accepting the new myths and truths that shape his human mythological/imagined/metaphysical and physical experience – just like Block has so well demonstrated.

10. I am What I am: A Personal Conclusion

The Hebrew Bible has been a part of my existence from the moment I was born. In my parents' house it was laid on the shelf, rarely if ever used, but nevertheless, was considered the holiest of all books. In my second grade, when I started to study the Hebrew Bible, in my Israeli secular elementary school, I took part in a ceremony in which we were all in white, and received a revised edition of the book of Genesis for children. In the seventh grade I took part in an international bible contest, finishing first in my city and region but not enough to qualify for the national level. In the eleventh grade I had to memorize the Hebrew Bible over and over again, and to write an essay on the image of man in the Hebrew Bible – all in order to pass the final matriculation exams. I can still recite the lamentation of David over Saul and Jonathan, since it was I who recited it on every Memorial Day for the Israeli soldiers in my high school. My final substantial encounter with the Hebrew Bible was in the oath taking ceremony of the Israeli army, with a rifle in one hand, a Bible in the other, all in front of the Wailing Wall, thus connecting all aspects of my normalized Israeli identity. As for most Israelis, the Hebrew Bible was then put aside, and became an object that I did not live by, nor did I really know what exactly was written there. However, whether I was aware of it or not, it still affected my life then, and it continues to affect it today.

My BA was not in biblical studies but in Jewish philosophy and French studies. At the end of the three-year degree I noticed that although these two fields did not concern the Hebrew Bible, it was still present in their fundamental structure. Only then did I understand that the Hebrew Bible is not only Israeli and certainly not only religious, but one of the foundations of western thought. I also realized that when I

read the Hebrew Bible, which is written in my mother tongue, I read it as an Israeli, therefore assuming my identity accordingly, not realizing that many other identities assume the same.

Thus came this research. I did not want to examine the book of Ezekiel, nor Ezekiel or Yhwh, but the reader and the discourse that allows its construction. When I am saying reader, I do not speak about an abstract one but me, me and you. I tried to accept and reject at the same time the subscription to the text, to allow myself to fully immerse in the discourse so I could criticize it while assuming my identity by it. The political, or the so-called reality is bigger than the total sum of the objects that construct it. In this manner, I believe that no one can understand or claim to understand reality without telling his/her story, without being aware of his/her origins, parameters of identity or voice. Most importantly, without listening to others. Only then can we understand the discourse, and change it in cases where it promotes subjugation.

In the first part I showed how discourse is being shaped in the book of Ezekiel, and how the persona of Ezekiel is used in order to establish an author-function. The discourse has clear borders, limitations and a watchtower. In this section the reader who already has a history and an identity, takes part in its erasure and emerges in the discourse formation process. The reader becomes an agent of the book and of its ideology. In the second unit I discussed how the book of Ezekiel revamps the knowledge and the different metaphors so it can construct a new Israelite male. Biblical scholars, especially male, took part in this process, assuming without questioning their position according to the text. These scholars never stopped to think about the meaning of such horrifying punishments to the metaphorized woman and ignored their moral implications; all under the pretext that one cannot seek a different

textual meaning since the meaning is historical. The language of male scholars thus became the language of truth, a centralized discourse in which any attempt to undermine it was considered as wrong or childish.

The strong violent pornography that is presented in this unit achieved its purpose.

This departure point of the new male Israelite, which was built on the remains of the feminine, paved the way for biblical scholars, in the units to follow in order to fully assume the New Israel, whether they were Jewish or Christians.

In one of the conferences I attended, I discussed with a colleague the future and the place of biblical studies in the academy. She claimed that the Hebrew Bible has one main problem, the people who do not read it regard the bible a sacred book and do not really bother to understand why it is sacred, and those who do read it view it in a secular academic way, thus ignoring its religious aspects. She concluded that in our time and age, the Hebrew Bible does not have any real influence on society. I disagreed with both assumptions. Firstly, biblical scholars (not all of course), while claiming to be objective and 'scientific', are still treating the biblical text in a somehow religious manner, and whether they conceal it or not, to some extent biblical studies has not left the domain of theology. Secondly, the Hebrew Bible, even if it is not read by most of the population, still predominates their experience and is part of the political order.

A Young Educated Arab

Roughly seven years ago I was working on my MA on the book of Judges and the masculinization process of the different judges. I was a very enthusiastic young student who was carried away by the highly complex Samson saga, by the unique character of Gideon, and by the unbearable tragedy of Jephthah and his daughter. Every evening, about two hours before the closing time of the library in Tel Aviv

University, I used to go and buy the last cup of coffee. One evening I came later than usual, and the coffee place right next to the library was already closed. Behind the counter was a young student; one hand was cleaning while the other was holding a thick anatomy book. He too, just like me, was fully occupied studying.

‘The place is closed’, he said to me, and I stood in front him, begging without words for him to serve me a cup of coffee, already considering turning around and leaving.

‘No, come back, I’ll make you some coffee; you are lucky that I did not finish cleaning the machine. Don’t you worry, I will make you a strong coffee, on the house, I know how difficult it is to use the mind so late at night’.

I was touched by his kind and rare human gesture and I wanted to stay with him while drinking my coffee.

What do you study? I asked.

‘Medicine’, he answered with his Arabic accent. ‘And you?’ He replied.

Masters in Biblical Studies, I answered.

‘Bible?’ He asked, ‘no coffee’, he smiled and gave me the cup.

He smiled, and bid me goodbye, but I knew that he was not really kidding. As a biblical researcher, all I have is words and texts, and I saw the text between us: ‘Bible? No coffee!’ These three words formed a text, a context and a subtext. This young Arab who is sometimes constituted in the Jewish state as the other or the enemy from within, saw in me something that I did not realize until that moment – he saw my political function in the Israeli discourse, and from a student who sees himself as radical, I thus became another Zionist agent.

Most Israelis know the context in which a young Arab lives in Israel: most of the job opportunities in the free market are out of reach for him. The majority of Jewish landlords will not accept him as their tenant and many positions in the Jewish

governmental institutions are out of his reach. As a result, many Arabs in Israel turn to medicine.

In the year 2010 The Israeli parliament researched the status of Arabs in the governmental employment sector such as in education and health services. In its statistics we can witness a higher number of Arabs in health services, higher than any other number in the rest of the sectors, and close to their general rate in the general population. However, the chairman of the committee closed the briefing in a less optimistic note: 'I believe that these figures do not reflect the will of the Israeli government for a better representation of Arabs in its institution, but mainly point to the lack of human resources'.⁶⁹

And here is the context, did the young Arab actually dream of becoming a doctor? This we will not know, however, we do know that choosing to become a doctor is the best option available for Arabs to climb the social ladder.

When he shared his narrative, I wanted to share with him that I was also an Israeli from a disadvantaged background. I was born to a poor family that lived in social housing in a poor city. I was never taken to after school programs. My mother had only finished elementary school (according to the law in her time), and none of my extended family members has ever been to a university. I wanted to tell him all of this but I did not, because I knew that no matter how disadvantaged I considered myself, I was still Jewish, and this identity would forever place me in a higher position than his. I did not continue my work that night. Instead I returned to the library and gazed at the rows of books, at the cement walls of the library – a brutalist architecture building, representing the strength of the new and young Jewish nation. From the windows of

⁶⁹ The figures and the conclusion can be found in the official site of the Knesset: <http://oknesset.org/committee/meeting/5192/>

the library I saw the Diaspora Museum, which has as its slogan ‘The Story of Every Jew’, and where this encounter had taken place.

That night I counted my privileges, I have two: I am Jewish and I am a Man. Then I counted his. It was one - he is a Man. As a man he is more privileged than his sister, and she, in her turn, is more privileged than a Palestinian living under the occupation, since she has the right to vote, get elected and so forth. That was the moment when I realized that the study that I am conducting is political, and although it has a scientific aura, it is never objective and always serves a purpose. Therefore, we must first comprehend the political/theological value of our study before its academic one. My understanding that night was that the Hebrew Bible is everywhere, especially in Israel, even if it is camouflaged by cultural aspects. In other words: We should not claim that we convey a meaning or examine a meaning, but we should first ask, what we do? What are my performatives?

Others may perceive my research as an attempt to overthrow modern biblical research altogether, but this is not my goal. I do believe that modern biblical research can still contribute to our understanding of the Hebrew Bible and the biblical text, but scholars must realize that this is only one possible avenue out of an infinite amount. Biblical scholars, any scholar, you and I, should not strive to find the historical truth or the primal meaning, nor should we seek the origin of things. We must not look for the truth of the text since it is nothing but a political end in a long complex process of power/knowledge. We are indeed scholars and researchers, but we are also theologians, we read and write theology. Therefore, I wish to offer here what feminist scholars have offered over the years – the understanding that there is no such thing as a unified textual truth, and instead of seeking for this truth, we should worry more about the inter-human relations, and strive to build a better society, while

understanding that words have power. Moreover, by assuming the definition ‘theology’, we can be more honest with our research. Then we can start analyzing new ways and shapes of religion in the twenty-first century, whether it is political theology, cultural theology, national theology, or even philosophical theology. Understanding that each and every one of us is a construct of a political/theological process, and that the way we think, act, analyze and grasp is not a unique thinking but a direct outcome of our political environment (whether it is supporting or opposing it), is the first step to take before analyzing the text.

An objective clean text does not and never has existed. Every text is a myriad of thoughts and political actions and every text, once it comes in contact with the researcher may produce new political acts, thus every text has a context and subtext. If a context and especially the subtext become a source of subjugation and suppression then we must fight it, change it, create a different subtext or oppose the existing one.

Giving the reader such an important role in the decoding of the book of Ezekiel does not necessarily mean that the reader is the prime target of this work. I aimed in this work to contribute and encourage researchers to examine the biblical text in ways that are relevant to philosophy and to interdisciplinary studies in order to enhance the Bible’s relevance for contemporary life, society and readers. While Masculinities Studies, and the studies of the formation of the term ‘man’ is a fast developing field, and while poststructuralist approaches to different fields of studies are heavily used, their application to biblical literature is scanty. Using poststructuralist approaches, philosophical methods and the application of political theory and political theology on the biblical text may not only enrich us with new

understandings but will also promote a much needed act – the evaluation of biblical research itself and the reexamination of its knowledge (power) production.

This dissertation is a modest beginning, an attempt to fill this void.

The different theories used in this dissertation can of course be utilized on other texts, such an example is given in the appendix: The Daughter of Jephthah and the female sacrifice (p. 311).

The Bible is still a very important book in western society and can still help constitute subordination and marginalization of others, especially of women and LGBT persons. Deconstructing then reconstructing images of biblical Man, Maleness, Male, God, leadership, filial relations, spatial conceptions, woman and the feminine, reader subscription and beliefs, is my way, as a marginalized minority to resist. It is commonly agreed nowadays that everything is ideological and political. Text interpretation is a political act, writing a PhD is a political act too; this PhD is my scholarly act but also, to be sure, political, act.

Appendixes

Judg. 10.7-12: The Female Bride of Yhwh

The book of Judges with its well-organized editorial scheme (Amit 1999) may be viewed as a well-constructed manifesto of myths of masculinities and a mythological credo of how to be an Israelite Man and what the organization of the male-god matrix should be. In this matrix and its complicated relationship between the Man and its God, the woman and her feminine qualities serves as a tool and a product in the all-masculine economy.

The book of Judges may be perceived as a book that depicts a chaos of masculinities with images of men that constantly fail to perform in a coherent *manly* manner, and consequently to rule over the land and their people. Moreover, every judge has a unique relationship with Yhwh and each one of the judges is infused with his spirit in one way or other. The story of Jephthah and his daughter is no different.

The Jephthah cycle is not just a story about Israel's sins, the punishment and salvation. It is a story of divine jealousy, betrayal, repentance and purification in the form of female sacrifice. More than being a story about Jephthah and his daughter, it is a story of a mythological connection between the male and his male god and of the woman representing the element of this connection.

Ch. 10 (without the tale of the minor judges 10.1-10.5) functions as theological introduction to the second part of the book of Judges (Boling 1975:193; Soggin 1987:203-7). The Israelites are doing wrong in front of Yhwh and Yhwh, as a punishment sends the Philistines and the Ammonites on them.

The depiction of the sins of the Israelites in the Jephthah cycle is unique to the book of Judges:

The Israelites again did what was offensive to the LORD. They served the Baalim and the Ashtaroth, and the gods of Aram, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the Ammonites, and the gods of the Philistines; they forsook the LORD and did not serve Him. 10.6

The rest of the introductions to the different cycles of Judges are usually summed up by one or two deities: Othniel (3.7) Baalim and the Asheroth; Ehud (3.12) did offensives in general; Deborah (4.1) offensives in general; Gideon (6.1) offensives in general; Abimelech (8.33) Baal; Samson (13.1) Offensives in general. While the Israelites in the rest of the stories did wrongs, in the Jephthah cycle it seems that they completely abandoned Yhwh, almost like a divorce, a complete breach of the union. The ensuing punishment is as harsh as the offensives:

That year they battered and shattered the Israelites — for eighteen years — all the Israelites beyond the Jordan, in [what had been] the land of the Amorites in Gilead (10.18).

Only twice does the verb **רָעַע** appear in the Hebrew Bible, in this verse and in Ex. 15.6. according to the BDB the meaning of the verb is to shatter or smite (BDB 1996:950), a harsh punishment and stronger than the rest of the cases. The Israelites then turn back to Yhwh and ask for forgiveness but Yhwh does not agree. In a hurtful tone he tells them: *Yet you have forsaken Me and have served other gods. No, I will not deliver you again* (10.13). The Israelites try to correct their ways by removing the statues of the alien gods, but Yhwh does not change his mind (10.16b).

This unique dialog between Israel and Yhwh may be perceived as a dialog between partners: a loyal husband that always protect his wife, and a deceitful woman that always disappoints her husband and lives a promiscuous life. Moreover, the dialog is a direct dialog between Israel and Yhwh, and can only be found again in

Judg. 1-3. At the end of the dialog, the Israelites find themselves alone without a masculine husband/deity to protect them. This broken relationship is the key to understanding of the Japheth cycle. Israel, a divorced and dispelled wanton, is in search of a new man that may lead her, the search yields a very interesting outcome – the son of a whore.

Chapter 11 starts with a short description of Jephthah: *Jephthah the Gileadite was an able warrior, who was the son of a prostitute*. Due to this fact Jephthah was exiled from his land and did not have the right to inherit the lands. Jephthah thus moves to the land of Tob and gathers with him men of low character. In this sense, the cultural signification of Jephthah is as someone who is beyond the law, a non-Israelite in whose characteristics are derived from a promiscuous relationship. We also know that Jephthah is an able warrior. These two elements are key foundations for the understanding of Jephthah's act. Jephthah's answer to the elders of Israel is that if Yhwh delivers the Ammonites, then he will be a leader over Israel, and the use of Jephthah in diplomacy continues to build Jephthah's character. It also may indicate his design to accept ruling over the Israelites and guide them through war. Jephthah's arguments to the foreign kings may also be perceived as arguments to the R: the right over the land is a divine right that was given by Yhwh himself, therefore no one can take ownership over the land since it is part of Yhwh's domain. The Heterotopia depicted as Yhwh's land is that which allows the R to understand that being part of the land denotes also the acceptance of Yhwh's rules, hence, the deportation of Jephthah from the land could also be regarded as a breach of this understanding.

The foreign kings refuse to accept the Yhwhist paradigm, and the war is about to ensue. Yhwh immediately joins forces with Jephthah and his spirit comes upon him, (11.29b) a moment before Jephthah's offensive he makes a vow:

“If you deliver the Ammonites into my hands: then whatever comes out of the door of my house to meet me on my safe return from the Ammonites shall be the LORD’s and shall be offered by me as a burnt offering.” (11.30-31)

This vow connects Jephthah and the reader with his god, the R that reads this text, and thus is in a process of identification with different models of Israel. The R knows that the connection between Yhwh and the Israelites is more than an agreement, it is also a marital covenant, and the sacrifice that Jephthah is willing to make is a gift to this lord, maybe even a peace offering. The tragic outcome of this vow is the sacrifice of Jephthah’s daughter, since she was the first one to come out of the house (11.34).

Whether Jephthah meant in his vow a human sacrifice or an animal was much debated. Boling for example claims that houses in the biblical era were built in such a way that they also allowed a passage for animals, thus we can assume that Jephthah believed that an animal would come out of the house, while making his vow (Boling 1975:208). Boling’s explanation in my view is an attempt to launder the text and is not sufficient. In the book of Judges we may witness a promise of Caleb to give his daughter away to any man that will capture Kiriath-sepher (1.12). In this manner, the promise of handing over the daughter to a different man is securing the patriarchal line and the chain of masculinities. The woman is the price and the prize (see also Klein 1993:20-6). Moreover, sixty six times the word לַקְרָאָה followed by a pronominal suffix appears in the Hebrew Bible, only once does it imply an animal (the lion in the Samson saga 14.5), a fact that may lead us to the understanding that Jephthah did mean a human sacrifice. Bal also claims that Boling wishes to promote a more subtle interpretation to the text (Bal 1988:45).

The vow of Jephthah may be in masculine form, but we can see here a standard grammatical form in Hebrew. Thus, even while referring to a woman, Jephthah gave his vow in a general masculine way (Trible 1981:61). It is custom in the Hebrew Bible for women to wait for their men or to watch from the window (Judg. 5.28; 2 Sam. 6.16; 2 Kng. 9.30; Prob. 7.6), and a woman comes out of Jephthah's house and greets him indeed. Why then, did Jephthah want to sacrifice a woman to his lord? Jephthah could have canceled his vow despite his saying what he said to his daughter (11.35), his word could have been broken in the same way that Yhwh changed his mind and did not let Abraham kill Isaac (Gen 12.22). However, it was not the case in the story of the daughter of Jephthah, she goes to the mountains, cries for her virginity and asks her father to do to her as he had promised his god (11.39).

The sacrifice of the daughter of Jephthah, the nameless woman is thus two folded.

In the act of the sacrifice, Jephthah is handing over a woman to Yhwh, thus strengthening Yhwh's masculinities. Jephthah might have been sad over his only daughter's death, and he may have wanted to sacrifice one of his wives or other women, but by sacrificing his daughter, Jephthah reestablishes the marital metaphor between Yhwh and his people. In the beginning of the cycle, Yhwh, the abandoned god left the Israelites for their promiscuous acts and agreed to reunite with them only when the Israelites sacrificed themselves to him in the shape of a pure docile virgin. At the beginning of the cycle, the Israelites cried to Yhwh: *Do to us as You see fit; only save us this day!* (10.15), and Yhwh indeed did as he saw fit; he wanted Israel to repent:

The victim is not a substitute for some particularly endangered individual, nor is it

offered up to some individual of particularly blood thirsty temperament. Rather, it is a substitute for all the members of the community, offered up by the members themselves. The sacrifice serves to protect the entire community from *its own* violence; it prompts the entire community to choose victims outside itself. The elements of dissension scattered throughout the community are drawn to the person of the sacrificial victim and eliminated, at least temporarily, by its sacrifice (Girard 1977:8).

Indeed, the daughter of Jephthah was sacrificed to divert violence and to promote social order. Whether the daughter was sacrificed or not has no importance, and the story should be examined on the mythical level. Scholars such as Boling wanted to salvage the text and examine the persona of Jephthah more than that of his daughter. By so doing, they neglected the martial metaphor in the text, even if it is not directly present as in Ezek. 16 and 23, and only echoed. Fuchs calls to examine the role of the daughter instead (Fuchs 1989), however, her justified search for justice neglected another character in the story - Yhwh and his role in this matrix of masculinities.

The daughter of Jephthah in this story is a representation of Israel; she represents the step that the Israelites are willing to take in order for them to return to the covenant. The daughter is an offspring of a man that was born out of harlotry; her father is a precise allegory of the Israelites. However, she is pure, a virgin, who kept her virginity until the day she was burnt at the stake. She is the pure image of Israel that Yhwh wants to own, and Yhwh accepts his prize and his price. Just like the metaphorical woman of the book of Ezekiel - In her death the nameless woman gave the Israelites life. The nameless daughter gave them another opportunity to be part of the all male matrix. She was the sacrifice that needed to be made for Yhwh to accept the Israelites. She is the woman element of the covenant between the man and his god. Moreover, she is the sacrifice that Jephthah needed to make in order for him to be a part of Israel again, Since reclaiming the land is not enough, one needs to be part of the land and part of the covenant at the same time.

The second aspect of the sacrificial act is the lesson for women, the same as was for the women in Ezek. 23. In this case, women must always follow their father's word, even if the outcome is severe, after all, let us not forget, the sacrificial act of the daughter became the convention in Israel (11.39).

Was the sacrificial act sufficient to correct the damaged relationship between Yhwh and his people? It does not seem so, however, it created a myth that functions in the Israelite's *âme*, a feminine element that serves as the representation of the (also sexual/erotic) relationship between the Israelite man and his god.

Yet again the woman is a commodity in the all-male economy, she may be used for his needs, and may be dispensed. Sometimes she has no name, sometimes no voice, sometimes neither. However, she is crucial for the male matrix, since she is the missing sexual link in the covenant of these two males, the earthly and the heavenly.

Like the daughters of Israel, we remember and mourn the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite. In her death we are all diminished; by our memory she is forever hallowed (Trible 1981:67).

Appendix 1: Logos, Grammatology, Voice and Misreading

The concept of the author as a function, as a ‘malestream’, a central thinking as opposed to Hebraic thinking, points to anti-logocentric thinking. Logocentrism was first coined by the German philosopher Ludwig Klages (1954).⁷⁰ Klages showed that the West thinks in the Platonic manner, in which our presence in the world is mediated, and that for a structure to hold itself it must assume an original, a metaphysical object whose representation is the logos.

Philosophers, especially Derrida, used Klages’ term extensively. For Derrida logocentrism is the tendency to centralize the meaning of all signs and to create at the same time a ‘transcendental signified’, a metaphysical logos that will function as the ultimate central ‘meaning’. In this manner the logos will no longer refer to anything other than itself, and will function as a self-sufficient center that all reference will denote and nothing will be able to escape it. *Logocentrism*, writes Backman, ‘is the desire of discursive thought to transcend discursive structures in order to arrive at a point at which the basic contextualizing movement of discourse—the endless “deferral” (différance) in which meanings always turn out to be constituted by references to other meanings, those meanings in turn referring to others—would cease and be consummated in an immediate disclosure of the non-referential and undeferred presence of an absolute meaning. In this sense, “logocentrism” is another name for “ontotheology”’ (Backman 2012:70). Defined otherwise and in a much less complex manner, logocentrism is the seal of the discourse. It moves the statements to the

⁷⁰ Since the book is in German I used the article of Backman ‘Logocentrism and the Gathering’ for the translation of the idea and its analysis.

avenues that it forms, and locks the discourse according to its 'logic', rendering other statements as not important. To control the discourse, one must transcend its authority, hence the Text-Author-God paradigm.

Another notion of Derrida, well connected to the idea of logocentrism, is 'phonocentrism' – voice or speech is superior to the written word and comes before the written word. Western thinking seeks the source of any text and its authenticity will always refer to the spoken voice behind the text and thus to its authority. Derrida writes that speech cannot be prior to writing because any kind of speech already presupposes the existence of a linguistic system in which it participates. Derrida's 'grammatology' offers a different writing, to end the book and to begin with writing, writing that will cease to signify the signifier, that will no longer promote an origin and will deconstruct any notion of Center/God.

The Bible and Derrida

The Literary Guide to the Bible of 1987, excluded deconstruction, arguing that deconstruction is 'an unsympathetic approach to reading biblical literature' (Derrida 1976:3-5, 6-26). An issue of *Semeia* (Alter and Kermode 1987:5-6) devoted to Derrida 'talked about rather than did deconstruction', says Greenstein (Detweiler 1982). Although almost twenty years have passed since Greenstein's article 'Deconstruction and Biblical Narrative', aside from Sherwood's works, *A Biblical Text and Its Afterlives* (Greenstein 1989:44), *Derrida's Bible* (Sherwood 2000) and *Derrida and Religion* (Sherwood 2004) and a few more articles, not much has changed in the biblical world; and the act of deconstruction still seems to be somehow suppressed by modern mainstream, 'malestream' biblical scholars.⁷¹

⁷¹ Works such as: Elata-Alster and Salmon:1989 'The Deconstruction of Genre in the Book of Jonah'. Moore: 2007, 'A Modest Manifesto for New Testament Library'. Coleridge: 1992, 'In 319

The main work of Derrida on the Hebrew Bible was his essay 'Des Tours de Babel' (Sherwood and Hart 2005) in which he analyzed the story of the tower of Babel. For Derrida, the narrative of Babel (Gen 11) is the narrative of narratives, the metanarrative. According to Derrida, the Semitic family, the people of Babel wanted to have a name for themselves that would create their *selves* and would be a name of a place and a name of a language. God punished Babel for their attempt to create logocentrism, to form a hegemony that would impose itself on the rest of the world.

God's punishment is to 'confuse' the name Babel; out of his jealousy he destroys the tower, creates confusion and dismantles the Semitic family; moreover he imposes his name on the city of Babel, and thus Derrida creates a linkage between Yhwh and Babel. At the same time that the name Babel marks Yhwh's name, it also marks confusion, where people can no longer understand each other and translation will always be needed.

From Writing to Reading

The last critic who I would like to present in this preface is Paul de Man, especially his understanding of reading. Almost all of de Man's work concerns the act and the question of reading. Reading for de Man is not just the act itself but the entire human experience as sensation, experience, and every human act whatsoever (Derrida 1985). De Man's essay 'Literature and Language: A Commentary' (McQuillan 2001:13; Miller 1987:48, 58) is very useful in understanding de Man and his method, since it summarizes different reader-responses and new criticism theorists. In this essay, de

Defense of the Other, Deconstruction and the Bible'. Landy: 1999, 'Leviticus, Deconstruction and the Body. Silverman: 2013, *Textualities, Between Hermeneutics and Deconstruction*. Clines: 1995, 'Ethics and Deconstruction'. Phillips: 1994, 'The Ethics of Reading Deconstructively'. Blank: 1986, 'Deconstruction, Entering the Bible through Babel'. Rutledge: 1996, *Reading Marginally: Feminism, Deconstruction and the Bible*.

Man continues the work of Derrida and other poststructuralist theorists by writing that there is no authoritative center in a text, no fixed meaning, and that no single point is more important than the other. Therefore there is no accepted or proper starting point for reading. De Man examines some critical essays and concludes by stating that all the essays involve previous partially incorrect theories of literature and literary language. Each essay misreads by copying or doubling a misreading by someone else. 'How are literary studies ever to get started when every proposed method seems based on a misreading and a misconceived preconception about the nature of literary language?' asks de Man (1972). To answer this question, de Man goes to the core of the problem and that is the relationship between the reader and the author in literary criticism. 'The author itself', writes de Man, 'rather than the referent of the statement, now seems to be the sole depository of meaning' (1972:185). This process of assuming a central meaning of the text is, according to him, a *misreading*. Instead of searching for this central meaning we should be open to endless readings of the text, without searching for a central authoritative meaning.

De Man states that a text can only refer to itself and never to the event that holds the text. Hence, any attempt to claim some fixed truth is blindness in reading. In this manner critical texts are unstable: 'Since they are not scientific, critical texts have to be read with the same awareness of ambivalence that is brought to the study of non-critical literary texts, and since the rhetoric of their discourse depends on categorical statements, the discrepancy between meaning and assertion is a constitutive part of their logic' (1972:189).

Going back to Hannaniah son of Hezekiah, could it be that Hannaniah performed a reading that decentralized the authoritative status of Ezekiel and actually allowed endless readings to the text, unlocking its limited meaning that was given to it? We

might never know what his interpretation was. In fact we may never know if Hannaniah son of Hezekiah existed at all. However, we are left with a notion that reading can illuminate blindness in the text, and that reading is always occurring, never locked, and that there is no such thing as a fixed or true meaning.

Deconstructing the Bible, interesting as it may be, is not sufficient in this sense, since the Bible as a whole, the New Testament and the Hebrew Bible, is encased within a concrete wall of interpretations that has been created by blindness and misreadings. In this sense I cannot search for meaning, since I do not want to engage in misreading and to be blind; instead I would like to question the way we perceive the text and its central notion.

Collins, in his book *The Bible after Babel* (De Man 1983:110), discusses biblical research in the age of postmodernism, while defending the historical method. Collins argues that while different readings of the biblical text are important, one cannot claim to find any meaning that one wishes: 'What historical criticism does is set limits to the conversation, by saying what a given text could or could not mean in the ancient context. A text may have more than one possible meaning, but it cannot mean just anything at all' (Collins 2005). This argument is a prime example to what I show here; I do not believe that there is a postmodernist who claims that a text can produce any meaning. However, who is to say what limits one must set on the conversation, and under what premises should these limits be set? In this light, any limits set on the conversation need to be examined, directly and indirectly; directly- what is the correct knowledge one must produce? Indirectly- what are the political aspects of the knowledge production and who is gaining from it? In different words, why historical truth is the truth and who should be the one that sets these limitations on the discourse?

What is written on the page is only what the author has chosen to reveal; but to every text there is a subtext, which the author has suppressed, repressed, forgotten, ignored, kept from us—and not even told us that it has been kept from us. We innocent members of the public, who go on laying out good money on commentaries, need protection against these commentators who are failing to tell us what it is they are failing to tell us. So it becomes an urgent public duty to create a neighborhood watch committee of metacommentators who will investigate for us how we are being shortchanged (Collins 2005:10).

Clines continues later in his article and gives examples of feminist interpretations to the book of Amos that expose what the commentators do not claim. I would like to add that poststructuralism is an avenue for those who have no powers, for those who wish to break everyday thinking. Not only the logocentric but also the simple things in life that at first glance may seem mundane, but once they are carefully examined they may be regarded as thoughts or sayings that enfold within a complex myriad of power relations that in most cases if not all, are controlled by a minority of people. Wherever there is resistance to poststructuralism, one must ask not what is the better option, but why resist in the first place, and why modernism is still perceived as a more accurate, classical and even better way to analyze the Bible.

Appendix 2: Biopolitics

...‘Biopolitics’ does not oscillate between killing and abandoning to a permanently insecure life; instead, in a formula that we find no less disconcerting, it *makes live* ... Biopower makes one live the existence it has first captured and confined. In this manner, human existence is recast as a *project*, endowed with *identity*, subjected to *authority* and granted a teleological *destination* (Clines 1993:76-7).

Although the concept of biopolitics is mainly congruent from Foucault’s works, *The Birth of Biopolitics* (Prozorov 2007:20), *History of Sexuality Vol. 1* (Foucault 2008) and *Security, Territory, Population* (Foucault 1978); it was not invented by him but actually existed over a century before his time.⁷²

2.1 Foucault and Biopolitics

Foucault sees biopolitics as a technology of power to manage the people as a group. Biopolitics is that which changes the human being into a political person. What separates this technology and makes it unique from the rest of the technologies that have been mentioned already, is the fact that it can help control an entire population and not just a subject. Foucault states that the idea of a society as a biological whole, the human being as a species, denotes the establishment of a central authority that governs and controls it, watches over it and moderates its values and moralities via the control of purity. This sovereignty is the modern state. However, this sovereignty could also be a god, or in this case Yhwh.

2.2 Zoe and Bios

Agamben does not see biopolitics as something that emerged in the 18th century but as something that has been present in western thought since ancient Greece. Moreover, Agamben does not regard the sovereign as the one who uses biopolitics, but biopolitics as the core of the sovereign. Using the works of Arendt (Foucault

⁷² For a full review see and Esposito (Lemke 2011).

2004), Benjamin (1994, 1963), Bataille (1989), Heidegger (1990) and mainly Carl Schmitt (1959). Agamben argues that the central binary opposition of the political is between bare life (zoé) and the political existence (bios) – the distinction between the natural being and the legal existence of the subject. According to Agamben, *homo sacer* is a person who can be killed freely by someone since he has been excluded or banned from the political-legal community and has been reduced to the status of his physical existence. This form that is called ‘bare life’, is the basis of political existence, the outlet from which the sovereign can strip the political legal existence from the person or give him one according to his own needs. Using Schmitt’s work *Political Theology* (1976, 2005) Agamben describes the meaning of exemption and its role in the formation of sovereignty. Once the sovereign exempts someone from the law he strips him/her of his/her political existence and brings the subject back to the ‘bare life’ status. Schmitt named this process *Ausnahme*. The exemption is a kind of exclusion of an individual case from the general rule, but this exemption does not exclude without a relation to the rule. Since exception is the structure of the sovereign then it is not just power that is external to law: ‘it is the originary structure in which law refers to life and includes it in itself by suspending it’ (2005). Agamben continues and writes that the exemption functions as a ban, and the one that is being banned is not just set aside but he is abandoned, exposed and threatened on a threshold where inside and outside, law and life cannot be distinguished. ‘Law’, writes Agamben, ‘is made of nothing but what it manages to capture inside itself through the inclusive exclusion...it nourishes itself on this exception and is a dead letter without it. In this sense, the law truly “has no existence in itself, but rather has its being in the very life of men”’ (Agamben 1998:23)

In his book *Means Without End* Agamben speaks of this threshold and describes it as a camp: ‘The camp intended as a dislocating localization is the hidden matrix of the politics in which we still live, and we must learn to recognize it in all of its metamorphoses. The camp is the fourth and inseparable element that has been added to and has broken up the old trinity of nation (birth), state, and territory’ (Agamben 1998:22) and he also describes it as ‘the hidden paradigm of the political space of modernity’ (Agamben 1998: 123). The camp does not necessarily need to be a concrete place but can also be used as a political concept that symbolizes and fixes the border between ‘bare life’ and political existence.

What allows life to be captured in law is not sanction but rather guilt, referring to the original meaning of the term – being in debt. It is the condition of the person when he understands that he is being included in relation to something from which one is excluded or which one cannot fully assume. This state of guilt denotes gratitude and also promotes a sense of belonging to a social body, in a state of political life, *bios*. Examples of exclusions and inclusions in the Hebrew Bible can be found in quite a few places, and sometimes it seems like something that is elementary to the Israelite existence, of which Num. 5.1-4 is just one example.

Appendix 3: Pornography and the Erotic

Pornography is a term that the feminist academic world has been engaged in a comprehensive debate about its meaning and its effects on general culture since the seventies.⁷³ The introduction of pornography to the academic field of research was due to the battle of feminists against pornographic material in the society and against its implication on the situation of women (Agamben 2000:43). In this manner, researchers, mainly Dworkin and Mackinnon, were not interested in the phenomena of pornography but rather in what it does.

We define pornography as the graphic sexually explicit subordination of women through pictures or words that also includes women dehumanized as sexual objects, things or commodities; enjoying pain or humiliation or rape; being tied up, cut up, mutilated, bruised, or physically hurt; in postures of sexual submission or servility of display; reduced to body parts, penetrated by objects or animals, or presented in scenarios of degradation, injury, torture; shown as filthy or inferior; bleeding, bruised, or hurt in a context that makes these conditions sexual (Stern 1982:43-46).

Mackinnon claims that pornography is an institution of power against women (MacKinnon 1987:176). Pornography is not something by itself, or a form of art or speech but an institution of power whose sole purpose is to subordinate women. The physical subordinated situation of women is being mirrored by pornography and is being presented by it. This stand correlates well with Dworkin's take on pornography, which seeks to examine pornography via the research and analysis of the male self and the power relations between men and women.

Dworkin writes:

The major theme of pornography as a genre is male power, its nature, its magnitude, its use, its meaning...male power, as expressed in and through pornography, is discernible in discrete but interwoven, reinforcing strains: the power of self, the power

⁷³ For a review of the debate, see: Easton 1994, Duggan and Hunter 2006.

of terror, the power naming, the power owning, the power of money, and the power of sex (MacKinnon 1993:12-13).

It is very difficult to analyze pornography and the erotic while separating the unjust use and representation of women. Nevertheless, it is impossible to disconnect the erotic and pornography from the human imagination, hence after establishing the opinion of Dworkin and Mackinnon I will try now to further explore this term.

3.1 On the Erotic

Some feminist theorists claimed that there is a difference between the erotic and the pornographic. Steinem states that the erotic is about the sexuality and pornography is about power, and that sex is being used as the male weapon (Dworkin 1981:24). According to this statement, pornography has to include violence while the erotic does not necessarily bear violent elements in it. Brenner also uses this notion and argues that the differences between pornography and the erotic are rooted in the content of the fantasy. The erotic is what within the personal experience and the pornographic is what that conjures up as possible. Since women did not take part in the construction of the erotic and it was forced upon them, pornography had become a universally valid idea of the erotic (Steinem 2007:24-25).

Clellow criticizes this distinction by saying that since pornography is used mostly in a negative connotation, the categorization between pornography and the term 'erotica' is used in order to justify one's enjoyment of sexual imagery (Brenner 1996:68-70). Moreover, The problems in such a distinction is first the binary categorization, pornography is violent hence, masculine; erotica may be imaginative with less violence, therefore feminine. Second, whether or not violence is taking part in the erotic imagination, it is still pornography since it provokes sexual imageries in the human mind. One cannot assume that 'feminine erotica' is imminent to the woman

while the rest is a construct. Another factor that was not taken into consideration is the origin of this imagination and its core definition.

Bataille, in his book *Death and Sensuality* (Clewlow 2004:119) elaborates on the sexual experience from a reproductive natural mechanism to a well-established cultural system of erotica. His main assumption is that humans are the only animals who are well aware of their death. This awareness was the cause for the development of men, and the creation of taboos has deepened this separation. For Bataille, eroticism is born at the same moment as humanity, simply because the boundary separating man from nature is the boundary that is transgressed during (or rather *by*) erotic activity.

I said that I regarded eroticism as the disequilibrium in which the being consciously calls his own existence in question. In one sense, the being loses himself deliberately, but then the subject is identified with the object losing his identity. If necessary I can say in eroticism: I am losing my-self (Bataille 1962:31-32).

In Eroticism, man faces his own annihilation and refuses to accept it. Therefore, the subject uses eroticism to die in order to experience life. However, this new life is not the subject's own life but the universal one. The human discontinuity is embraced in order to create a radical continuity that is the underside of human experience, which is essentially the act of sacrifice. Man, according to this statement, destroys his small self and builds a different self, one that is a part of humanity. Bataille explains the sexual dissolution of the subject in terms of a male partner actively dissolving a passive female partner, that is being annihilated in order to pave the way for a fusion where both male and female are merged. He emphasizes the male as the destroyer who is more essential to the erotic experience than the female who is destroyed by him; women are sacrificed in erotic transgression and that transgression is always violent. Bataille's work is similar in to Jung's term Animus and Anima by the fact

that both men and women possess some qualities of the opposite sex in their unconscious level. 'Every man carries within him the eternal image of the woman, not the image of this or that woman, but a definite feminine image. This image is fundamentally unconscious, an hereditary factor of primordial origin... Even if no women existed, it would be still possible, at any given time, to deduce from this unconscious image exactly how a woman would have to be constituted psychically (Bataille 1962).' Indeed, the way man according to Bataille is sacrificing a woman in order for him to exist, so does the woman Jerusalem. One does not need to have a woman next to him for him to sacrifice her, since he can invent her in any given moment with the tools that he has in his manly experience.

However, it is not as simple in the book of Ezekiel. The woman Jerusalem that is being raped and sacrificed in chs.16, 23, is after all an allegory to Israel, and to it representative - the male reader. Such gender reversal cannot be solved easily and not in the binary matter that is portrayed in Dworkin's and Bataille's. Randall tries to offer another view of pornography by understanding the linkage between eroticism and pornography, and by calling to understand the role of the erotic in the social structure without going immediately against it. Randall claims that the erotic, the pornographic imagination is a way to speak to the darker side of the mind, to discuss matters that humans cannot easily express, to understand the destruction of the self that Bataille speaks about.

Perhaps our difficulty with the idea that pornographic imagination can say something important lies in concern about how its message would cause us to feel about ourselves and others. Most of us would not welcome a return to the maelstrom of desire, jealousy, rage, and terror that gives rise to erotic conflicts... But pornography calls us back, and the pornographic imagination may call us back a great distance. If it were simply a matter of prudery or inhibition, we might have less difficulty. But the image of sexual transgression—the hallmark of pornography—is not always simply celebratory in its emotional consequence. Violations of taboos... may also suggest a darker world of the mind where erotic and destructive impulses are joined. We may

thus extend our argument a step further: the pornographic imagination, imagistically regressive, may have the most to say to us in exactly those areas where our resistance to exploration is understandably greatest and our defenses invested most heavily (Jung 1925:338).

Nevertheless, it seems that the role of the woman is neglected here, how are women presented in this system of imagination and self-dissolution? What can we say on the role of the woman in the imagination? The female, that violence is forced upon her, cannot act against it, she is passive according to Bataille. He may be right if he only wishes to mirror the society, but if Bataille explains only the term erotic and not the reality as Mackinnon and Dworkin do, then he uses the woman as a tool to create a male, and only a male self. The female is sacrificed for the male's entry into the sacred, the universe which is always *his* universe. Roberts-Hughes states that the sacrificial role of the woman is threefold: Mankind emerges because woman does not. Woman is sacrificed for society to exist ('pledged to communication') and for transgression to occur (she is murdered and he fuses with her death) and in the sacred realm of transgression (for the sake of his ecstatic communication with the universe, an 'other' part of himself woman came to represent for him) in which there can only be totality and no difference (Randall 1989:73). Roberts-Hughes' critique on Bataille may lead us back to Dworkin and Mackinnon and to their statement that they are not interested in what pornography is but in what it does, mainly, what it does to women. Nevertheless, Bataille's work on the erotic is important for the understanding of the creation of the self, but one must not ignore the role of the woman and the use in the object called woman in the creation of the male self.

In her discussion on the value of pornography and its characteristics, Brenner states that the sexual behavior of the woman is recognized always as deviant and this feature helps us understand the woman's presentation as a vehicle for the message to

pass. Furthermore, the nature of pornography and the metaphorization of human sexuality secure the audience's attention and its emotional response is granted. This emotional response, that is guilt and shame produced through the rejection of the metaphorized woman, may lead to identification with the speaker and the acceptance of his message, thus promoting a new consciousness. After elaborating on the role of fantasy and imagination in pornography, she continues and states that 'the political result of this strategy is a contrast between the metaphor and its designated purpose: pornography is expected to promote religious and political reform' (Roberts-Hughes 2008:5). Another element must be taken into consideration when analyzing chs. 16, and 23 – the fact that Israel is being treated as a woman. This complex episteme of gender reversal needs to be reviewed carefully. The woman that is being sacrificed to bring new life to the male is no other than male Israel itself, creating an equation in which a man becomes a woman to be sacrificed by his god, so his god could recreate himself, and by so doing the man could relive. Either way, the role of the woman in these chapters and the gender placement is not as clear as it may seem. Moreover, pornography, or the erotic, is used to promote theology, and we may even view these chapters as the basic chapters for the theology of the book of Ezekiel.

From chapter 16 on, Israel is being born, the Israel that R must assume. By means of pornography the R cleans his self, and becomes R^M , not before he goes through a short phase of R^{MF} . Making the female a part in the construction of the man's *âme*, her characteristics as a political invention and pornography as the technology for this process.

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