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Carnival Clown, Royal Rejuvenator, and Cosmic Terror: The Characterisation of Saul, David, and God through the Bakhtinian Lens of the Carnival in Select Chapters of 1 and 2 Samuel.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
A.J.	*Antiquities* by Josephus
ANE	Ancient Near East/ancient Near Eastern
ApOTC	Apollos Old Testament Commentary
BBR	*Bulletin of Biblical Research*
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BibInt	*Biblical Interpretation*
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
CBR	*Currents in Biblical Research*
DJD	Discoveries in the Judean Desert
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
Hen	*Henoch*
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
IBC	Interpretation Biblical Commentary
Int.	*Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology*
ISPCK	Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LXX	Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament)
MT	Masoretic Text
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OTE	*Old Testament Essays*
OTG	Old Testament Guides
OTL	Old Testament Library
RevQ	*Revue De Qumran*
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature

SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBL SemeiaSt.	Society of Biblical Literature Semeia Studies
SubBi	Subsidia Biblica
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum Suppliment

Contents

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 - Purpose of this Study:

This study investigates the characterisation of Saul, David, and God within certain passages of 1 and 2 Samuel (1 Sam 9:1-10:16; 10:17-27; 11:1-15; 19:18-24; 24:1-8; 2 Sam 6). While this topic is not new, the Bakhtinian approach will provide a new angle to interpret the material. The premise of this dissertation will be the application of Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of carnival to these passages from the Books of Samuel. This notion of carnival has had limited discussion in relation to the Books of Samuel. Mikhail Bakhtin will therefore form the foundation of the methodology being used – employing especially the text which that outlines this carnivalesque approach, *Rabelais and His World.*[1] The overall methodological background of this thesis will be a narrative critical one, with a specific emphasis on the carnival as a theme or perspective through which the text will be analysed. In terms of particular characters in the Books of Samuel that will be discussed, Saul will form the nucleus of interest alongside the characters of God and David, who will be discussed in light of this carnival method. In a Bakhtinian reading, Saul can be viewed as the clown, God as the cosmic terror and David as the fulfilment of the carnival parade.

This thesis uses the Hebrew of the Masoretic Text (MT) as its basis for discussion, following the standard critical text found in *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*.[2] However, scholars recognise that the MT for the Books of Samuel has suffered in transmission.[3] For instance, it is likely that between 1 Samuel 10:27 and 11:1, the MT has lost some text, which is preserved in 4QSam^{a}.[4] In some sections, 4QSam^{a,} the Septuagint (LXX), and Josephus' iteration of the Samuel story in his *Antiquities* (*A.J*) retain a different form of the text, and where the differences are significant this thesis includes a translation of them. Nevertheless, because the primary concern of the thesis is literary rather than text-critical,

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[1] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).

[2] Karl Elliger and Wilhelm Rudolph, eds., *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983). The electronic form utilised is from the Biblehub website: https://biblehub.com/text/1_samuel/1-1.htm

[3] P. Kyle McCarter, *1 Samuel* (AB 8. New York: Doubleday, 1980), 8.

[4] Ibid, 199. For the standard Septuagint edition, see Alfred Rahlfs and Robert Hanhart, *Septuaginta, id est Vetus Testamentum Graece Iuxta LXX interpretes* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006). The electronic form utilised is from the Blue Letter Bible website: https://www.blueletterbible.org/lxx/1sa/1/1/s_237001

the main focus will be on the MT as a matter of preference. So too in the process of quoting biblical material, the Revised Standard Version (RSV) is preferred over the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), due to it being more verbally accurate and containing a smaller amount of alterations in translation which may make the text more archaic in its reading but may be more reflective of the initial authorial intention or meaning.[5] However, for the selected passages under discussion, a new translation is provided here.

The proposition of this thesis is as follows. Previous studies of the story of Saul have emphasised the tragic aspect. However, certain material within the Books of Samuel can be perceived as being carnivalesque in nature, as the text is questioning the popular or dominant hegemony regarding kingship (and that of foreign deities) witnessed in other Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) communities. Within the carnival space, certain characters are used to ridicule this popular ideology; in different ways, both Saul and David are styled as the clown-kings in order to achieve this aim and bring a renewal within the narrative world through this ridicule. Both figures acquire the mantle of clown-king; Saul begins the parade as the expected heroic-king type who is beaten and debased, while David concludes the carnival celebration with the reintroduction of God into the community in 2 Samuel 6. The main focus of this study will be on Saul as the clown-turned-king of the carnival of 1 Samuel. In the Bakhtinian perspective, the clown is the spirit of the carnival embodied, a figure who is placed amidst the people to be ridiculed, a source of laughter for those participating in the carnival itself who is eventually debased and stripped to bring about the culmination of the carnival parade, and the eventual prosperity of the people, emerging as "the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change, and renewal".[6]

In a Bakhtinian reading, this carnivalesque mockery and degradation is needed to undermine of the ANE concept of the king, which is to be replaced by another form. God is representative of what Bakhtin calls the "cosmic terror"; the unknowable, unfathomable, immeasurable entity that necessitates the presence of the carnival, one which appears as "the fear of the immeasurable, the infinitely powerful".[7] God being positioned as this cosmic terror is possibly reflective of the people's inability to recognise him, as well as God's seeming distance from the community at the outset of the narrative of 1 Samuel (1

[5] For instance, in Judg 19:22 the RSV describes the men of Gibeah wanting the visitor to be brought out so that they "may know him", whereas the NRSV alters the wording to say that the men wanted to "have intercourse with him". The NRSV iteration loses the nuance of the original Hebrew verb.
[6] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 10.
[7] Ibid, 335.

Sam 3:1; 8:22). How the cosmic terror interacts with individual characters – here Saul and David – completely changes the fortunes of these figures as well as the overall tone of the narrative. God, as the cosmic terror, reacts and elicits human reaction and these interactions form a part of the carnival. The cosmic terror is given a familiar form to be interacted with by the community, which is "represented in the bodily lower stratum [and] is degraded, humanised, and transformed".[8] The manner in which this carnival finds its conclusion and the cosmic terror finds its genuine transformation is through the character of David. In a sense, both Saul and David are two sides of the same coin, being "two aspects of one world", the old and the new.[9] David stands as the fulfilment of that carnival *spirit* and allowing for the growth and renewal of the community to begin in this new form of kingship.

1.2 - Survey of Research on First and Second Samuel (*Status Quaestionis)*:

Biblical scholarship on the area of 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel, as well as on the characters of Saul and David, has been vast. Tony Cartledge perceives the Samuel narratives as retaining a sense of hope for the future that "bubbles up through the Deuteronomistic porridge of crime and punishment".[10] Cartledge denotes this as being witnessed though the character of David and his failures which "speak to future generations".[11] He describes the Books of Samuel as an attempt by the Israelite community to make its way back to the life it once had under the Davidic kingship, following the Babylonian exile. Cartledge's reader-reception treatment of the Samuel narratives does not shy away from the issues which David's complexity and ambiguity conjure up, recognising David as "a man after God's own heart with a dark spot on his soul".[12] For Cartledge, Saul's failures prove to be a lesson which David learns from so that David's own failures become a moment of reflection for the community to learn from (in turn), and so become a moment of optimism rather than despair despite the sometimes despairing nature of the material.[13]

[8] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 336.
[9] Ibid, 198.
[10] Tony W. Cartledge, *1 & 2 Samuel*, Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary, no. 7 (Macon, GA: Smyth and Helwys, 2001), 14.
[11] Ibid, 14.
[12] Ibid, 1.
[13] Ibid, 14.

R.P. Gordon too focuses more on the theological function of the Samuel narratives due to the "idealised presentation" of the material.[14] This function, as far as Gordon is concerned, is the presentation of kingship as something which Israel asked for but did not necessarily need. He notes the Philistine threat as being a significant factor behind the Israelite demand for a king, despite the claims of the text that the period of Judges "was as capable of dealing with Israel's military emergencies as of directing its social and religious life".[15] Gordon is rather unforgiving in his treatment of Saul, denoting his "ignorance of Samuel" when the pair first meet (1 Sam 9:18-19) as functioning "by a kind of metonymy, for his ignorance of God's plans for him in relation to the throne".[16] He marks David in a different fashion, as being one whom God had appointed himself as king, whereas the people had requested Saul.[17]

Ralph W. Klein uses a more redactional method of interpretation, yet is more sympathetic to Saul and kingship in general, marking its introduction in the story (1 Sam 8-9) as offering a "positive assessment" of kingship.[18] According to V. Philips Long, Kingship and monarchy emerges as an institution which "neither Samuel nor Yahweh shows himself to be [against] in an absolute sense".[19] David Tsumura calls the Books of Samuel "one of the most fascinating sections of the Bible".[20] When dealing with the material of 1 and 2 Samuel, Tsumura uses a more source-critical approach yet he too denotes kingship positively as being God's will and plan being "fulfilled in the normal day-to-day life of human beings".[21]

The narrative-critical method of assessing these texts has formed a considerable amount of literature, such as works (mentioned below) by Robert Alter, Keith Bodner, Barbara Green, Shaul Bar, Peter D. Miscall, and David Gunn. Within the scope of narrative criticism, Meir Sternberg has assessed sections of the 1 Samuel text. For instance, he examines the depiction of good looks as a form of direct characterisation with regards Saul,

[14] R.P. Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel*, OTG (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1984), 41.
[15] Ibid, 41.
[16] Ibid, 45.
[17] Ibid, 58.
[18] Ralph W. Klein, *1 Samuel*, WBC 10, 2nd edition, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 93.
[19] V. Philips Long, *The Reign and Rejection of King Saul: A Case for Literary and Theological Coherence*, SBLDS 118 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1989), 181.
[20] David T. Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 1.
[21] Ibid, 71.

David, and Absalom.[22] Shimon Bar-Efrat has a comparable analysis of outward appearance, as he discusses figures such as Bathsheba and Tamar, and he also notes aspects such as clothing as a means of characterisation in 1 Samuel, including David's 'borrowing' of Saul's armour in 1 Samuel 17.[23]

Even outside of narrative criticism, the Books of Samuel have inspired a plethora of material utilising reader-reception as well as source-critical approaches. The character of Saul has garnered much attention, with his typical perception being as a figure of tragedy or the central antagonist once David enters the narrative landscape. The story of Saul is commonly denoted as a "tragedy of fate" wherein Israel's first monarch never truly had a chance against the machinations of forces "beyond his control".[24] Edwin M. Good in his work on literary irony explores Saul as a tragic figure, who is undermined by his own insecurities and doubt, which ultimately lead to his destruction.[25] In addition David Gunn finds tragic elements in Saul's portrayal within the Books of Samuel, positing Saul as a character who "demands" a reader's sympathy.[26] Utilising a more literary-based approach, Gunn notes the genuine pathos involved in Saul's characterisation, being reflective of the "ambiguity of life", which challenges the reader.[27] Saul's failures are described by Gunn as displaying moments of true tragedy, because he failed to "measure up to the demands of God".[28]

Saul is ultimately unsuccessful in his 'role' as king as he "cannot resolve the ambiguities inherent in his rise"; namely the level or placement of kingly authority against that of God's own honour and sovereignty.[29] The bungling nature of Saul "never fully rises above the haphazard and ad-hoc conditions of charismatic leadership".[30] Peter Ignatius lays the possible 'blame' for Saul's failure at kingship at the 'feet' of the narrative drive to place David and his dynasty centre stage "in biblical interpretation", being a possible explanation

[22] Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: An Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading*. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984), 354-364.
[23] Shimon Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, JSOT Sup 70 (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 49-52.
[24] Bernard P. Robinson, *Israel's Mysterious God: An Analysis of Some Old Testament Narratives* (Newcastle: Grevatt & Grevatt, 1986), 41.
[25] Edwin M. Good, *Irony In The Old Testament* (Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1981), 79.
[26] David M. Gunn, *The Fate of King Saul: An Interpretation of a Biblical Story*, JSOTSup 14 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980), 27.
[27] Ibid, 31.
[28] Ibid, 26.
[29] David G. Firth, *1 & 2 Samuel*, ApOTC 8 (Nottingham: Apollos, 2009), 44.
[30] Joel Rosenberg, '1 and 2 Samuel', in *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, ed. Robert Alter and Frank Kermode (London: Collins, 1987), 122-146, here 128.

for Saul's tragic characterisation and his inevitable decline.[31] Shaul Bar describes Saul's 'career' as being "full of drama and tribulations, and end[ing] tragically".[32] While by literary standards Saul's death seems a logical conclusion to his story amid David's perpetual rise, Saul still emerges as a "classical hero of a tragedy".[33] Klaus-Peter Adam notes the "modifications of Saul's character" to one of a tragic nature due (he claims) to the impact of Hellenistic influences on the Hebrew texts.[34] It is within comparison to David that Saul takes on the mantle of a tragic figure, as the early Samuel narratives (1 Sam 9-14) focus on Saul's "rejection as opposed to David's divine election".[35] Yet some commentators are more sympathetic towards Saul, seeing him as a "humble, modest, heroic, and dedicated human being" but still recognising that he was lacking in "organisational ability" with regards the people.[36] Keith Bodner, despite his own writing style which possesses a sense of humour, takes Saul to be poignant figure, whose passivity in these opening chapters will eventually develop into the tragedy that overtakes him as Israel's first king.[37]

Samuel's character will also be examined through a parodic lens. Whereas most previous studies have followed the canonical viewpoint of Samuel as an inspired prophet and a devout hero of faith (1 Sam 3:19; Sir 46:13-15; Acts 3:24), the present study will explore the more human aspects of his character as a disgruntled patriarch, jealous of rural leaders in Israel, resenting the people as they demand "that he exercise his authority to demote or even remove himself by appointing another leader".[38]

While many commentators have read the story of Saul as a tragedy, the present thesis will consider the more comedic elements in the narrative, pointing to his initial

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[31] Peter Ignatius, *King Saul – A Villain or a Hero? Revisiting the Character of Saul* (London: ISPCK, 2008), 16.
[32] Shaul Bar, *God's First King: The Story of Saul* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2013), xiii.
[33] Ibid, xvi.
[34] Klaus-Peter Adam, "Saul as a Tragic Hero: Greek Drama and Its Influence on Hebrew Scripture in 1 Samuel 14:24-46 (10:8; 13:7-13a; 10:17-27)", in *For and Against David: Story and History in the Books of Samuel*, ed. A. Graeme Auld and Erik Eynikel, BETL 232, (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 123-184, here 184.
[35] Ibid, 182.
[36] Joel Lieberman, "The Eternal Torah: Joshua, Judges, Samuel One, Samuel Two", in *The Eternal Torah: A New Commentary Utilizing Ancient and Modern Sources in a Grammatical, Historical, and Traditional Explanation of the Text*, vol. 2, 3rd ed. (Scranton, PA: Twin Pines Press, 1986), 183. One of the only true directives given by God with regards the king's role is for this figure to "restrain" the people (1 Sam 9:17).
[37] Keith Bodner, *1 Samuel: A Narrative Commentary*, HBM 19 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009), 80.
[38] Peter D. Miscall, *1 Samuel: A Literary Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 47.

narrative presentation as a clown-king.[39] Placing an ironic 'lens' over the character of Saul is not entirely unheard of. Robert Alter describes Saul as being like a puppet in the hands of Samuel in the establishing of the monarchy in Israel.[40] This idea of Saul being like a child's toy in the hands of God and the aging prophet/judge Samuel potentially elicits a more comedic image than most commentators have touched on. Yet Alter still credits Saul as being the closest in construction to the notion of a tragic character that the Hebrew Bible has to offer as a literary figure.[41]

The characterisation of God, a rather neglected topic for the Books of Samuel, is an undertaking that requires more nuance. It is difficult to speak of – and so construct – God as a character when human terms may seem insufficient to do so. For instance, the utilisation of direct characterisation in terms of expression, looks, or clothing would hold little value. It cannot be said that God wore a blue shirt in a particular scene, and so metaphorically, the Deity was feeling melancholic. However, the description of emotions and feeling is a far more practical entry point for analysis. Yet God does 'act' as a character in the narrative, one that is "actively, emotionally engaged", yet one that is "neither hidden in eternity nor available on demand".[42] God's presence within the narrative may not be immediately obvious upon first reading, but it is "enough for a reader to ascribe the whole grand scheme of things to the divinity's desire and deed".[43] A reader attempting to discern God and his activity in a story may have to rely on external or extraneous 'sketches' of God from other stories, adding to the unknowable nature of the Deity's character. God can be posited as having similar "enigmatic ambiguities found in complex human characters".[44]

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[39] For some commentators that describe Saul as being a tragic figure, see: Gunn, *The Fate of King Saul;* Barbara Green, *King Saul's Asking* (Interfaces. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003); eadem, *How Are the Mighty Fallen? A Dialogical Study of King Saul in 1 Samuel*, JSOT Sup *365* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003); Diana Vikander Edelman, *King Saul in the Historiography of Judah* (JSOT Sup 121. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991); Ignatius, *King Saul;* Long, *The Reign and Rejection of King Saul*; J. Cheryl Exum and J. William Whedbee. 'Isaac, Samson, and Saul: Reflections on the Comic and Tragic Visions', in *On Humour and the Comic in the Hebrew Bible,* ed. Yehuda T. Radday and Athalya Brenner, JSOT Sup 92, (Sheffield: Almond, 1990), pages 117-157.

[40] Robert Alter, *The David Story: A Translation with Commentary of 1 and 2 Samuel (*New York: W&W Norton, 1999), xix. See also David Gunn's discussion of Saul as being in the "grip" of God and a victim of Fate - *The Fate of King Saul*, 30.

[41] Ibid, 30.

[42] Eep Talstra, "'What You See Is What You Get': The Passion of a Literary Character", in *Interested Readers: Essays on the Hebrew Bible In Honor of David J.A. Clines* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 169-181, here 171. The present study follows the Hebrew Bible in using masculine pronouns for God.

[43] David M. Gunn and Danna Nolan Fewell, *Narrative Art in the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 81.

[44] Ibid, 85.

Barbara Green depicts the request for a king by the people as something which greatly distresses the Deity. She explores the pattern of God's response to Samuel, noting the Deity's rebuttal to the request for a human king (1 Sam 8:6-9), as being tantamount to a rejection.[45] John Barton portrays God as being a wholly inexplicable entity but one which engages in an emotional manner, as a companion of sorts, with the community he is acting for and with. God is thereby putting himself at risk through such integrated interaction.[46] Peter Miscall too notes that God appears in the Samuel narratives "in a variety of ways that differ in significance, amount of information granted, and certainty about his actual intervention in a story and his motives and purposes".[47]

The movement of the Books of Samuel is mostly created by three central figures: Samuel, Saul, and David. Yet these three characters are linked to God's purposes in the text, and so one can assert that God is the story's core organising figure, suggesting that "Yahweh is the book's central figure".[48] God's activity and care for the community emerges as a reality for the people through the witness of the literature, a realisation that God had acted for his people which becomes "not merely a set of facts to be passed on".[49] The Books of Samuel portray God as a Deity who is deeply involved and concerned for the community of Israel with the implication that "kingship is Yahweh's design for the next stage in Israel's life".[50] God, as a character in general and as this story's cosmic terror, is genuinely inscrutable. Deryn Guest, in her discussion of the Deity's character in the Book of Judges, suggests that God acts for his own "obsessively megalomaniacal self-interest".[51] While this may be too uncharitable a description of the Deity, the reality of God's multi-faceted and inexplicable personality is a feature of his characterisation which is difficult to tackle. In characterising God or coming to grips with his character, it is difficult to determine "whether all Yahweh's traits and actions in his various roles can be understood in terms of one coherent personality".[52]

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[45] Green, *King Saul's Asking*, 35.
[46] John Barton, "The Dark Side of God in the Old Testament", in *Ethical and Unethical in the Old Testament: God and Humans in Dialogue*, ed. Katherine J. Dell, LHBOTS 528 (New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 122-134, here 124.
[47] Miscall, *1 Samuel*, xiii.
[48] Firth, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 21.
[49] Ibid, 22.
[50] Firth, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 43.
[51] Deryn Guest, 'Judging YHWH in the Book of Judges', in *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Narrative*, ed. Danna Nolan Fewell (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 180-188, here 184.
[52] Stuart Lasine, 'Characterising God in His/Our Image', in *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Narrative*, ed. Danna Nolan Fewell (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 465-475, here 474.

Rachelle Gilmour posits that such a sense of vulnerability is exposed in God's striking dead of Uzzah in 2 Samuel 6, with the irruption of divine violence being not part of a punishment for some imagined slight but rather an example of God's limitation within the physical presence of the ark as the community interacts with it.[53] Stephen B. Chapman discusses the sentience, omniscience, and power of God which could threaten to overwhelm the narrative and the characters in it. Yet Chapman maintains that God is a literary figure, similar to any other human ones described in the text. He acknowledges that fact that God, as a Deity, has the ability to overwhelm yet he appears as a divine force that "apparently lets things ride rather than forcing a resolution".[54] God then retains a sense of resembling humanity to some degree which makes him recognisable, allowing the Deity to be involved in a more intimate relationship than may otherwise be possible, while still existing as something distinctly *other* by his divine nature that is "never literarily captured or tamed".[55]

David as a character seems to have attracted the majority of scholarly focus, his characterisation being so ambiguous and multifaceted, which lends itself to significant interest. A. Graeme Auld marks the special space which David's character has within the scope of the Books of Samuel, noting that David is "presented and re-presented with and against a very large supporting cast".[56] Steven L. McKenzie adopts a more historical approach to the character of David, yet he still marks David out as a particularly significant character, being both notorious and worthy of attention.[57] Walter Brueggemann notes David as being a major vehicle for Israel's imagination and identification as a nation.[58] Baruch Halpern offers a multiplicity of portraits of David which may not all be as flattering as Brueggemann's treatment, but follows Alter's perception of the monarch as being a truly ambiguous character.[59] The character of David often has been presented through the lens of narrative criticism, usually exploring his character and surrounding events that affect

[53] Rachelle Gilmour, 'Divine Violence and Divine Presence: Reading the Story of Uzzah and the Ark in 2 Samuel 6 with Slavoj Žižek', *BibInt* 27 (2019), 1-19, here 1.
[54] Stephen B. Chapman, 'Worthy to be Praised: God as a Character in Samuel', in *Characters and Characterisation in the Book of Samuel,* ed. Keith Bodner and Benjamin J.M. Johnson, LHBOTS 669 (London: T&T Clark, 2020), 25-41, here 40.
[55] Ibid, 41.
[56] A. Graeme Auld, *I & II Samuel: A Commentary,* OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011), 1.
[57] Steven L. McKenzie, *King David: A Biography (*New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).
[58] Walter Brueggemann, *David's Truth: In Israel's Imagination and Memory* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1985).
[59] Baruch Halpern, *David's Secret Demons: Messiah, Murderer, Traitor, King* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001).

him, with the focus being establishing David's superiority over Saul as king. The central conclusion reached is that David is the hero, flawed as he may be, while Saul is his adversary.

However, scholars have also recognised David's ambiguity. Bodner notes that David's intentions can never fully be assessed; is he doing things for appearance or because he is genuine?[60] Shimon Bar-Efrat argues that the figure of David presented in the Samuel narratives had undergone a "process of idealisation" yet it is within the other books of Bible concerning him that he was "transformed into an ideal figure".[61] Barbara Green portrays the complexity inherent in David's character, and the genuine 'growth' which the shepherd-king undergoes through the course of 1 and 2 Samuel.[62] David's trajectory as a protagonist shifts as the narrative progresses, David moving from arrogant youth to considered monarch, with the text inviting readers to "avoid easy valorisation or vilification but to experience these struggles with empathy".[63] Within the Books of Samuel, David is portrayed as being "many-faceted and richer than any other figure in the Bible".[64] The approach of the narrative appears to be that of establishing David as the primary protagonist, with David receiving a far more favourable 'gloss' than his predecessor.

Benjamin Johnson delineates the Samuel narratives concerning David as "an unapologetic apology" that both defends the biblical hero while also not shying away from events that are critical of him or unflattering.[65] Robert Alter latches on to this ambiguity of David. He describes the characterisation of David as unusual given its recounting of the Israelite king's collusion with Israel's enemies (cf. 1 Sam 27), bouts of lust and murder (cf. 2 Samuel 11-12), and displays of debasement (cf. 2 Samuel 6). Alter envisions David as a cunning and resourceful figure, describing the hero of 1 and 2 Samuel as indecipherable.[66] It is not surprising then that the character of David has garnered such attention, and with

[60] Bodner, *1* Samuel, 261.
[61] Shimon Bar-Efrat, 'From History to Story: The Development of the Figure of David in Biblical and Post-Biblical Literature', in *For and Against David: Story and History in the Books of Samuel* (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 47-56, here 47 and 50.
[62] Green, *David's Capacity for Compassion: A Literary-Hermeneutical Study of 1-2 Samuel*, LHBOTS 641 (London: Bloomsbury, 2017).
[63] Ibid, 4.
[64] Bar-Efrat, 'From History to Story', 49.
[65] Benjamin Johnson, 'An Unapologetic Apology: The David Story as a Complex Response to Monarchy', in *The Book of Samuel and Its Response to Monarchy,* ed. Sara Kipfer and Jeremy M. Hutton (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2021), 225-242, here 225.
[66] Alter, *The David Story,* xvii.

such interest and attention, much has already been said about such an ambiguous figure as that of the shepherd-king.

David is portrayed as an immediately charismatic, handsome young man who possesses a certain 'spark' which Saul is lacking, and either through divine intervention, political scheming, or sheer dumb luck David succeeds. The young man's propensity for perceiving or recognising longevity is impressive as "he remains a rational and farsighted architect of kingly institutions long before his attainment of actual kingship".[67] David stands as 'better' than his royal predecessor in so far that David understands that "the one who sought to retain power lost it, brought down by Yahweh, so David's only hope was to hold lightly to power".[68] David's rise could be argued as being fortuitous because he accepts God's will and authority, as opposed to Saul who seemed to resist it.[69] David's rise and Saul's corresponding fall express a recurring theme of God's ultimate authority, showing that God will have "a man of his own choosing as king" which moves the narrative beyond the "negative appraisal of monarchy presented previously".[70] The Books of Samuel are a "means of political propaganda" which does not shy away from the ambiguous and negative facets of David's character.[71] The presence of such ambiguity in David's portrayal is a testament to the enigmatic nature of his 'person' wherein even the "storyteller does not always know" what to make of Israel's shepherd-king.[72]

1.3 - Bakhtinian Approaches to the Biblical Text (*Status Quaestionis)*:

The approach of Mikhail Bakhtin, in comparison to narrative criticism, is an area that has only recently begun to gain attention in relation to the Books of Samuel. His theories of polyphony and dialogism have proven to be the ones most scholars have gravitated towards. For example, Bodner utilises said methodologies in an unpublished SBL seminar paper.[73] Moving away from his previous focus on David, Bodner here discusses the character of Saul as being a particular viewpoint or collection of polyphonic voices

[67] Rosenberg, '1 and 2 Samuel', 129.
[68] Firth, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 30.
[69] Ibid, 47.
[70] McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 20.
[71] Brueggemann, *David's Truth*, 14.
[72] Ibid, 16.
[73] Bodner, 'Problems of Deuteronomist's Poetics: David, Saul, and the Allegory of the Cave' (*SBL* San Diego, 2007), unpublished paper presented at SBL conference in San Diego, 2007, available at: http://home.nwciowa.edu/wacome/bodner.pdf [accessed: 11th August 2021].

immersed in one figure, speaking on the world, rather than just an assortment of traits. In the event of the cave encounter (1 Sam 24), Bodner notes that Saul comes to a sort of interior conclusion about David as being his successor. This revelation accurately reflects a historical reality or worldview and therefore Saul becomes an approximation of what Bakhtin would call a hero, who is not so much a character as being a particular perspective.[74]

Benjamin J. Johnson engages this multiplicity of voices that speak in the text when discussing David's impressive 'curriculum vitae' (1 Sam 16:18) which Saul's servants construct for the shepherd-king.[75] Mary Mills has applied the notion of polyphony to Ecclesiastes and Jonah, highlighting the presence of a multiplicity of opposing voices and narrative conversations within the texts concerning the royal persona.[76] Albert Sui-Hyung Lee has also applied Bakhtinian terminology (specifically dialogism) to the Book of Judges, in an attempt to exposit the dialogue that is occurring within the narrative on the subject of monarchy.[77] Lee recognises a multiplicity of voices in the text which exist as pro-monarchical and anti-monarchical, and are examples of the "interpersonal tensions" that existed within the Israelite community.[78]

Barbara Green in particular has focused her attention on an application of dialogic elements to the stories involving Saul in 1 Samuel – alongside David and Jonathan. Green employs the notion of *exotopy* in her discussion of 1 Samuel – in particular the characters of Saul, David, and Jonathan. She has two central works in which she utilises Bakhtinian ideas; *Mikhail Bakhtin and Biblical Scholarship* and *How Are The Mighty Fallen? A Dialogical Study of King Saul in 1 Samuel.*[79] Green focuses on the Bakhtinian concept of exotopy in the former work. Exotopy explores the concept of a multifaceted approach to exploring a character; it is not just how a reader or author views them that informs the characterisation. It is how the character views themselves, others, and in turn how others

[74] Ibid, 8.
[75] Benjamin J. Johnson, 'David Then and Now: Double-Voiced Discourse in 1 Samuel 16:14-23'. *JSOT* (2013), 455-466, here 455.
[76] Mary Mills, "Polyphonic Narration in Ecclesiastes and Jonah", in *Reading Ecclesiastes Intertextually*, ed. Katherine Dell and Will Kynes, LHBOTS 587 (London: T&T Clark, 2015), 71-83.
[77] Albert Sui-Hyung Lee, *Dialogue on Monarchy in the Gideon-Abimelech Narrative: Ideological Reading in Light of Bakhtin's Dialogism*, BibInt 187 (Leiden: Brill, 2021).
[78] Ibid, 3.
[79] Green, *Mikhail Bakhtin and Biblical Scholarship: An Introduction,* SBL SemeiaSt 38 *(*Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2000) and *How Are the Mighty Fallen? A Dialogical Study of King Saul in 1 Samuel,* JSOT Sup 365, *(*London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003).

view the character, how outside persons view the observing others and the character in question and so on.[80] It is an unfinalised and unending mode of characterisation analysis, with this layering effect of competing voices 'sketching out' the character. Overall, Green's focus however falls more in line with Good's interpretation of Saul as a tragic figure.

For Green – looking first at *Mikhail Bakhtin and Biblical Scholarship* – Israel's first king is a character who is unable or unwilling to inform himself or others of his character zone.[81] Green stretches this lack of communication to encompass God and the people of Israel. She depicts this failure in the relationship and the subsequent demand for a king (1 Sam 8) as like a "squabbling couple" who believe having a baby will fix their broken marriage.[82] Utterances play a large role here for Green, as utterances that Saul fears reflect a type of truth he is unwilling to see which he attributes to outside forces who are mocking him or wish to see him undone (cf. 1 Sam 18:7). Saul 'borrows' speech from others; thereby his own viewpoint of the world is pressed into the narrative.

In her second large work – *How Are the Mighty Fallen?* – Green moves further with this concept of the multiplicity of 'drawings' of a character, using the dialogic principle of authoring as in her previous work. Saul's viewpoint, as outlined in *Mikhail Bakhtin and Biblical Scholarship,* is only one facet of this character construction. Green depicts the process of authoring as akin to a large art studio; Saul 'paints' himself, David, and others (including God), while all these other participants paint Saul, themselves, and all those around themselves.[83] It is an ever-widening gyre of characterisation - unfinished and unfinalised - which Bakhtin most enjoyed about the concept of discourse itself and the manner in which it can used, describing the diversity of a character *speaking* as "a concrete integral phenomen[on]".[84] By this act of 'painting', a certain responsibility is then taken up by each participant, a responsibility that Saul feels unable to take on.[85] Saul is unable or

[80] Green, *Mikhail Bakhtin and Biblical Scholarship*, 33-34. Green uses three different designations for elements of this process of authoring in exotopy; the *I-for-myself* (how the 'I' might see myself), the *I-for-the-other* (how another might see me), and the *other-for-me* (how I might see another). These three components are necessary for this exotopy: the outside view becomes part of the internal perception of oneself and the world.
[81] Green, *Mikhail Bakhtin and Biblical Scholarship*, 164 and 170. See Bakhtin's own discussion of exotopy and the hero as worldview – *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics,* Theory and History of Literature 8, ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 10.
[82] Green, *How Are the Mighty Fallen?* 218. Note also the lending of a more human veneer to this portrayal of God and people, beyond merely ungrateful community and wrathful deity.
[83] Ibid, 195-196 and 233.
[84] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 183.
[85] Ibid, 239.

unwilling to 'author' himself or others responsibly, which leads to the fundamental breakdown of genuine communication of the character. Green here focuses on the initial lead into the establishment of the monarchy (1 Sam 8), and the lack of communication between all parties – Israel, Samuel, and God – which has the newly made king starting on the 'wrong foot' from the beginning.

In both the books discussed, Green seems to lean more towards this idea of Saul as a flawed and tragic character – whether for an innate inability to communicate or see the truth of his situation, or because his failure stands as some sort of riddle or lesson to be learned. Another work which utilises this Bakhtinian lens with regards biblical narratives is Stacy Burton's "Bakhtin, Temporality, and Modern Narrative: Writing the 'Whole Triumphant Murderous Unstoppable Chute'" which looks at the way in which the chronotope has shaped certain elements of literary analysis.[86]

In connection to Bakhtin's concept of the carnivalesque, several scholars have applied the broader term of comedy or laughter to biblical passages, showing how certain texts could be considered 'funny' or at least parodic in tone.[87] Yet denoting something as being humorous is a tricky undertaking, with humour itself being highly subjective depending on the perceiver and the context of it.[88] In applying humour to something as potentially divisive as a religious text there can be the implication that something is being taken lightly rather than taking it humorously.[89] David Firth does not perceive the Books of Samuel as being comedic in nature, but sees them rather as a piece of prose "concerned with political events, involving historical characters".[90] J. Cheryl Exum and William Whedbee denote tragedy as being the failure of satire to move toward restoration.[91] In their article, they did not find restoration in Saul's story, and the tragedy inherent in Saul's tale

[86] Stacy Burton, 'Bakhtin, Temporality, and Modern Narrative: Writing the "Whole Triumphant Murderous Unstoppable Chute"', in *Comparative Literature* (Vol. 8, No. 1), 1996, 39-64.
[87] Works include: Juliana Claassens, "Tragic Laughter: Laughter as Resistance in the Book of Job", *Int.* 69 (2015), 143-155; Benjamin Johnson, "Humor in the Midst of Tragedy: The Comic Vision of 1 Samuel 4-6", *JBL* 141 (2022), 65-82; Joel S. Kaminsky, "Humor and the Theology of Hope: Isaac as a Humorous Figure", *Interpretation* 54.4 (2000), 1-11; Willie Van Heerden, "Why Humour in the Bible Plays Hide and Seek with Us", *Social Identities* 7:1 (2001), 75-96; Helen Paynter, *Reduced Laughter: Seriocomic Features and their Functions in the Book of Kings* (Leiden, NL: Brill, 2016).
[88] Athalya Brenner and Yehuda T. Radday. Radday, "Between Intentionality and Reception: Acknowledgement and Application (A Preview)", in *On Humour and the Comic in the Hebrew Bible,* ed. Yehuda T. and Athalya Brenner, JSOT Sup 92 (Sheffield: Almond, 1990), pages 13-19.
[89] M. Conrad Hyers, "The Comic Profanation of the Sacred", in *Holy Laughter: Essays on Religion in the Comic Perspective,* ed. M. Conrad Hyers (New York: Seabury Press, 1969), pages 9-27, here 13.
[90] Firth, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 20.
[91] Exum and Whedbee, "Isaac, Samson, and Saul: Reflections on the Comic and Tragic Visions", 121.

is negated by the "sanguine" mood observed with David.[92] Yet this need not be the case, and the pair even recognise the humorous elements inherent in the narrative concerning Saul, in its "moments of comic incongruity".[93]

Helen Paynter applies the notion of the seriocomic to the Books of Kings, utilising "final-form criticism" in an attempt to uncover aspects of this darker form of comedy in the texts.[94] She discusses how the seriocomic features in the Book of Kings seeks to "subvert the reader's attitude to Elisha, and then by use of mirroring, scorn is diverted towards Elijah".[95] Paynter recognises certain aspects of irony and satire in the literature which may have otherwise been overlooked, using a purely literary or 'standard' method of inquiry.[96] This tragicomic genre leaves "nobody exempt from its scrutiny" and is at times "crude, violent, and funny", with the text retaining a "deliberate ambiguity".[97]

Where comedy seems to be in a text, its presence enables the process of reflecting on it, so long as comedy is not forced into a text which simply does not have it. The form of comedy that could be 'at play' within the Samuel narratives is a darker, more parodic form which does "not necessarily seek to elicit laughter as a response".[98] This darker form of comedy prefers to make a statement or pronouncement against a particular 'evil', and so these forms of comedy penetrate deeper amongst the audience than more conventional forms of humour as it "derives from what [is] normally regard[ed] as tragic".[99] Parody, dark humour, and satire act to "make the audience suffer without the relief of tears and to make it mock without a true relief of laughter", as these forms are aimed at a 'higher' sense of comedy which is to undermine something.[100]

Juliana Claassens denotes this form of laughter as something which had become "an important strategy for survival" as one find levity in events which should be considered dark or even macabre.[101] Here then laughter exists within tragedy to serve "the purpose of

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[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Paynter, *Reduced Laughter*, 15.
[95] Ibid, 11.
[96] Ibid, 19.
[97] Ibid, 2 and 10.
[98] Melissa A. Jackson, *Comedy and Feminist Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible: A Subversive Collaboration*, (London: Oxford University Press, 2012), 9.
[99] Walter Kerr, *Tragedy and Comedy* (New York: Da Capo, 1985), 17.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Claassens, "Tragic Laughter", 143. Claassens discusses the use of laughter in relation to the events of Job. This particular quote is used in relation to humour arising out of the experiences of the Holocaust, highlighting the endurance which laughter instils.

interrupting oppressive structures" or ideologies.[102] The seriocomic then can be said to offer a litmus test "as to what is the common consensus of truth".[103] The cathartic release associated with laughing may not be readily accessible here because of its aim as well as its contact with these more tragic sensibilities.[104] In this sense, these darker forms of comedy become "the groan made gay" wherein the individual is prevented from "succumbing to despair or losing faith", and it is in these darker forms of comedy that are tinged with a sense of the tragic that carnival exists.[105]

Juliana Claassens applies the concept of tragic laughter to the Book of Job, the act of laughter being explored as an aid to "understand what it means to be human".[106] The 'evils' visited upon Job and the interactions that are recounted (with Job's acquaintances and God) become a parodical response to suffering wherein laughter is "integrally connected to the preservation of the dignity of the suffering individual".[107] Benjamin Johnson also utilises the aspect of tragic laughter in the Books of Samuel, specifically the ark narrative of 1 Samuel 4-6. Johnson denotes the dark humour within the narrative as being "part of how the story works".[108] The problems of the subjectivity of humour are not easily overcome, yet Johnson employs the notion of "psychological distance".[109] For allowing the thing being ridiculed and allowing it to be considered 'funny' the mockery must be at the expense of the 'other' (here, the Philistines). Yet this mockery is reversed later in the narrative with the mass-killing of Israelites by God (1 Sam 6:19). In this way, the seriocomic genre is used to reverse the role of the one being mocked, from the Philistines to the Israelites, wherein the strife of the former was humorous and the injuries of the latter are deemed to be tragic. Johnson suggests that the turn from mockery to tragedy in the narrative is designed to eradicate the cultural distance between Philistine and Israelite, or at least to stand "as a warning that those who see the Philistines purely as the other or the enemy and the Israelites purely as the good guys become the new butt of the

[102] Ibid, 145.
[103] Paynter, *Reduced Laughter*, 4.
[104] J.L. Styan, *The Dark Comedy: The Development of Modern Comic Tragedy* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 260.
[105] Kerr, *Tragedy and Comedy*, 19; Claassens, "Tragic Laughter", 148.
[106] Claassens, "Tragic Laughter", 154.
[107] Ibid, 152.
[108] Benjamin Johnson, "Humor in the Midst of Tragedy: The Comic Vision of 1 Samuel 4-6", *JBL* 141 (2022), 65-82, here 65.
[109] Ibid, 66.

joke".[110] Yet, similarly to Claassens, Johnson stops short of fully recognising the carnivalesque in these chapters.

There has been limited progress made in applying Bakhtin's concept of the carnival to biblical scholarship. There have only been a handful of notable works that have utilised this approach. In her work on Christianity and Bakhtin, Ruth Coates has a chapter that applies the carnival lens to select New Testament texts. Interestingly, she finds elements of the carnivalesque even in the tragedy of Jesus' crucifixion. She has a larger focus on the notion of laughter being central to the overall carnival tone, stopping short of aspects such as the grotesque body and depictions of the lower stratum.[111] When speaking about the carnivalesque elements of the New Testament, Coates states that God "ceases to be an abstract principle" of the unfathomable entity, and places himself on the "horizontal plane".[112] God, as a divine figure, ceases to be merely some sort of figure who is considered to be on such a cosmic level that he can no longer reside in the world. Instead, God moves himself into the world (which Bakhtin terms the 'horizontal plane'), and is enmeshed with it.[113] For Coates' purposes, she speaks specifically about the crucifixion as this point in which God is drawn into the world.[114]

Geoff R. Webb also uses the carnival, alongside aspects of multi-layered dialogue and elements of the chronotope, within his discussion of select passages from the Gospel of Mark.[115] Webb begins at the level of dialogue within the narrative, utilising a three-fold tier system of speech by characters in order to reveal the metalinguistic play ongoing within the text.[116] Using this matrix, Webb perceives within these levels of dialogue not just characters interacting through speech but also "interactions among speech genres and their secondary derivatives – literary genres".[117] Webb places his fleshing out of the importance of genre, and the literature of the Roman Saturnalia which would have been to some degree contemporaneous with the writing of the Gospels, at the forefront of his discussion as the core point at which the text of Mark becomes carnivalesque. This interaction of

[110] Johnson, "Humor in the Midst of Tragedy", 82.
[111] Ruth Coates, *Christianity in Bakhtin: God and the Exiled Author (*Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 126-151.
[112] Ibid, 133.
[113] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 364-365.
[114] Coates, *Christianity in Bakhtin*, 133.
[115] Geoff R. Webb, *Mark at the Threshold: Applying Bakhtinian Categories to Markan Characterisation*, BibInt 95 (Leiden: Brill, 2008).
[116] Ibid, 234.
[117] Ibid, 31.

contemporaneous literature is important for the building of "genre-memory" as a map through which the literary work is able "to respond to a specific situation".[118]

In his utilisation of the carnival, Webb relies more on the generic conventions of satire arising from literature such as *Callirhoe* and *Ephesiaca,* and other more "common" or "vulgar" forms, in order to show the process of the carnival undermining the dominant hegemony of the Markan gospel (i.e. the Roman authorities, the Pharisees, or other overly serious religiosity).[119] The more grotesque elements of defecation are not mentioned in Webb's discussion, but he does discuss the presence of feasting, sexual indecencies, nudity, and folly within the Gospel of Mark at various points, seeing it as linking with the "socio-cultural questions of purity and the maintenance of body-boundaries".[120] Within this matrix of the Bakhtinian "pantheon", Webb shows how the movement of the disciples to come to terms with Jesus' identity and the mission of the disciples is transmitted to the hearing-reader, who is invited to continue following Jesus like the disciples.[121] The idea of a carnival mask being removed and replaced upon Jesus as the carnival clown (and subsequently the clown-king at the time of the Passion) serves to underline the ambiguity of the gospel, reflecting the ambiguous nature of the carnival itself. It is at the threshold of understanding that the reader is brought and required to respond or not to the utterances of the characters surrounding the person of Jesus. Justin Andrew James Comber also utilises the carnival lens to examine aspects of the Gospel of Mark, focusing again on this ability of the carnivalised literature to undermine authorial positions and figures through the use of comedy and the duality of images.[122]

Laurence L. Welborn applies carnivalesque elements to 1 Corinthians 1-4 against Paul's declaration of the cross being "foolishness" (1 Cor 1:18).[123] Welborn posits the figure of the fool as witnessed in Greco-Roman culture as consisting of "a weakness or deficiency of intellect, often coupled with a physical grotesqueness", whose role was to "make fun of a primary action by imitation and intrusion".[124] The figure of the fool allowed

[118] Webb, *Mark at the Threshold*, 37.
[119] Ibid, 236.
[120] Ibid, 237.
[121] Ibid, 232.
[122] Justin Andrew James Comber, "Torn Between Two Kingdoms: A Bakhtinian Reading of Characters in the Gospel of Mark" (PhD Diss., McMaster Divinity College, 2016), 7-286.
[123] Laurence L. Welborn, "Paul's Appropriation of the Role of the Fool in 1 Corinthians 1-4", *BibInt* 10.4 (2002), 420-435.
[124] Welborn, "Paul's Appropriation of the Role of the Fool in 1 Corinthians 1-4", 424.

for a certain "freedom" in permitting "the utterance of a dangerous truth".[125] Welborn suggests that Paul has accepted the role of the fool, and his presentation of the cross as being folly is to be understood against the "background of the popular theatre and the fool's role" in it.[126] Paul was labelled as the fool by his Corinthian detractors, and being accredited such a part, he was granted a degree of freedom to ridicule the "sense of superiority" that existed among the leaders of the church in Corinth, thus embracing his designation as a fool as it was through the 'foolishness' of the cross that God himself had chosen folly.[127]

Mathias Nygaard also approaches Paul's writing in 1 Corinthians in a similar fashion, utilising the carnivalesque lens to examine the subversive nature of the Pauline literature.[128] Paul (according to Nygaard) oversteps certain limits of societal norms between Jews and Gentiles, allowing for the creation of new ones. This is accomplished through five points originating from the concept of the carnival, marked out by Nygaard as significant for Pauline literature: "(1) it [carnival] entails an unhindered interaction between all people; (2) in it otherwise impermissible behavior is accepted; (3) it is set towards a uniting of opposites; (4) it explores the sacrilegious; and (5) it constitutes a redefinition of the physical and the bodily".[129] Nygaard perceives all of these aspects as existing in Pauline literature as Paul "preaches a foolish gospel about Christ crucified".[130] Thus, Nygaard argues that Paul's writings can be said to be truly carnivalesque as they reject "that which is complete and closed".[131]

Susanne Gillmayr-Bucher has applied the Bakhtinian notion of the carnivalesque, and the notion of double-voiced discourse to the Book of Judges, specifically with regards the character of Samson. Her argument centres on the acceptance of a plethora of 'voices' within the text.[132] The first voice is witnessed in the preface (Judg 2:14-15), which "reveals an increasing distance from God", with the need for a saviour for the beleaguered community.[133] These saviours, temporary as they are, take the form of judges whose vibrant personalities and the exposition of their personal exploits stands counter to the languid

[125] Ibid, 433-434.
[126] Ibid, 435.
[127] Ibid, 434.
[128] Mathias Nygaard, "Bakhtinian Carnivalesque and Paul's Foolish and Scandalous Gospel", BibInt 26 (2018), 369-390.
[129] Ibid, 369.
[130] Ibid, 377.
[131] Ibid, 390.
[132] Susanne Gillmayr-Bucher, "Framework and Discourse in the Book of Judges", *JBL* 128 (2009), 687-702.
[133] Ibid, 689.

judge outlined in the preface by the narrator. It is the characterisation of these judges that comes to the fore, portraying them as human figures who possess flaws and failures, challenging the witness of judgeship outlined in the preface. The greatest challenge to this notion of leadership comes in the form of Samson, who acts as the text's carnival king through his ridicule and debasement suffered at the hands of the Philistines. Samson manages to undermine the text's own view of judges as mere tools for God's use. The judge is instead perceived as working with God, becoming an "anti-authoritarian force" within the text itself.[134]

Writing on the final text under investigation in this thesis, Bruce Rosenstock looks at the application of carnivalesque themes with the bringing of the ark into Jerusalem (2 Sam 6).[135] He also utilises Mediterranean rituals that incorporated dancing, genital displays, and the idea of royal phallic power into their celebrations.[136] The divine glory was reflected or present in this royal phallic power which symbolised the fertility of both the people and the land through their monarch. Rosenstock's focus here is more on the notion of appropriate worship. David represents this correct manner of worship of God that does not seek to honour itself but rather to honour God, whereas Michal in 2 Samuel 6:20 exemplifies an incorrect manner of worship that seeks to honour oneself in parity with God. Rosenstock presents this conflict as that of royal glory and divine glory.[137] Rosenstock understates the role of God, focusing more on the interaction of David and Michal and the debasement inherent in their encounter. David debases himself, thereby parodying the royal phallic power inherent in divine glory, whereby the divine glory may remain hidden whereas this royal phallic power becomes particularly visible to those celebrating and Michal.

David debases himself, and thereby his own glory, through exposing himself and thus gives greater revelation to divine glory, and this humiliation is "meant to signal the inversion of the expected pattern" of glorification of king and Deity.[138] This stands in opposition to Michal's perception of glory, wherein glory must remain hidden.[139] David's exposure, though offensive to Michal, "is the carnivalisation of the subject's pretensions to

[134] Gillmayr-Bucher, "Framework and Discourse in the Book of Judges", 700.
[135] Bruce Rosenstock, "David's Play: Fertility Rituals and the Glory of God in 2 Samuel 6", JSOT 31 (2006), 63-80.
[136] Ibid, 68.
[137] Ibid, 73-74.
[138] Ibid, 67.
[139] Ibid, 65.

glory and power".[140] The implied nudity of the king is "represented as a refusal by David to claim glory for himself in a way that YHWH does", and becomes "a declaration of his unique intimacy with" the Deity.[141] Michal is not privy to this liberation and so remains 'fruitless' and excluded. Rosenstock moves further than Coates does, discussing the more bodily aspects of the carnival, but the focus is once more upon David, with Michal situated as the antagonist much like her father, Saul. Nehama Aschkenasy also utilises the concept of the carnival in an examination of Ruth, focusing on the undermining of the typical patriarchal authority within the carnival space.[142]

To this point, no study known has yet employed the concept of the carnival extensively with the 1 Samuel narrative involving Saul, David, God, or other surrounding characters. The carnival framework has been applied to the text of Esther in book-length studies by Kenneth Craig and Trisha Gambiana, yet specific application of carnivalesque elements to the Books of Samuel is rare.[143] Benjamin Johnson has also applied the notion of humour and tragedy to 1 Samuel 4-6 (the capture of the ark by the Philistines) but stops short of utilising the carnivalesque concept with the material.[144] Paynter has used the idea of tragicomedy in the Book of Kings yet, similarly to Johnson, does not move fully toward an application of the carnival.[145]

Hitherto, the prevailing concept of Saul has been as a tragic or flawed character. Yet with the carnival, this dissertation will seek to place the character of Saul into a more comedic – if darkly comedic – environment. Previous examinations of Saul have stressed his being the primary antagonist within the concluding sections of 1 Samuel, as the foil to David, or a tragic figure who does not necessarily inspire a comedic outlook.[146] This dissertation will seek to redress this imbalance of gravity in the narrative, pointing out particular elements of the text that can prove to be carnivalesque or darkly comedic. Saul will form the nucleus of this portrayal, taking him as the carnival clown who is energised

[140] Ibid, 71.
[141] Rosenstock, "David's Play", 73 and 74.
[142] Nehama Aschkenasy, "Reading Ruth Through a Bakhtinian Lens: The Carnivalesque in a Biblical Tale", *JBL* (Vol. 126, No. 3), 2007, 437-453.
[143] Kenneth Craig, *Reading Esther: A Case for the Literary Carnivalesque*, Literary Currents in Biblical Research (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1995); Trisha Gambiana Wheelock, "Drunk and Disorderly: A Bakhtinian Reading of the Banquet Scenes in the Book of Esther", PhD Diss., Baylor University. Dept. of Religion, 2009.
[144] Johnson, "Humor in the Midst of Tragedy", 69.
[145] Paynter, *Reduced Laughter*.
[146] Note here: Gunn, *The Fate of King Saul*, 23. Gunn discusses God's seeming outward hostility to Saul, as opposed to his benevolence toward David.

(1 Sam. 10:9-11; 11:6) and debased (1 Sam. 16:14; 18:12) by God, the cosmic terror. The clown's death ultimately brings about the communal display of laughter and regrowth in the character of David (2 Sam. 6), at the culmination of the 'parade', whereupon the cosmic terror finds its own space amongst the community.

1.3 - Research Question and Hypothesis:

There is a significant interest in the area of characterisation within 1 and 2 Samuel, specifically the characters of David and Saul. The majority of recent literature has focused on a *tragic* portrayal of the 1 Samuel narrative, with Saul as the central tragic figure, who is portrayed as either the raving antagonist or more popularly as the tragic king who was destined to fail.[147] Even when scholars have utilised Bakhtinian approaches, this pitiful depiction of Israel's first king has tended to prevail. Yet it is worthwhile to explore other ways of assessing Saul as a character, who can be considered just as ambiguous and multifaceted as David. Similarly, it is beneficial to discuss the figure of God, as he appears in the text, aside from the conventional 'clock-maker' deity.[148] Therefore, this dissertation seeks to answer the following: *Can select chapters of 1 and 2 Samuel be viewed as having a carnivalesque aspect? And if so, what would God's role be within such a carnival system?* Other studies of questions relating to specific characters in the narrative, such as Saul, have addressed the tragic element of the text of 1 Samuel. Previous research has discussed Saul's being a foil for David, with David as the perfect shepherd-king, or as a deeply ambiguous figure. In addition, Green has investigated how one can 'sketch' Saul's character through the Bakhtinian methods of reported speech, exotopy, and authoring.[149] The portrayal of God has often played a comparatively minor role in such discussions.

Select chapters of 1 Samuel can offer a less tragic interpretation of events involving Saul, who will form the central figure for this dissertation, as the larger volume of material will be utilised which involves his character. The major question for discussion will be to see if Saul, David, and God can be viewed as comedic figures, when the Bakhtinian methodology of carnival is placed alongside the text. Saul and David can be seen as

[147] See Good, *Irony In The Old Testament,* 57. Green also discusses Saul as being a tragic figure rather than an outright "villain", stating that his being 'weak is not the same as bad' (*How Are the Mighty Fallen?* 179).
[148] See: Carl Jung, *Answer to Job* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), who gives a more nuanced examination of God's character in the Book of Job. Here, Jung assesses God psychologically and discusses his being borderline amoral.
[149] Green, *How are the Mighty Fallen?* 192-217.

representative of two differing yet connected entities, with God acting amongst them. Various questions arise: What is David in relation to the overall carnival aesthetic? Is God to be considered in the narrative as the cosmic terror (as Bakhtin phrases it) or some sort of unpredictable spirit which engages with different characters in drastically different ways? How and why does God as the cosmic terror differ in his interactions with Saul and David? Does God's interaction in history and the community change the tenor of his being fully the cosmic terror? Why do Saul and God have such an estranged relationship, in comparison to David? Is this distance between the two significant beyond the effect it has on Saul? Is God, as the cosmic terror, to be considered as good, bad, or neither (by human estimations)? To what degree is Saul actively participating in the carnival if the opening chapter of his story shows him reluctant to even continue on his journey (1 Sam 9:5)? Is David the fulfilment of the carnival (2 Sam 6) or another 'brighter' side of the clown-king? The carnival as a genre (or mutation of other genres) seeks to undermine or ridicule a particular dominant ideology. It is language about these carnivalised figures which "uncrowns, covers with ridicule, kills the old world (the old authority and truth), and at the same time gives birth to the new".[150] If this is the case, what exactly is being 'made fun of' by the narrative?

The hypothesis for this thesis is that selected chapters of 1 and 2 Samuel *can* indeed be viewed as a carnivalesque in nature, when utilising the carnival ideology of Bakhtin. The core ideology being ridiculed and exposed is that of the ANE concepts surrounding kingship and deities. The people of Israel have subscribed to this ideology and pushed it to the fore (cf. Judg 2:11-13, 17; 3:7, 12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1; 1 Sam 8: 4-5), thus rendering it as a dominant hegemony that the narrative of Samuel is reacting to. The figures of the clown-king and the cosmic terror exist within this parodic carnival reality, acting out the reaction to and against this governing ideology. While the figures of God and David will play prominent roles in this thesis, Saul will be given greater attention due to his being the immediate progeny of the venture of kingship between God and people.

Initially looking at Saul in 1 Samuel, the scholarly consensus has viewed him as a tragic figure or as the primary antagonist for David, a sort of "alter ego" for the shepherd-king.[151] Green marks this characterisation as dismissive, "by labelling Saul as deluded,

[150] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 207.
[151] Robert Polzin, "David and the Deuteronomist: 2 Samuel", in *Literary Study of the Deuteronomic History*, vol. 3. (Bloomington: IN: Indiana University Press, 1993), 5.

paranoid, tragic", which "seems a shame in a story that spends its detail about this figure with considerable care".[152] This thesis will move aside from this construction of Saul as a tragic character, exploring him as more of a comedic figure through utilising Bakhtin's carnival theory, within the scope of his undermining the ANE concept of *what* a king should be. The nature of the 1 Samuel narrative, when viewing select chapters, can offer the occasion for a more comedic (or tragicomic) reception of it. As the central character in these chapters, Saul can therefore be described as being a carnival figure, or at least having aspects of dark comedy. The characters of God and David can also be placed in this carnivalesque atmosphere, as the cosmic terror and the fulfilment of the carnival respectively.

To place this hypothesis into the tone and imagery of the carnival as put forth by Bakhtin, it can be suggested that Saul is the clown-*cum*-king, ridiculing a popular ANE image of a monarch. Saul is crowned and then through the course of the narrative is debased and beaten. This is done so that the growth and renewal of the people may ultimately commence, so that a flourishing of the community may occur, and this should not be "seen as a return to chaos, but as a creative reordering by the God who has placed the world on [his] cosmic pillars".[153] Samuel, as one of the town criers (uttering *cris de Paris* as Bakhtin would put it) both insults and compliments Saul as he parades the newly minted king before the people of Israel (1 Sam 9:20; 10:24).[154] It is these 'cries' which could at any moment "show their other side; that is, they may be turned into abuses and oaths".[155] God may stand as the cosmic terror of the narrative; both a terrifying and destructive force that cannot be controlled by the community, but also the rejuvenating potency that allows for renewal and growth. This growth of the community is achieved when the story of David reaches its climax in 2 Samuel 6. That aspect of the cosmic terror or unpredictable spirit of God is well captured here when Uzzah is struck down, but this same spirit invigorates the community as the ark enters Jerusalem.

Within the narrative, viewed from a Bakhtinian perspective, David thus can be said to be the body in which the cosmic terror truly finds its own place in the universe. David is thus another form of the clown-king figure, further undermining this popular ANE concept

[152] Green, *How are the Mighty Fallen?* 383.
[153] James S. Ackerman, "Who Can Stand Before YHWH, This Holy God? A Reading of 1 Samuel 1-15", *Prooftexts* 11/1 (1991), 1-24, here 4.
[154] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 181.
[155] Ibid, 187.

of the king by subverting that expected portrayal of *how* such a monarchic figure should act. David re-establishes the role of the king in new terms, bringing the carnival parade to a close in 2 Samuel 6, wherein the community and God reach their zenith. The conclusion then sees the growth and prosperity of the people, ushered in after the clown's debasement (both Saul and David). David is posited as a 'pivot point' within the scheme of the narrative, being the point at which the carnival 'swings' upward toward its conclusion in 2 Samuel 6. David is thus pivotal in the Books of Samuel as he becomes a "model that is positive for the future" for the community.[156] This modelling is accomplished over the 'body' of Saul, yet the death of Israel's first monarch enables the rise of the nation's carnival leader in David, and so retains a positive energy that overcomes the tragedy inherent in Saul's death.

David here is taken to be the climax of the carnival through whom the euphoric end may be brought into the community, as God has found his own shape or *becoming* in the world. Thus, subverting the expected *conduct* witnessed in other ANE gods, the unknowable God becomes 'at home' with his community, wherein the boundaries between the mundane and the sacred are totally removed between God and the people. There is a desire or willingness on the part of God to enter the world, to become enmeshed with the people, which stands in contrast to the more removed, or static ANE deities (as evidenced and ridiculed in 1 Sam 5:1-5). The linked figures of the clown-king, Saul, and his 'brighter' counterpart of the new king, David, bring about this entrance. These two linked utterances of the clown-king, and the dynamic form of the cosmic terror, subvert and undermine this stagnant ANE form of a community surrounding the concepts of king and gods as the foundation of a civilised society. God's activity within the community leads to the introduction of the monarchy, which "symbolised the unity of the nation, transcending the divisions of families and clans".[157] Yet the efforts of the Books of Samuel are to reveal the defective nature of this ideology or outlook, supplanting it with its own form. It is thus the death of one form in favour of the rebirth and renewal of the community in the new.

[156] Firth, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 45.
[157] Karel van der Toorn, "Saul and the Rise of the Israelite State Religion", *VT* 43 (1993), 519-542, here 528.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

The theory of narrative criticism will serve as a background for the initial entry into the select passages of 1 and 2 Samuel (1 Sam 9-11; 19:18-24; 24:1-8; 2 Sam 6), which will form the focal point of this thesis. The utilisation of this narrative methodology will follow the similar uses of it by contemporary scholars such as: Robert Alter, Adele Berlin, Mieke Bal, Jean-Louis Ska, Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, Jan Fokkelman, and Shimon Bar-Efrat.

Gary Yamasaki's *Perspective Criticism: Point of View and Evaluative Guidance in Biblical Narrative* will serve as the foundation of a perspective critical approach to the chosen chapters of 1 and 2 Samuel.[1] More specifically, the analysis will refer to selected elements from Mikhail Bakhtin's approach to narrative, especially his notion of the carnivalesque.[2] The method in this study will be eclectic, and utilising what is useful from Bakhtinian analysis for interpreting the selected passages of 1 and 2 Samuel.

2.1 - Settings, Plot, and Viewpoint:

The five headings of narrative criticism that will be used selectively as an entry method to the text are: settings, plot, viewpoint or perspective criticism, characterisation, and style. Settings are the spatial and temporal context in which the narrative takes place. The setting of a narrative is the textual landscape, within which the story progresses and the characters interact. It is the textual *terra firma* on which the story stands. A text without a solid setting lacks a sense of organisation. Setting is a twofold principle, encompassing both time (temporal setting) and space or place (geographical setting).[3] The chronological order of the narrative may also be an element of the temporal setting that can be 'played with'. The

[1] Gary Yamasaki, *Perspective Criticism: Point of View and Evaluative Guidance in Biblical Narrative* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 2013).

[2] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M Bakhtin*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981); *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson, Theory and History of Literature 8, ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1984); and especially *Rabelais and His World* (trans. Helene Iswolsky [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984]). Although some Bakhtin quotations employ masculine language for people (e.g. "men"), the wordings of the provided translations will be kept here, despite the gender bias.

[3] Some scholars identify the social setting as a third type of setting. This is the societal environment of a given text, or the social stratification which is being represented. Yet for the present purposes of this thesis, a discussion of a social setting would not be hugely beneficial. See James L. Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008), 110-113.

act of reading occurs in a linear fashion, and this process cannot be changed. This manner of reading usually sticks to one, central character as the primary perspective, to reduce confusion but also to align the reader with particular figures.[4] Here the character moves through the spatial setting and experiences the temporal setting of the text. Therefore, the reader has an 'avatar' of sorts to experience these surroundings through and with.

Biblical narratives in general often favour temporal settings over geographical locations, in terms of description.[5] This is probably due to the preference for the dramatic rather than the concrete, with quick movements between time frames or the slowing down of the narrative pace in order to create a sense of tension. Thus, the ebb and flow, disorder and reorder, of time allows for the characteristic biblical "movement and activity".[6] The re-shaping of the chronological order can alter the nature of the reading experience. This is done by applying either an analeptic or a proleptic 'glance' within the narrative structure. Analepsis is the recounting of events that have already taken place, and is referred to as a 'flash-back'. For instance, 1 Sam 11:1-4 moves backward narratively to show the reader the previous exploits of Nahash, before the reader is drawn forward to Saul, with the use of the Hebrew וְהִנֵּה ("and behold") to introduce the immediate action, placing the reader alongside Saul in the narrative present. Prolepsis, by contrast, is a 'flash forward' of the narrative, showing the future conditions of the story by moving forward in textual time. An example of 'fast-forward' is the mention of David taking Goliath's head to Jerusalem (1 Sam 17:54), despite the city of Jerusalem being a Canaanite stronghold, and still inhabited by the Jebusites, and so may be referring to the city becoming David's later in the narrative (2 Sam 5:6-9).[7]

Mikhail Bakhtin developed his thought of the represented "real world" within the text into what he terms the chronotope.[8] This term, literally meaning "time-space", conveys the concept that real fragments of historical time and space, and the real historical figures involved in said events, become a representation of their true form within the scope of the

[4] Yamasaki, *Perspective Criticism,* 22.
[5] This is the general shape of things when it comes to geographical locations and their descriptions. Yet there exist exceptions such as the lengthy description of the Elah Valley and the arrangement of the troops of Israel and the Philistines in 1 Samuel 17:1-4.
[6] Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 196.
[7] Keith Bodner, *1 Samuel: A Narrative Commentary,* HBM 19 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009), 188.
[8] Sue Vice, *Introducing Bakhtin* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 200.

text and recreate the text's own "social and political contexts".[9] It is within the text that time "thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot, and history".[10] The setting becomes imbued with a particular outlook and so depicts far more than just the textual 'bricks and mortar' being shown. For example, the fall of Saul as king of Israel and the subsequent rise of David is set approximately thirty years after the last judge 'retires', in the predominantly central provinces of ancient Israel.[11] Yet the composition of the material as it now stands may be derived from an entirely different era, which sought to legitimise David's rule by showing Saul to be mad and abandoned by God.[12]

The plot explains the movement of the text, what is being told and why. While the setting of a narrative places the story into an accessible temporal and spatial environment, the plot gives the narrative a structure and a purpose. Plot leans upon this sequential placement of events – as designed by the setting – by assigning to the narrative an organised progression of action. The central aim of the plot is advancement and the easy transmission of this movement to the reader, in as simple a manner as possible, from point 'A' to point 'B'. For a plot to work smoothly, each event must logically move into the next. The cause and effect of each narrative unit must be linked with the overall formal plot, and the development of each character within this plot must be impacted meaningfully by the events which occur in the story. Streamlining is central. The plot should be able to detail a movement of a character through an arch or ladder-like intensifying of events which then culminate in some kind of victory or defeat. Elements extraneous to this are unnecessary. A narrative, regardless of genre, follows a pattern or movement of action which ultimately reaches a conclusion. These patterns can be as simple as a pyramid-like structure of a rising action, climax, and falling action.[13] The extension of this more basic plot structure from

[9] Ibid, 201.
[10] Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel", in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M Bakhtin*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981), 84-258, here 84.
[11] See: 1 Sam 8:1, 4; 9; 10:17; 11:1; 13:1; 25:1.
[12] The material as it presently stands could be said to have been drawn out by the compiler of the narrative in order to "narrate how through David's conquests, the great nation of Israel was established under the Davidic dynasty" (Anthony Phillips, *David: A Story of Passion and Tragedy* [London: SPCK, 2008], 7).
[13] Ska, *Our Fathers Have Told Us*, 20. Here Ska is discussing Gustav Freytag's basic plot structure from his 1863 work entitled *Technik des Dramas* (*Technique of the Drama*).

Vladimir Propp (and ultimately from Aristotle) can be expanded to include the following elements: exposition, inciting moment, complication, denouement, and conclusion.[14]

As a text is read, there exists a need for the material presented to make sense. The best way for a narrative to ensure that it can be transmitted to a reader is to follow some sort of pattern as outlined above, avoiding extraneous material which is useless to the overall story. There is a "propensity for order [which] drives us to make sense of what we read".[15] Jean Louis Ska offers two forms of plot points which can arguably best summarise the clarity of a particular plot; the plot of resolution (what will happen?) and the plot of revelation (what will be learned of certain characters?).[16] If, at the end of a narrative, these two questions can be succinctly answered by a reader, then the plot has been formed well; the information (resolution) as well as a compelling movement of character development (revelation) has occurred. Plots move out from a point of establishment, with the conflict that arises serving as the propelling force as well as the organising principle for all that follows, leading to the resolution and conclusion.

The viewpoint is the particular perspective that is being shown to the reader. Yamasaki's study of perspective criticism will be the primary source for this aspect of narrative criticism. The different viewpoints presented to a reader can be on an ideological or temporal capacity (or 'plane' as Yamasaki says), or on a psychological one so that the reader may perceive the story world from a particular 'spot'.[17] Spatial, informational, and phraseological planes of point of view also constitute the perspective of a narrative. Within a narrative, the perspective guiding the viewpoint is that of the narrator; the figure inside the story world, standing as one of the structural components of the narrative. The narrator is the principal point of contact for the reader, addressing the readers directly as they are led through the story world. The narrator becomes similar to a textual tour guide. The literary entity constitutes "the sole means by which we can understand the reality which exists within a narrative".[18] The narrator should not be equated with the actual author of the text, the real person who penned or compiled the material being read. The narrator can be best approached by assessing the narratorial mode being deployed.

[14] Daniel Marguerat and Yvan Bourquin, *How To read Bible Stories: An Introduction to Narrative Criticism* (London: SCM, 1999), 43-44.
[15] Gunn and Fewell, *Narrative Art in the Hebrew Bible,* 102.
[16] Ska, *Our Fathers Have Told Us*, 18.
[17] Yamasaki, *Perspective Criticism*, 7.
[18] Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 13.

For biblical narratives, the narratorial mode employed is that of omniscience.[19] In terms of the Bakhtinian sense of diversity of voices within a text, the narrator within a biblical text exists as a sort of tour guide of the narrative world being depicted yet may impart a particular viewpoint or stance within the text. For instance, the people's request for a king to Samuel (and God) witnesses the merging of multiple voices, from the people (1 Sam 8:5-6, 19-20), Samuel (1 Sam 8:6, 10-18), God (1 Sam 8:7-9), and the narrator (1 Sam 8:1-3, 19). These voices interact and collide, leaving the question of the legitimacy of kingship open and unfinished as a piece of dialogue.[20] Biblical narrators, as well as being presented as omniscient, operate in a covert manner.[21] This means their presence is often minimised and their impact within the narrative is reduced. However to describe a narrator as covert is not to denote their being objective. The narrator retains the ability to choose particular descriptions and portray aspects of certain characters in ways which suggest a standpoint or perspective.

The narrator then proves to be the principal manner of establishing the particular perspective in a narrative. The narrator is thus the conduit through which the specific viewpoint of the text is portrayed for the reader. The ideological plane of point of view, as Yamasaki terms it, is that perspective which the narrator sets out for the reader.[22] This ideological stance can be divulged subtly or more blatantly and "will often constitute the raison d'être of the narratives exhibiting them".[23] Narrative analysis of 1 Samuel 8 would portray an overarching stance of ambiguity towards the establishment of the monarchy as witnessed through both Samuel's and God's speeches as well as the demands of the people (1 Sam 8:6-18). Yet later in the narrative, once David rises to power following Saul's death, the monarchy is viewed in a much more positive light (cf. 2 Sam 6; 7).

Whereas narrative critics seek to analyse the viewpoint, a Bakhtinian approach emphasizes that it is ambiguous and unfinalisable, which is made possible by the structure of carnivalisation.[24] Thus, it is not easy to pin down the narrator's viewpoint towards the monarchy in the whole of First and Second Samuel because of a polyphony of voices. The "unfinalisability" of the dialogue of the characters within a story is central in order for the

[19] To be sure, despite this omniscience, the narrator does not resolve every ambiguity of interpretation within a biblical text.
[20] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 63.
[21] Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 32-33.
[22] Yamasaki, *Perspective Criticism*, 98.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 177.

hero (or collective of persons) to remain undefined and outside of an authorial statement which would rob the dialogue of its individuality and ability to respond independently.[25]

2.2 - Characterisation:

Characterisation forms a central aspect of this study, and will therefore be discussed at length here. This facet of narrative criticism is the analysis of traits of particular figures in the narrative, and may consider how a character speaks or acts, what they look like, and how others around said character interact with them.[26] This facet of narrative criticism will be the primary point of entry into this study, as the text itself is heavily character-driven. If characters are the *who* of a narrative then the plot is the *what* of the narrative. The central perspective of the story world is portrayed and embodied in the characters. These narrative figures represent the values inherent in the text, expounded through their actions, speech, and fate. They drive the action of the plot, and are arguably the 'soul' of the reading venture. They form the centrepiece of the narrative and so the reader's attention is usually placed alongside these figures to a greater degree than other narrative elements. Characters are the emotional as well as ideological focal point of the reading experience, and generally arouse a considerable amount of sentiment from the reader (whether positive or negative, depending on the characterisation). For this reason, as readers, "we are never indifferent to them".[27]

Through the ongoing deeds and declarations of those 'paper people' the reader is also drawn into the story. The emotional reaction to characters can range from empathy (perhaps the pinnacle of the process of constructing the main character or protagonist) and sympathy, to antipathy (usually reserved for the antagonist of the story – or a badly created hero). If there is no reaction to a central character at all, then there is a definitive issue with the construction of said figure within the initial characterisation. The process of characterisation involves "putting together pieces of a personality, whether real or fictive, as we might put together a puzzle".[28] Yet this process of characterising narrative figures must enable the reader to assess if a character is located centrally enough to warrant such investigation; is the character dynamic or static, flat or round in construction?[29] Round

[25] Ibid, 63.
[26] See: Gunn and Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible*, 63-81; Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 47-92.
[27] Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 47.
[28] Gunn and Fewell, *Narrative Art in the Hebrew Bible*, 47.
[29] Ska, *Our Fathers Have Told Us*, 83-84.

characters have a greater depth, an emotional complexity, which flat characters do not possess.

Flat characters tend to be one-note in structure; they perform a single task in the narrative and when that task is completed they are easily forgotten. For example, the young servant boy from 1 Samuel 9 performs the task of moving Saul from his desire to return home (1 Sam 9:5- 6) to his meeting Samuel in Ramah (1 Sam 9:7-9). Yet beyond this (and his sudden disappearance from the story – 1 Sam 9:27), as a character, he is not remarked upon again as he was longer needed. Flat characters are easy to sum up and do not necessarily resist such summation.

Round characters, by contrast, require far more enquiry, withstanding such generalisation and therefore "give most literary pleasure when they are allowed to resist their readers, rather than [being] overruled and forced to conform to their expectations".[30] Round characters are able to possess a "psychological portrait", not unlike an evaluation of a 'real world' person.[31] With flat characters there is a degree of predictability, whereas round characters resist such readerly expectations. Take, for example, the character of David as he is presented in the narrative of 1 and 2 Samuel. Here stands possibly the best biblical example of a round character.[32] He is a genuinely intriguing character *because* not every facet of his being is exposed to the reader; there is much to guess at and this is what makes him such an engaging figure. In the contest between David and Goliath, David makes a profound speech about the blasphemy which Goliath has put forth against God and Israel, and how the Philistine will be "delivered into my [David's] hand" by God (1 Sam 17:45-47). This grand rhetoric in defence of God and country notwithstanding, only a few verses previously David's first inquiry was about the reward which could be gained for defeating Goliath (1 Sam 17:26, 30). It is here that two sides of David's complex character are revealed; "the earthly and the spiritual, the private and the public".[33] It is also here that the younger sibling is seen retorting rather aggressively at his elder sibling, Eliab (1 Sam 17:29), which is at odds with David's later speech of such reverence. Again in 1 Samuel 25, David sends an attaché to Nabal with a message of seeming congeniality, asking for shelter (1 Sam 25:5-8). Yet within the message itself, it is difficult to assess

[30] Bal, *Narratology*, 114.
[31] Ibid.
[32] On the ambiguity of David's character see: Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 356-62.
[33] Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 182.

whether or not David is genuine in his greeting or if there is a more malignant threat buried beneath this statement of goodwill to Nabal. The actions of David and his men here in this chapter could "have a peculiarly mafia-like aroma, and this would not envelop David in a positive fragrance".[34] In addition, David's marriage to Abigail (1 Sam 25:39-42) seems like a fairy-tale romantic ending, until the narrator informs the reader immediately of another marriage to Ahinoam (1 Sam 25:43).

While flat characters are easy to assess, not holding much mystery, round characters retain an air of uncertainty or ambiguity. Much like when interacting with a new acquaintance, the reader must 'meet' the new character. If the mystery of the character is removed, then the very essence of the rounded character is gone. Yet if they are allowed to retain this mystery, then "just as some people in the real world stay mysteries no matter how well we know them", so too do these complex characters remain mysterious and thus remain interesting as narrative constructs.[35] God emerges as a particularly rounded character, despite absences from select narratives in the Bible where his presence is not immediately apparent. The Deity remains unfinalisable and resistant to summary, as "the writer does not pretend to fathom God's actions".[36] For instance, 1 Samuel 8 sees the people request a king. God denotes this as tantamount to a rejection of his sovereignty as king over Israel (1 Sam 8:7) yet still allows for the request to be granted (1 Sam 8:7, 22). Why? The text gives no immediate answer, nor tries to reduce God's decision down to any single emotional or strategic rationale.

Enough of the portrait of a round character needs to be told in order for the reader to neither generalise a character nor become bored with an overly distant figure: "the art therefore turns on authoritative relations between the told and the withheld…between truth and the whole truth".[37] The principal techniques involved in the creation of such rounded characters concern both internal and external traits. This extended form of characterisation can be divided between direct and indirect characterisation. Direct characterisation utilises descriptions of outward appearance and inner personality, while indirect characterisation

[34] Ibid, 261.
[35] Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), 118.
[36] Fokkelman, *Reading Biblical Narratives,* 58.
[37] Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative,* 321.

relies on the speech and actions of a character, and what the minor characters of the narrative say about them.[38]

Direct characterisation then depends on the narrator to expound as far as necessary what a character looks like and what a character might be feeling or thinking. Biblical narratives ordinarily lack a "precise, detailed description of the physical appearance of the characters".[39] There are no long explanatory passages detailing the minutiae of what a particular figure looks like; the colour of their eyes, how they wear their hair, or what clothes they have on: "the text does not help us to visualise characters".[40] In the few instances when the external appearance is given of a character, it may serve no massive narrative purpose beyond advancement of the plot or serving as an explanation of the plot's course.[41] For instance, the narrator's description of Goliath's appearance (1 Sam 17:4-7) provides a contrast with David (1 Sam 16:12; 17:33, 42), and thereby establishes the plot's tension as the reader fears for the smaller combatant, David.[42] In a further example, the description of Tamar's beauty (2 Sam 13:1) serves to explain why Amnon felt driven to assault her, which then leads to Absalom's killing his brother and fleeing David. This is turn results in a coup and civil war between father and son (2 Sam 15-18) which ends in Absalom's death (2 Sam 18:9-15). The description of Tamar's beauty does not serve to unveil any particular element of her character, but rather acts as a catalyst for the advancement of the plot between David and Absalom.[43] That is not to say that Tamar was at fault for any reason; the fault lies with Amnon's depravity which spurs Absalom to kill his elder brother in revenge, which in turn leads to the civil war between himself and David. Her beauty acts as a plot device rather than a recommendation or condemnation against her character.

Describing the inner personality of a character is usually a form of characterisation which is given as an "element of judgment" from the narrator or other characters in the narrative.[44] These tend to be broad strokes of painting a character's portrait, and serve to

[38] Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 47-92.
[39] Ibid, 48.
[40] Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narratives*, 34.
[41] Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 48.
[42] See McCarter's discussion of the varying descriptions of Goliath's size between the MT and LXX: *1 Samuel*, 286.
[43] Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 48. Similarly, the beauty of Helen of Troy sparked the Trojan War according to Homer's *Iliad*.
[44] Ibid, 53.

exposit character traits or personality. For instance, if a character is said to be wicked or good or foolish, then this "constitutes both characterisation and judgment".[45] So the reader may be granted a description of a figure aside from an outward appearance or an action committed, while simultaneously being able to estimate the character in relation to their personality. For instance, in the narrative involving David and Abigail (1 Sam 25), Nabal is described as being "churlish and ill-behaved" (1 Sam 25:3 RSV). This estimation of Nabal is upheld by Abigail, who refers to her husband as an "ill-natured fellow", adding that "folly is with him" (1 Sam 25:25). The narrator's assessment of Nabal in the opening verses constitutes a judgment against the character which is supplemented by Abigail's derogatory remarks. The reader is expected to see Nabal as being a mean, ill-spirited, and stupid man. The comments from narrator and Abigail thus can be "considered reliable and accurate".[46]

While direct characterisation deals with the more judgment-sided portrayal of a character – how they look and are said to behave – the process of indirect characterisation is to be "found in all those external features…which in turn [disclose] something about the individual's inner state".[47] Speech is one of these ways of indirectly characterising someone, as all speech reveals something specific and singular about the speaker. Old Testament historical narratives (with the exception of Chronicles) are not renowned for their grand monologues, nor are the characters' speeches usually constructed in such a way as to mimic natural speech patterns exactly. To return to a previous example, before the contest against Goliath, David rebukes his elder brother rather harshly when told to return to his sheepfold by Eliab. David replies; "What have I done now? Was it not but a word?" (1 Sam 17:29). This could be an innocuous rebuttal by an impetuous younger sibling to his overly dismissive elder brother, or a complete lack of respect for the position of the elder sibling by the youngest member of the family.[48] This again feeds into David's ambiguity as a character; is this an innocent slip of the tongue or an early display of David's being quick to anger when he is challenged or embarrassed (like his reaction to Nabal in 1 Sam 25:12-13)?

[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid, 55.
[47] Ibid, 64.
[48] Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 183.

Actions serve as another facet of this indirect characterisation: "individuals are disclosed through their deeds no less than through their words".[49] Assessment of action is an important element in the evaluation of a character. A character may speak of doing a plethora of heroic deeds, yet if they are unable or unwilling to follow through on these deeds, such inaction represents a greater disclosure of their character than their hollow words allow. The inability of Goliath to "give [David's] flesh to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the field" (1 Sam 17:44), undermines his impressive stature and possibly reveals the Philistine as being more bark and less bite when confronted by a figure such as David, who "comes in the name of the LORD of hosts" (1 Sam 17:45).

The actions of characters are also significant for the overall plot of the narrative, as it is the deeds of the figures participating in the narrative environment that constitute the movement of the story. If a story is presented without characters, then there can be no advancement as there is no one to carry the action of the story forward. Similarly a well-crafted plot enables the characters to have something to do or accomplish: "the individuals are a function of the events, and vice versa".[50] Simple actions such as eating, drinking, or sleeping can be significant for the construction of a character as well as any number of grand gestures. As an example, consider Saul's journey to Endor to commune with a medium there. After learning from a conjured-up Samuel that he will die in battle, alongside his sons, and thus his fledgling dynasty will collapse (1 Sam 28:16-19), Saul falls to the ground and refuses to eat (1 Sam 28:20, 23). Saul's unwillingness to eat, despite his hunger, shows the depth of his despair and the breadth of his fear in the face of his imminent death.

The depiction of external and internal traits of a character in a story helps a reader to identify with them, just as equally it serves to portray a figure in a story in a particular way. This identification can be positive (usually aligning the reader with the protagonist or a figure affiliated with the protagonist) or negative (usually designated for the antagonist, who is working against the hero of the story). For Yamasaki, this process takes places on the psychological plane of point of view. The central manner of identification is typically done through inside views (much like direct characterisation). The reader is "treated to the subjective experience of a character" as opposed to a reader's only being given the exterior

[49] Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 77.
[50] Ibid, 77.

of a character.[51] The reader is allowed inside the character's mind, from where the perceptions of the character become the guiding vantage point of the text. While this serves to narratively drive the reader toward or away from certain individuals, it also allows for a greater perception of that figure to come to the fore and thereby become characterised to a greater degree. The manner by which this type of identification by the reader is accomplished is through the depiction of certain cognitive features of the character or inside expressions of rationale.

The first of these inside views involves expressions of thinking. These are narratorial statements which describe the internal processes of a character; what they are thinking during the story.[52] If a reader becomes introduced to how a character *thinks*, then the reader is allowed a greater depth of interaction than with ancillary characters with whom the reader has only a passing acquaintance. Being shown how a character thinks may not necessarily be moments of great tactical consideration or monologues on major challenges which threaten the character's existential nature.[53] This type of inner view creates a significant degree of intimacy between character and reader which can push the reader to align with this certain character. The reader experiences what the character is experiencing, mentally moving alongside them. Take for an example the movement of the ark into Jerusalem by David (2 Sam 6). Following Uzzah's being struck down by God (2 Sam 6:7), David is described as being afraid of the ark which he is transporting. The new king comes to a terrifying realisation: "How can the ark of the LORD come to me?" (2 Sam 6:9). David grasps that the ark is not a mere trinket to be moved from place to place as one moves a vase around one's home. The ark is greater than a mere symbol, more alive than a simple ornament, and needs to be treated as such. Uzzah made the unfortunate mistake of grabbing at the ark as though he were merely packing furniture. David is quick to recognise the ark's significance, yet he has no answer for what he is to do. His speech, though constructed as being out loud, can be thought to be echoing inside the king's own mind. What is he to do? The reader is treated to the inner view of David as a character, experiencing this troubling event alongside the king as the narrative progresses.

[51] Yamasaki, *Perspective Criticism*, 35.
[52] Ibid, 37.
[53] In a modern novel, it can be as simple as deciding whether or not to have toast for breakfast, where the reader is treated to the debate between the desire for cereal or fruit.

The second aspect of these inner views involves expressions of emotions. This is a step away from the more rational perspective of the character, and focuses on the character's more sentimental nature. It is another movement closer to the character, as what one *feels* is arguably a far more guarded element than what one is thinking, and such narratorial statements "constitute inside views into the character's inner life".[54] Literature permits the exposition of emotion to be done through inner monologue by the character themselves, by the narrator, or even through speech. For example, following Saul's 'sin' of not utterly destroying the Amalekites and their king, Agag, God is described as having "repented that he had made Saul king over Israel" (1 Sam 15:35 RSV). The NRSV deploys a different verb: "the LORD was sorry that he had made Saul king over Israel" (1 Sam 15:35 NRSV). The Hebrew here is נִחָם meaning "to be sorry" or "to regret something". This depiction is of God's inner feeling toward Saul's removal as king; there is regret, which denotes a degree of sadness or perhaps frustration. The reader is given a very quick glimpse into the emotional state of the Deity in this moment, making the demotion of Saul that much more poignant.[55]

The third form of conveying a character's inner view involves the expression of reasoning. This explains the rationale behind the action which a character undertakes, the reason behind a character's deeds (which is also significant for the coherence of the plot). Expressions of reasoning can often be associated with purpose clauses ("in order that X may happen") or causal clauses ("because X happened, Y was done").[56] Expressions of reasoning go deeper into the inner view of character, beyond the scope of what a character is thinking or feeling, and to the workings behind that thinking process or feeling. For instance, in the account of Saul's first "sin" (1 Sam 13), the reader is granted access to Saul's thought process behind his offering the burnt offerings before Samuel had arrived; "the people were scattering from him" (1 Sam 13:8). This 'thinking' is reiterated by Saul himself when he is confronted by Samuel (1 Sam 13:11-12). The rationale of Saul's action is transposed into the narratorial speech, and by accounts seems reasonable. The reader is sympathetic towards Saul, especially as he is severely rebuked by Samuel (1 Sam 13:13-15).

[54] Yamasaki, *Perspective Criticism*, 39.
[55] Although Samuel states that God does not repent (1 Sam 15:29), later in the same episode the Deity does exactly this (1 Sam 15:35). This is an example of the presence of polyphony or the existence of a multitude of "voices" within the narrative landscape. See Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 161.
[56] Yamasaki, *Perspective Criticism*, 40.

The final inner view involves expressions of seeing. This may seem like a step aside from the more 'cerebral' expressions which deal with the emotions and rationale associated with a character's perspective. Yet when the text describes a character *seeing* something, as opposed to their *looking at* something, the reader is given a greater degree of detail, involving an "incursion to note the visual data being registered".[57] Looking at something only shows the direction of the character's gaze, whereas expressing what the character actually sees portrays what has caught the character's eye to begin with. Consider the beginning of the David and Bathsheba story (2 Sam 11). David is on his roof, having arisen from his couch, and "saw from the roof a woman bathing" (2 Sam 11:2).[58] The reader witnesses the bathing woman as David does, and as the king notices that "the woman was very beautiful" (2 Sam 11:2b) the reader is able to perceive this also. The reader is not just told David looked down, but rather something drew the king's eye (Bathsheba, the bathing woman) and then is told what the king thought of this individual who caught his attention.

Developing the use of internal views as a manner of characterisation, Bakhtin's notion of authoring and outsideness/exotopy is an interesting addition to the above. Outsideness or exotopy is the notion of a character being able to access and assimilate third-party considerations of the character's self; considerations which the character cannot finalise and therefore his consciousness lives "by its unclosedness and its indeterminacy".[59] Here are two concepts that tend to overlap with one another; authoring is described as the "key action of human existence" while outsideness (exotopy) is the manner in which one organises their authorings of self and others.[60] Authoring is described as being the primary activity of the self in the world by trying to find room for oneself against the dominating distinction between the self and the other.[61] The establishment of a sense of this outsideness is done by merging three distinct spheres of perception; the I-for-myself (how I perceive myself), the I-for-the-other (how I might appear to the other), and the other-for-me (how the other appears to me).[62] It is when these three spheres are combined that a greater picture of the individual and their surrounding others comes into view. One person cannot stand

[57] Ibid, 42. To be sure, such distinctions in Hebrew are not always clear. For instance, שׁמע can mean "to hear" or "to listen to".
[58] The verb used to describe David's perceiving Bathsheba is ראה ("to see") which can sometimes mean "to look at" or "to watch" (as in 1 Sam 17:28). The verb שׁמר ("to observe" or "to watch") can also be used to denote the direction of one's gaze.
[59] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,* 53.
[60] Green, *Mikhail Bakhtin and Biblical Scholarship,* 33.
[61] Green, *How Are the Mighty Fallen?* 166.
[62] Green, *Mikhail Bakhtin and Biblical Scholarship,* 34.

alone, with no exterior input, and hope to obtain a greater understanding of oneself. The external perception is a necessity, and indeed a responsibility, to obtain and add to the perception of the self. These voices may not always reside in perfect harmony, and in fact often collide in violent ways, but are absolutely necessary for the correct authoring of oneself.

Authoring is an unfinalised and unending mode of characterisation analysis, with this layering effect of competing voices 'sketching out' the character. The character or hero as Bakhtin terms this figure, "looks at himself, as it were, in all mirrors of other people's consciousness, he knows all possible refractions of his image in those mirrors".[63] Israel's first king, Saul, is a character who is unable or unwilling to inform himself or others of his character zone.[64] Green stretches this lack of communication to encompass God and the people of Israel. She views as folly his failure in the relationship and the subsequent demand for a king.[65]

Samuel has his own authoring of Saul as having failed in his charge of kingship, while Saul's own authoring of himself is very different. These two authorings of one character are polar opposites because of the failure of Saul to engage with his narrative counterparts and the role of king (a failure in communication from the top down) and he is consequently fired by Samuel.[66] Saul is a closed character, refusing or unable to allow this external interpretation of his actions to enter his conception of the world. Yet Green does not necessarily blame Saul for his failure. His role in the narrative is to present a particular viewpoint – as Bakhtin notes a hero should do – with his failure being that viewpoint which the narrative wishes to exposit.[67] The construction of such portraits gives a more nuanced internal viewpoint of the character than just an exterior glance. The reader comes to know a literary figure as more than just a paper person but as a complex entity possessing near-human tendencies and perceptions. The character obtains a kind of sovereignty from the narrative which initially constructed it, able to possess their own "inner logic and

[63] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,* 53.
[64] Green, *How Are the Mighty Fallen?* 164 and 170. On exotopy and the hero as worldview, see: Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics*, 10.
[65] Green, *How Are the Mighty Fallen?* 218.
[66] Ibid, 256.
[67] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 79. For Bakhtin, the hero is described as being the "carrier of an independently valid idea" with this valid idea becoming "combined with the hero's image [and] an intellectual expression of his spiritual face".

independence", allowing for the "word of the character himself" to become part of the narrative design.[68]

2.3 - Style and Genre:

The style is *how* the story is written. Elements such as repetition, use of a particular *Leitwort*, the rhythm of a sentence, and the order of words in a sentence constitute the style of a narrative. The narrative style denotes the manner in which the language of the text is deployed, the eccentricities and key patterns that emerge when reading. In other words, the style of a narrative is how a story is told. To reutilise the painting metaphor, style would be the particular colours used or the types of brushstrokes employed to build the overall picture. It is within this organised grammatical pattern of words, sentences, and paragraphs that various linguistic possibilities are exploited in order to convey meaning and value. Style can convey more than an artistic use of semantics; there are the "finer, secondary and connotative" meanings which exist beneath the primary layer of linguistics.[69]

Sound, rhythm, and repetition constitute elements of style which are noteworthy. These components are important, particularly in biblical narratives which were originally believed to have been often transmitted orally.[70] Sound and rhythm can be said to be joined; how a word or sentence sounds is defined by the rhythm which it possesses. This sound and rhythm may be able to imitate a sound found in nature (onomatopoeia), the repeating of letters (alliteration), or how the preserved Hebrew rhymes.[71] Repetition is an aspect of style that is best examined in the preserved Hebrew.[72] The words may change in meaning when the text is translated into and from a plethora of languages which would also lose the nuances associated with the texts. Yet the presence of particular key words – or a *Leitwort* – can be significant. This can be the use of expressions which have a matching core root-word. This presence of a *Leitwort* in the Hebrew text can illuminate a certain pattern in the

[68] Ibid, 65. Similarly the portrait of David emerging from the narrative is unfinalisable because of the diversity of voices and perspectives, reflected in the title of Halpern's work, *David: Messiah, Murderer, Traitor, King* (2001). Many other commentators have noted how difficult it is to assess David's character because of the presence of these contradictions and ambiguities. See: Bodner, *1 Samuel*; McKenzie, *King David;* Alter, *1 Samuel*; Brueggemann, *David's Truth In Israel's Imagination and Memory.*

[69] Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 198.

[70] Ibid, 200.

[71] The central issue with assessing sound and rhythm is that there exists only the assumption of how the preserved Hebrew text is to be properly pronounced.

[72] By comparison with the MT, an issue with assessing repetition is the presence of numerous translations (e.g., LXX, Latin, English), as well as manuscript variants.

overall narrative which may otherwise go unnoticed: "the measured repetition that matches the inner rhythm of the text, or rather, that wells up from it, is one of the most powerful means for conveying meaning without [bluntly] expressing it".[73] For example, in 1 Samuel 8 the root-word "king" (מלך) is repeated ten times in the twenty-two verse chapter (1 Sam 8:5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11 [bis], 19, 20, 22 – in a noun as well as verbal form). This repeating of the root-word indicates the central focus of the narrative as well as the arrival of a new cause of narrative tension. Yet the presence of numerous traditions of pronunciation, and the lack of uniformity, can sometimes make deciphering the exact stylistic pattern of biblical narratives problematic.

A stylistic feature noted by Bakhtin is heteroglossia, when a speaker (or the narrator) uses different styles of language or speech in different contexts, made up of "the images of 'languages', styles, and consciousnesses that are concrete and inseparable from language" wherein the language used is "parodying the direct word [and] exploring its limits" within the frame of a narrative.[74] Whereas some passages of royal history are rather dry, bureaucratic records of political events (e.g. 1 Kgs 15), 1 Samuel 9-10 has a popular storytelling style, characterised by repetition of הִנֵּה ("look") and שָׁם ("there").[75]

The difficulty of deciphering biblical grammatical nuances aside, Yamasaki proposes the phraseological plane of point of view as an avenue to explore biblical narratives.[76] This plane of view relates more to the speech characteristics of figures in a narrative, but can portray certain aspects of the text which constitute a particular style. The characteristics of how a person speaks in a text are the primary manner of uncovering this perspective, rather than what is being said. Distinctive speech patterns or the selection of particular words indicate the nuance which is of interest here. Yet the presence of a distinctive speech pattern in a character is not by itself significant. Rather it only becomes noteworthy when it becomes embedded in the narratorial speech, the narrator's verbal pattern. When the character's speech metre is mingled with that of the narrator, then these speech characteristics become distinctive. Take the piece of exposition regarding David's rise as a military leader (1 Sam 18:1-5). David's initial successes define the young man in Saul's eyes as a threat to his own dynasty and power as king. Jonathan becomes "knit to

[73] Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 93.
[74] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 49 and 60.
[75] For הִנֵּה see: 1 Sam 9:6, 10; 10:3, 5 [bis], 10. For שָׁם see: 1 Sam 9:6, 7, 8, 12, 14, 17, 24; 10:2, 8, 10.
[76] Yamasaki, *Perspective Criticism*, 91.

the soul of David" (1 Sam 18:1), and David's victories in war are seen as "good in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants" (1 Sam 18:5). There is the accumulation of adoration which David acquires, reaching its pinnacle in 1 Samuel 18:7 which confirms for Saul that David is a threat. Saul's own fears become verbalised and personified in the actions of others which are reported as fact by the narrator: "the utterance he [Saul] dreads is his own, though he credits it to others".[77]

Within the larger consideration of style exists a particular variation of textual composition, this compositional form moves away from the distinctive speech aspects of characters and narrators, whereby attention can be moved to noteworthy nuances of a text which are more genre-based than specifically linguistic. For present purposes, linking the material to the sphere of the carnival, comedy emerges as a form or style that sets itself apart, not necessarily linguistically but rather through tone. Comedy is a genre which is not specifically the antithesis of tragedy but rather retains tragedy and mutates the tragic form into something which a reader or audience can only laugh at: "*something* inside comedy is not funny".[78] There is often a hardness to comedy which the tragic would make heroic, an ever-present melancholy which creates an impulse to laugh, as "comedy at its most penetrating derives from what we normally regard as tragic".[79] Irony and dark comedy are other forms derived from the comedic family, both serving to "make the audience suffer without the relief of tears and to make it mock without a true relief of laughter".[80] From a Bakhtinian perspective, Menippean satire, taking its name from the Greek Cynic author Menippus of Gadara, is a form of the serio-comical which reflects this dichotomy of tragedy and comedy. It is a type of Hellenistic literature which stood counter-posed to the more 'serious' genres such as the epic. Bakhtin cites this form of dark humour as being a carrier and a main channel which conveyed a "carnival sense of the world" in that, similarly to other forms of darker comedy and the carnivalesque especially, the Menippean satire retains a sense of the comedic paired with an "extreme [and] crude slum naturalism".[81] In this form of naturalism the ideologies of the marketplace are debated within this everyday "depravity, baseness, and vulgarity".[82]

[77] Green, *Mikhail Bakhtin and Biblical Scholarship,* 83.
[78] Kerr, *Tragedy and Comedy,* 16.
[79] Ibid, 17.
[80] Styan, *The Dark Comedy,* 260.
[81] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,* 113-115.
[82] Ibid, 115.

The difficulties in defining comedy in biblical narratives are evident, particularly in such a diverse cultural environment that includes Menippean satire and the serio-comical. A sense of humour in biblical narratives may be elusive or difficult to fully detect. The very setting of the narratives may not seem immediately favourable to a comedic vision. Denoting a text (let alone a biblical text) as being humorous raises issues of how one person finds something funny compared to another. A more darkly comedic tone, such as that of the Menippean satire or the carnival as proposed by Bakhtin, could be appropriate to apply to many biblical texts as the laughter inherent in the Bible is "often complex and ambivalent, ranging from sardonic and subversive… [to] mocking".[83] Yet the eventual end of this ironic laughter is to move toward a more restorative and celebrative end.

Comedy is thus ambiguous by its very nature. Biblical narratives revel "in a profoundly ambivalent laughter, a divine and human laughter that by turns is both mocking and joyous, subversive and celebrative, and finally a laughter that results in an exuberant and transformative comic vision".[84] To describe something as comedic in nature would seem to immediately equate the medium with being humorous. This is not necessarily the case. True comedy is neither wholly tragic, nor can it be described as merely an absurd display of low humour.[85] There are comic moments which may belong in the realm of comedy but may not necessarily seek to make a reader or audience member laugh. Humour in the Bible therefore "encompasses not only pure joy but also joy with an undertone of sorrow".[86] What these more serious forms of comedy seek to do is to shock, surprise, or confront an audience in a way that tragedy is often incapable of doing.[87] Laughter and humour are not confined solely to comedy, and there is not always an exclusive relationship between comedy and humour that excludes other genres. There exists a fluidity to true comedy, which moves further than low forms of humour but is not mired in basic tragedy. According to Melissa Jackson, comedy in its purest form embraces the sheer creatureliness of the person, whereas tragedy mourns the infinitude of humanity.[88] Within comedy's core

[83] J. William Whedbee, *The Bible and the Comic Vision* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 9.
[84] Ibid, 4-5.
[85] Jackson, *Comedy and Feminist Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible*, 6. "True comedy" here refers to comedy which does not rely on the puerile humour alone or being just a constant stream of unfounded jokes.
[86] Willie Van Heerden, "Why Humour in the Bible Plays Hide and Seek with Us", *Social Identities* 7:1 (2001), 75-96, here 76.
[87] The Book of Jonah can be considered a work of serious comedy within the Bible. See Jack Sasson's discussion of Menippean satire, parody, and farce within the Book of Jonah (Jack Sasson, *Jonah*, AB24 [1990] (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 331-334).
[88] Jackson, *Comedy and Feminist Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible*, 15.

exists this mourning, but transformed and meshed with a sense of humour towards this vulnerability. There is a "co-mingling and cross-fertilisation" of terms, themes, and tones within the scope of comedy which may not always be designed to just be funny.[89]

Comedy's ending results in carnival, whereas tragedy's conclusion is funeral.[90] Within this journey to carnival, a sense of divergent thinking is encouraged in comedy, retaining a "high tolerance for ambiguity".[91] The desire to conclude in carnival is a celebration of the attainment of the banal social order, but better organised. At the outset of the comedic plot, the comic protagonist is usually desiring to merely move along in life in as easy a manner as possible, but is then confronted by a situation which threatens the peace and security of his or her life. As the plot moves along, the "not hero" of the comedic text is thrown into a "downward thrust" or series of negative events which seem to overwhelm the comedic protagonist.[92] This downward thrust may be corrected by some sort of event which (or figure who) causes the trajectory of the plot to change course. Comedy will eventually experience a reversal of this disunity of the social order for the 'not hero', and harmony will be restored.

The comic protagonist may also be reintegrated into this new harmonious society, with this fresh social situation existing as a renewed environment rather than a simple reproduction of the previous order.[93] At the comedy's end "a community attains and celebrates its stability and equilibrium – even if they last only for the present".[94] This sense of celebration may not always be wholly positive. It may retain a sense of the bittersweet; there can be loss (in a material or human sense) or sadness present while the final celebration of liberation is ongoing, reflective of the dark comedy which exists within Bakhtin's concept of the carnival. The following section will consider Bakhtin's notion of the carnival in more detail.

2.4 - The Carnival and Carnivalesque:

Having now dealt with the general framework of the narrative method, attention will turn towards the specific approach of carnival. While the narrative-critical serves as the

[89] Ibid, 13.
[90] Ibid, 15. The idea of funeral can be taken literally or in a more metaphorical sense, as being a melancholic end to proceedings.
[91] Ibid, 21.
[92] Ibid, 18.
[93] Ibid, 21.
[94] Ibid.

background for how a text may be analysed, the carnival approach derived from Mikhail Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World,* as well as Bakhtin's discussion of this carnivalesque genre in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* and *The Dialogic Imagination*, is an innovative way of examining the text of 1 and 2 Samuel. The present understanding of carnival is derived principally from Bakhtin's treatment of the literature of François Rabelais (1494-1553), looking mainly at the stories of Gargantua and Pantagruel (with additional reference to some other works such as Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*, and the literature emanating from the Roman Saturnalia). While *Rabelais and His World* delves deeper into the concept of the grotesque and the imagery associated with this reality, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* and the *Dialogic Imagination* partly focus on the generic and chronotopic conventions surrounding the carnival and seems to counterbalance the more salacious content of the former writing. Unlike Bakhtin's theories of polyphony and dialogism, which have a form or certain structure to them, carnival is far looser in terms of a fixed arrangement of elements. It is an approach which can be quite shocking on one level and completely ridiculous on another, and each particular element of the carnival may not always occur together in a piece of literature. Yet it is important to recognise the 'road' by which Bakhtin reached this literary outlook in his writings.

Bakhtin establishes literature as emanating from a particular historical reality, which is translated into a text through particular generic conventions. The text portrays a form of this historical reality within a textual world from which the author or compiler comes. The term coined by Bakhtin for this historical translation is *chronotope* which shows the "connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature".[95] The form of the chronotope is expressed through certain literary conventions, which shape a genre. It is within this form that time and space become tangible, whereby the reader is able to directly interact with a temporal marker otherwise inaccessible to such interaction. Yet it should be clarified that this is a reconstruction of a particular time and space, from a particular perspective which will colour the viewpoint portrayed for the reader. This colouring is again subsumed by the generic conventions attached to the chronotope, which affects the construction of the narrative aspects of the text including the characters as "the image of man is always intrinsically chronotopic".[96]

[95] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 84.
[96] Ibid, 85.

While this basic outline may seem simplistic, the actual process of assimilating an historical chronotope with its own generic conventions is erratic and complicated, with the cross-pollination of conventions and standpoints that emerge within isolated historical outlooks as well as the issue of a genre being reinforced by tradition and thus resistant to much alteration. The process of 'parcelling out' individual types of chronotope becomes difficult, yet Bakhtin has outlined several prominent forms including: the Greek romance, the adventure novel of everyday life, biography and autobiography, and the chivalric romance. While each of these forms presents its own valuable literary insights, for brevity's sake only those forms which relate to the carnival will be mentioned.

The form of the adventure novel of the everyday leans on that folkloristic core which is also the central language of the carnival. The core motif of this form of novel is the transformation and metamorphosis of the human person.[97] The aspect of sequentiality appears within this form, yet in this sequentiality each subsequent image is different from the one which preceded it, so that each new image or instance is a progression of the one that came before it. For instance, in Hesiod's *Theogony* the Era of Zeus replaces the Era of Chronos, as the ages of humanity progress in a series and each one is replaced by another form (e.g. from gold to silver to bronze). This form of sequential progression reflects that central motif of metamorphosis, which shows the more important moments of crisis wherein "an individual becomes other than what he was".[98] It is less an evolution of the person and more a rebirth of the person within such a crisis, and it portrays the exceptional and unusual moments in the character's life; such as chance meetings and encounters, fortuitous events, and strange occurrences. Thus it is reasonable to place the majority of the events within this form of literature following a road or a path, and so it is typically set on a journey along such routes. This then promotes such moments of sequential rebirth, recounting the process of "purification through suffering" while on a journey of some sort.[99]. Within the story of Saul, his first narrated journey (1 Sam 9:1-10:16) is the occasion for his metamorphosis from farmer to king.

The space and time in which the character is found becomes central to the movement of the character, with the space becoming more concrete as it has direct influence on the story surrounding the character. Events take place on the road and thus the

[97] Ibid, 112.
[98] Ibid, 115.
[99] Ibid, 116.

setting gains historical and literary importance for the narrative as it is native territory for the chronotope which emphasises the unusual moments that occur in the story, and it is imbued with experiences that the hero will go through. The adventure novel stretches along pathways which are immediately recognisable or familiar to the everyday genre memory of the reader, and is essentially folkloristic in a way which forms the basis for its generic conventions. In contrast with more elevated literary forms, this familiarity portrays a less polished form wherein the seedier aspects of life are shown, including the profanities and banal violence associated with the commonplace or public forums. Therefore the settings of time and space become more than mere set dressing and are instead essential for the movement of the narrative, flavouring the story in a particular way. The exploration of this everyday life is the "underside of real life", wherein the narrative is able to interact with those aspects which are more indecent or obscene (such as death, sex, defecation) primarily because of its familiar or folkloristic nature, standing in opposition to the "high literature" which existed.[100] It is within this common (and at times bawdy) literary environment that carnival sits, with its own conception of the world.

When first engaging with carnival it is prudent to acknowledge that there is no rigid method. It is a difficult idea to sum up into concise words, let alone put into a terse system of examination for a text. However, the central component, which must be present in combination with other elements of the carnival for the text to be considered carnivalesque, is a certain *tone* or *attitude*.[101] Carnival is a highly ambiguous venture, belonging "to the borderline between art and life, [and] shaped according to a certain pattern of play".[102] This pattern of play, expressed in the format of the carnival, "causes generic mutation", standing in opposition to these other forms of conventional genre, such as the epic.[103] Carnival, utilising the practice of laughter, takes these genres and twists them into carnivalesque parodies of their original form in order to bring low aspects of the dominant hegemony. This is done through the use of popular, folkloristic motifs which are usually overlooked by higher forms of literature, and they still retain "elements of the archaic" within their

[100] Ibid, 128 and 158.
[101] Caryl Emerson states that the carnival possesses a kind of "sinister energy" that fuels the more grotesque imagery that emerges ("Coming to Terms with Bakhtin's Carnival: Ancient, Modern, sub Specie Aeternitatis", *Bakhtin and the Classics*, ed. R. Bracht Branham [Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2002], 5-20, here 5). Simon Dentith similarly states that carnivalesque texts can be imbued with a certain spirit that 'articulates an aesthetic' (*Bakhtinian Thought: An Introductory Reader* [New York: Routledge, 1995], 66).
[102] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 7.
[103] Webb, *Mark at the Threshold*, 41.

own forms which the carnival feeds upon.[104] In Bakhtin's perspective for the idea of carnival and its mutative process, the following are typical aspects: laughter, feasting, gaping jaws, devouring, dirty jokes, defecation and expulsion of fluids, orifices of varying sizes and placements, insults and hazing, 'taking the proverbial', performing the proverbial, excretions, chaos and chaotic energy, death, graves, wombs, birth, pregnancy, earth, life. Or to summarise, carnival is *ambivalent*, because it contains life and death, comedy and tragedy, the extraordinary and the everyday.

It is at this juncture that one should differentiate between comedy and the carnivalesque (or darkly comedic, to use an umbrella term). Comedy, at its core seeks to elicit a response to what is being shown to an audience; it requires engagement. Laughter, as a response to comedy, serves as relief to what is occurring before an audience that has no other outlet for the emotions which the comedy is causing. Lower forms of comedy, seek to receive a laugh from an audience member; quick, easy release, yet not always memorable, it is just funny.[105] Darker forms of comedy are funny because it has ventured "where agony was".[106] Dark comedy, satire, and here the carnival, exist in variance to more traditional forms of comedy as "the impulse [to laugh] is there, dark, beckoning, conspiratorial", to laugh at something which probably should not be found humorous.[107] Comedy, in its more satirical form, seems to be derived from the tragic.[108] The darker form of comedy challenges an audience, pressing close to home, with the darker forms always able to play with the dichotomy of tragedy and comedy effectively. Indeed an audience retains these darker, satiric, or carnivalesque forms for longer than a 'cheap' laugh, as there is something about comedy which holds a particular despair which lower forms of comedy cannot retain.[109] Dark comedy does not appear to possess a future, past the events being recounted, with death appearing as the only way to truly or properly end the joke.[110] Dark comedy contemplates death, drawing on the tragic sphere to which it is either joined or linked.

[104] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,* 106.
[105] Kerr, *Tragedy and Comedy*, 16. Quoting Groucho Marx, Kerr asserts that the "distinction…between an amateur and a professional [is that] an amateur thinks it's [just] funny".
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid, 22.
[109] Ibid, 79.
[110] Ibid, 171.

Carnival exists within this darker, more challenging, type of comedy. The core aim of the carnival is to undermine the effect of the dominant hegemony, to confront the world as it exists, with its horrors and inequalities. Thus laughter, in its carnival context, becomes the site of renewal and regeneration and becomes a "coping mechanism" through which humanity may recognise its comparative inconsequentiality and yet "continue to participate in a world that is anything but utopian".[111] For the specific purposes of 1 and 2 Samuel, finding contemporaneous literature which may be parodied is difficult to ascertain due to the continued redaction and editing which the Books of Samuel have undergone. Issues of redaction are beyond the scope of this thesis, which is a narrative consideration of the material of 1 and 2 Samuel (and any associated or pertinent biblical material) rather than an exploration the Books of Samuel's place in the complex Deuteronomistic History debate.[112] Yet in terms of generic convention, the text of 1 Samuel provides a social outlook which can be said to have existed in popular thought, forming the dominant hegemony of the text. Genre is a primarily literary concept yet is also "representative of creative memory in the process of literary development".[113] So while there may not be readily available literature that can be parodied by the carnival aspects of 1 and 2 Samuel, there is evidently a dominant societal perspective which was in the process of becoming developed in the literature as it stands.

This popular outlook centres on the notion of kingship and the community's relationship to God, with the dominant perspective being akin to the outlooks of other Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) communities. This is evident at the outset of the kingship narrative when the people request a monarch: "appoint for us a king to govern us like all the nations" (1 Sam 8:6 RSV). This outlook forms the basis of the popular demand for a monarch and the foundation of a new form of authoritative structure. Within the ANE, the existence of kingship was regarded as the foundation of a civilised society as "only savages could live without a king".[114] This establishes a code of behaviour which the people expect to follow, and also expect the role of king to mirror, with no clear mention of God's role within this new set-up.

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[111] Webb, *Mark at the Threshold*, 53.
[112] Abraham Malamat, *History of Biblical Israel: Major Problems and Minor Issues* (Leiden: Brill, 2001); John Van Seters, *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983).
[113] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 106.
[114] Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society and Nature* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 3.

The spirit of the carnival seeks to subvert the norms and outlooks of this established value system, "in order to institute one of its own that corrupts language and behavioural codes in the work of creating new ones".[115] Here, the carnival seeks to undermine the concept of kingship and deities within the parameters of 1 and 2 Samuel, establishing its own forms of both through refracting the constructs of this authoritative outlook of ANE communities. This done by undermining two pillars that hold up this form of governance: the figure of the king and the relationship to the Deity. The dominant hegemony, in this case the ANE concept of kingship and deities, is parodied or caricatured within the scope of the carnival in order to undermine it and ridicule it. Carnival laughter is utilised to reveal this authoritative outlook as being faulty or ridiculous. This interaction of caricature is present within parody, satire, and other darker forms of comedy. In this way, the carnival is not funny per se, but is rather mocking the dominant attitude that existed and exposing it as defective. As a result, the carnival leaves the reader exposed also to such ridicule, which ultimately results in the emotional reaction of laughter to such ideological vulnerability.

Yet carnival is differentiated further from satire and parody by the presence of a peculiar or particular *tone* which other forms of dark comedy may not possess. This tenor is the presence of the supernatural within the natural, of the extraordinary within the ordinary; this is denoted as the literary feature of magical realism. Magical realism imbues the carnival with a "sustained blend of the natural and the supernatural" which is derived from the interplay of the ordinary human encountering extraordinary circumstances or individuals.[116] This magical realism understands "the extraordinary or 'magical' as a viable possibility".[117] The carnivalesque attitude is the engagement of cultures in "spirited celebration of a world in travesty, where the commonly held values of a given milieu are reversed", which requires the presence of magical realism in order to facilitate this reversal of outlook, the ambiguity of celebrating the tragic.[118]

In Bakhtin's perspective, the concept of the carnival is not even so much a methodology as it is a *worldview*, or how someone interprets the world for their society.

[115] David K. Danow, *The Spirit of Carnival: Magical Realism and the Grotesque* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2004), 63.
[116] Ibid, 1. To use a biblical example, consider Samson's encounter with the lion, which he tears apart with his bare hands (Judg 14:5-6). Curiously, much like Saul in 1 Sam 10:16, Samson does not tell his parents of this extraordinary event.
[117] Ibid, 3.
[118] Ibid.

The carnival is how Rabelais set about interpreting the world around him for the society in which he lived, utilising the medieval folk humour still popular with rural and lower classes, and thus undermining the dominant literary hegemony through the use of such folkloristic elements. The carnival stood in opposition to the authorial hierarchy of the feudal system and religious dictatorship present during the time Rabelais composed his writings. Accordingly, Bakhtin regarded the carnival as "the dramatic reversal of…authorities through caricature and exposure to the grotesque" and vernacular.[119] Carnival language – the folk humour of the marketplace – means to explore those spaces where the monsters live in order to comment on society, to undermine those stagnating authorities, and to revitalise the community living amongst and with those structures.

However, this should not be taken as an attempt at anarchy. Quite the opposite. The voices of disorder and ecstasy are interacting and co-mingling with the voices of harmony and restraint (the carnivalesque and the everyday). This is done in an attempt re-establish the norm as without disorder there can be no differentiation from order. For Bakhtin, one cannot be mired only in disorder nor can one solely reside in order; neither alone can support growth and renewal which is at the forefront of the concerns of the carnival, with these moments of disorder being "consecrated by tradition".[120] Disorder (ecstasy, chaos, cosmic terrors of death and destruction) is given order by the very persons engaging with it, while those engaging with it are granted a certain level of disorder to liberate themselves from fear and that which stunts renewing growth.

2.5 - Key Elements of the Carnival:

Although Bakhtin's approach does not here offer a rigidly defined category of carnival, there are particular *elements* which need to be present in a text in order for it to be considered carnivalesque by Bakhtinian standards. True; there is understandably a certain ebb and flow with regards an ordered system of approach for the carnival. Nevertheless, there are several constituent elements of the carnivalesque that occur in the stories of Saul and David:

[119] Justin Andrew James Comber, *Torn Between Two Kingdoms: A Bakhtinian Reading of Characters in the Gospel of Mark*, PhD diss. (McMaster Divinity College, 2016), 31.
[120] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 5.

- Use of vernacular/folk humour (such as the proverbial sayings, hazing of individuals) – e.g., the proverbial, ironic, or sarcastic saying: "Is Saul among the prophets?" (1 Sam 10:11-12; 19:24); Samuel's rhetorical questions to the people regarding Saul's suitability and external "packaging" (1 Sam 9:20; 10:1, 24).

- Debasement through laughter; laughter through debasement – e.g., Saul attempting and failing to find the lost donkeys (1 Sam 9-10), and Saul's hiding amongst the baggage during his public election (1 Sam 10:22-23).

- A procession or parade or movement – e.g., the procession of the ark into Jerusalem (2 Sam 6:12-16).

- Presence of a feast or talk of "abundance" of food (with images of devouring) – e.g., Saul's feasting with Samuel (1 Sam 9:22-24), and the feast and the handing out of food to the people after the procession of the ark (2 Sam 6:17-19).

- Images of the grotesque body (mouth/gaping maw, lower stratum, stomach, hyperbolic bodily proportions) – e.g., the nakedness of Saul (1 Sam 19:24; 20:30), his defecation in the cave (1 Sam 24:34), and David's revealing dance before the ark (2 Sam 6:18).

- Moments in which bodily, spatial, or social boundaries are transgressed (even temporarily) in the attempt to undermine the 'norm' of social or ideological stances, wherein "what was thought to be marginal…is brought to the centre of [the] discussion"[121] – e.g., David's wild dancing before the ark before and with the whole community, and his later ideological 'stand-off' with Michal (2 Sam 6).

To remove any one of these facets is for the text to weaken its carnivalesque quality, as all of these aspects seek to reverse or undermine the authoritative stance the text exists within.[122] Yet, over and above these constitutive elements, what is most significant for the carnival to work is the presence of a certain *tone*. A carnival can succeed or fail based upon the spirit (or lack of) involved: "there is indeed a life-affirming and life-enhancing 'spirit' that pertains to carnival in its varied and numerous manifestations".[123] It is a particular

[121] Robert Stam, *Subversive Pleasures: Bakhtin, Cultural Criticism, and Film* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 85.
[122] Carnival is one of Bakhtin's less strict ideologies in terms of method, so some aspects may not appear altogether, but others may occur in isolation throughout a text.
[123] Danow, *The Spirit of Carnival*, 1.

quality which might be compared to the genre of dark comedy which looks to make fun of taboo subjects or topics usually considered too serious or painful. The tone of the carnival is thus ambivalent to the core, taking things which are deemed unclean or taboo and transforming them into light-hearted matter. It is this "attitude in which the high, the elevated, the official, even the sacred, is degraded and debased, but as a condition of popular renewal and regeneration".[124]

The use of vernacular humour or folk humour is a category of speech, which exists outside of the normal, more formal, semantic range. This means that it is a colloquial form of communication, with a lack of formality. This type of speech characteristically employs abusive and insulting terms (such as Saul's unflattering reference to Jonathan's mother in 1 Sam 20:30), but when used in the carnivalesque tone it takes on an ambivalence; while it degrades, it also renews and restores. These curses and profanities which form part of the folk vernacular of the marketplace include the playful and chaotic environment of the street vendors and criers. These salesmen and criers formed part of the 'din' of the marketplace, in which abuse and compliments were all part of the same utterance and therefore completely ambiguous.

For Bakhtin, there is not a maliciousness inherent in the use of such vernacular language, not principally at least. Rather it enables laughter to enter the marketplace where the carnival is held. Colloquially, this type of humour is called 'taking the proverbial' out of someone or something. It lowers that which is being laughed at while also renewing it, and that which is lowering is re-establishing a sense of order through this laughter but in a dynamic way. Thus, the order is exposed to disorder, and disorder in turn is granted a sense of order. This notion may help to better appreciate certain aspects of the biblical narrative which might have been previously overlooked. For instance, Samuel's display of Saul and rhetorical questions to the people can be seen as this type of humorous or ironic utterance: "Samuel said to all the people: "Do you see the one whom the LORD has chosen? There is none like him among all the people". And all the people shouted and said: "Long live the king!" (1 Sam 10:24).[125] These ambiguous verbal expressions acquire a "general tone of

[124] Dentith, *Bakhtinian Thought*, 68.
[125] The ambiguity of Samuel's question is noted by Bodner (*1 Samuel*, 99): "While this can be construed as an affirmation, it is conspicuous that Samuel avoids the word 'king'".

laughter, and became, as it were, so many sparks of the carnival bonfire which renews the world".[126]

In Bakhtinian thought, laughter is thus the central element of the carnival. Without laughter, being non-malicious and communal in nature, there can be no renewal or growth. This laughter is not the basic form associated with cheap laughs but is rather a carnivalised laughter, one that parodies and ridicules. Fear is present in the human world: in all its forms and shapes, as small as forgetting a friend's birthday and as great as the terror which accompanies the dark abyss of universal unknowns. The only way to conquer fear is to laugh at it. If the fear is found to be comical, then it loses its fearsome nature and can be overcome. It is through this laughter that the community is granted renewal and indeed a future outside of the cosmic terrors they now face. This is the only way that terror can be liberating, otherwise it is just the same anguished/timid reaction of fear to death and destruction which cannot support renewal. Participating *in* death and upheaval becomes the source of liberation from death and upheaval. The event of the carnival "refers to an established period in time when certain cultures engage in a spirited celebration of a world in travesty".[127] It is the process of meeting the world as it is, but hoping for what it could be.

2.6 - The Cosmic Terror:

Carnival, existing in such a reality, portrays the near-hedonistic and comical celebration of humanity in the face of death and upheaval by sharing *in* death and upheaval (Bakhtin refers to this upheaval as "cosmic terrors").[128] The presence of the cosmic terrors can be seemingly minor or existentially huge. These terrors are those things that cannot be controlled, known or placated. There is an almost sentient indifference that makes these forces so distant. Yet through the carnival and its related laughter, the community stands aside from said fears to allow the cosmic terrors to find space in the world of shape and form. They may not become conquerable but they become identifiable. It is this cosmic fear that humanity seeks to find room for, and which in turn seeks to find its place in the

[126] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 17.
[127] Danow, *The Spirit of Carnival*, 3. For a carnivalesque reading of the NT Book of Revelation, see Sarah Emanuel, *Humor, Resistance, and Jewish Cultural Persistence in the Book of Revelation: Roasting Rome* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 192-93.
[128] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 335.

material world, described by Bakhtin as the "horizontal plane of becoming".[129] This celebration, achieved through carnival, is portrayed in grotesque realism, using the imagery of the grotesque body with degradation as the goal and laughter being the process through which this goal is achieved. The human body becomes the site of celebration and communal renewal with the principle of the "material body – hunger, thirst, defecation, copulation – becom[ing] a positively corrosive force, and a festive laughter [that] enjoys a symbolic victory over death, over all that is held sacred, over all that oppresses and restricts".[130]

This upheaval or cosmic terror in the narrative of 1 and 2 Samuel will be explored as being in some sense God. There is an unpredictability to God which invites such fear; he is unknowable and unfathomable.

> "This cosmic terror is not mystic in the strict sense of the word; rather is it the fear of that which is materially huge and cannot be overcome by force. [Even] the most ancient images of folklore express the struggle against fear, against the memories of the past, and the apprehension of future calamities, but folk images relating to this struggle helped develop true human fearlessness".[131]

This concept of the cosmic terror arises from the imagery inspired by the grotesque form; the image of a cosmos alive and devouring the world around it which is the "epitome of incompleteness", with is a wide-open "bodily abyss" which is in a state of becoming.[132] The destruction and fear associated with this unknowable entity of the cosmic terror was given a corporal sensibility, drawn into the folkloristic language of the everyday, wherein humour was attached to it and it became less terrifying. It is within humanity that the struggle against this form of the cosmic terror was found, rather than some immaterial sense of the mythological or abstract hope.[133] Within humanity itself the community sought to overcome these terrors, and within humanity the cosmic terror was able to find a place to dwell.[134] In the biblical text God stands as that cosmic terror; an unfathomable force who sometimes reacts violently and with little apparent regard for the community. For instance,

[129] Ibid, 365.
[130] Stam, *Subversive Pleasures,* 86.
[131] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 335.
[132] Ibid, 26 and 317.
[133] Ibid, 335-336.
[134] Ibid, 341.

the narrative reports God's killing of Uzzah (2 Sam 6:7, which raises a morally grey or ambiguous aspect of his character also). In the case of Uzzah, the sudden and chaotic intrusion of this divine violence "is a symptom of God's limitation and vulnerability, which results from God's earthly presence associated with the ark".[135]

God is an unknowable and sometimes terrifying force, yet when imbued with a sense of the bodily and tangible, when drawn into the carnival space, he becomes far more recognisable to the community. And within this recognition comes the opportunity for the community to become renewed in his presence. This study adapts Bakhtin's idea of the cosmic terror, to serve as a lens for viewing the characterisation of God within the Books of Samuel. Whereas Bakhtin does not regard the cosmic terror as mystical in the strict sense, this investigation deploys the idea as reflecting a key facet of the character of the Deity depicted in the narrative. Here, God is an unknowable force, an unfathomable 'other' which causes fear in the community.

God is therefore, as the cosmic terror, the raison d'être, as well as the liberating spirit, of the carnival. This portrayal of God as the cosmic terror becomes an *element* of his characterisation, a *facet* or *form* of his character that is being glimpsed at through the carnivalised treatment of the Books of Samuel. God is also an entity which stands in opposition to the pervasive concept of how a Deity should exist within the community, which is something that has a history of being popularised by the people in previous moments of biblical literature.[136] Within the scope of the Samuel narratives, the community is "dealing with a most human God", whose inexplicability is "not simply [directed towards] the restoration of divine authority".[137] The action of the 'human' God is the restoration of relationship with the community of Israel, a 'drive' with allows for the portrayal of exceptional qualities (e.g. enabling Hannah to conceive in 1 Sam 1:20), as well as some aspects of the divine nature which may not be so exceptional (e.g. his killing of the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh in 1 Sam 6:19-20). This is juxtaposed against other ANE

[135] Rachelle Gilmour, "Divine Violence and Divine Presence: Reading the Story of Uzzah and the Ark in 2 Samuel 6 with Slavoj Žižek", *BibInt* 27 (2019). 1-19, here 1. For the narrator, the character of God is thus unfinalisable.

[136] Cf. Judges 2:11-13, 17; 3:7, 12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1 as immediate literary examples of the Israelite community forsaking God in favour of these foreign gods and subsuming them within their own hegemony at the expense of God as their sole Deity.

[137] Mark S. Smith, *How Human is God? Seven Questions About God and Humanity in the Bible* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014), 54 and 46.

gods, who often seem to be stationed above the world, or if they do exist in the world they are contained within one main frame of corporeality or one tangible form.

For example, Egyptian gods are personified or given personality through the natural elements they work though (e.g. Ra and the sun) and are confined to this sole construction or manifestation; they are limited.[138] Within the narrative of the Books of Samuel, the figure of the deity for the Philistines is contained within the one inert vessel of Dagon's statue (1 Sam 5:2 RSV). This depiction of Dagon is subsequently upended repeatedly by Israel's God, who acts in a far more dynamic mode which results in the Philistines recognising this activity of God (cf. 1 Sam 5:6-12). These deities stand in opposition to God, who is highly interactive and dynamic, reacting and acting within the world and with the community. The character of God in the narrative of 1 and 2 Samuel undermines this prevalent relationship of deity to community, and establishes his own form of relating to the world. Here the Deity of Israel moves in and exists through the whole of the world wherein God "gets personally involved in events on earth" in contrast to other ANE deities.[139]

What is needed for both cosmos and community – as here for God and Israel – is reorientation of relationship. The Deity has thus "lost his neutrality and 'fallen into' the world, brutally intervening, and delivering justice".[140] Within the narrative, both entities are intimately connected and a recognition of this intimacy needs to be re-established. In Bakhtinian terms, God needs to find his "own flesh and blood", thereby discovering a place in the world.[141] This insight explains the divine acquiescence to the request for a king (1 Sam 8:22). A king can be what the people desire while also allowing for the cosmos to become "as man's own home, holding no fear for him".[142] God, as the cosmic terror and the galvanising force of Israel, affords "a positive life-affording potential [as well as being] in uneasy alliance with a corresponding affinity for its fugitive negative realization".[143] God thus possesses a dual nature: affable deity and deadly sentient tempest. The Books of Samuel "play a tricky game, suggesting on the one hand the possibility of the most intimate kind of interaction between other characters and this literary Deity, while at the same time

[138] Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, 143 and 145.
[139] Walter Dietrich, *The Early Monarchy in Israel: The Tenth Century B.C.E.,* trans. Joachim Vette (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 102.
[140] Slavoj Žižek, *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections* (London: Profile Books, 2008), 151.
[141] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 341.
[142] Ibid, 365.
[143] Danow, *The Spirit of Carnival*, 2.

ensuring that the Deity is never fully reduced to human form, never literarily captured or tamed".[144]

To place all this in context, imagine a harvest festival (with all of its parading, feasting, and joviality) being narrativised, with the imagery of devouring and death and birth all exaggerated. That is the carnival. Ambivalence is prevalent! The people are able to simultaneously engage with order and disorder. The disorder and the untameable cosmic terrors have been conquered by the celebration, yet they are also acknowledged. The disorder becomes embodied by the very entity which it threatens, thereby losing its truly destructive power. These two elements of the feast and the parade also reinforce the notion of fertility (both agriculturally and biologically) with the swollen earth producing life, just as the swollen belly produces new life. This belly in turn is nourished as the life ripped from the womb of the earth is moved into the gaping and devouring mouth of the human. Therein lies the imagery of the grotesque body; devouring and destroying (mimicking the cosmic terrors) yet renewing and life-giving. Order and disorder both lose their edges, merging and inter-mingling in this carnivalesque space. Similarly, the institution of the monarchy in Israel possesses two sides or faces; being at the same time destructive and a creature of new energy.

2.7 - The Clown-King:

Within this carnival space, ambivalence and ambiguity is prevailing. It is here that the clown is present as the central embodiment of this space and that mysterious tone of the carnival.[145] For Bakhtin, beatings and thrashings all fold into the ambiguous laughter of the carnival, thus not limiting the folk humour to just verbal pronouncements. Within this sphere, where the pure bodily experience is present (both positive and negative), the clown embodies this ambiguous carnival spirit and can be dressed up as a king in order for these beatings to hold a significant meaning. The notion of the clown-king in Bakhtin's writings originates from the Rabelaisian image of the Catchpole, a being who delights in being thrashed, "jumping up like a clown" once the beatings have finished.[146] The physical and verbal abuse thrown at the Catchpole are not negative, but are rather symbolic actions

[144] Chapman, "Worthy to be Praised", 41.
[145] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 197.
[146] Ibid, 196-197.

directed at a higher level, such as that of a king.[147] It is within such a system of ambiguous violence that the clown-king is centred. Bakhtin uses the figure of the Catchpole to further develop this idea of the king dressed as a clown to whom beatings, thrashing, and debasement are directed in order to propagate the renewal of the community. The figure of the Catchpole is one which becomes "king" and rises to a position of ultimate power yet desires to be beaten and thrashed by others. The image of the rent body here is reminiscent of the clown-king, who is destroyed in order for the "new" king to "jump up" in his place.[148]

The debasement of the clown-king is a part of the carnival in which the clown is a participant and a part of the carnival; this figure is both in and of the carnival space. This notion of thrashings and beatings as being rejuvenating rather than destructive is cemented in the image of the grotesque body. It is this type of body that is ripped apart so that new life may be brought into the world. It is in such a system of images that the clown is often dressed up as the king, whose body is destroyed to perpetuate growth and renewal.[149] The debased clown-king is destroyed (for lack of a better phrase) in order to perpetuate the growth of the community; simply put, it's the death of the old and birth of the new.

> "[The clown] is elected by all the people and is mocked by all the people. He is abused and beaten when the time of his reign is over…The clown was first disguised as a king, but once his reign had come to an end his costume was changed, "travestied", to turn him once more into a clown. The abuse and thrashing are equivalent to a change of costume, to a metamorphosis. Abuse reveals the other, true face of the abused, it tears off his disguise and mask. It is the king's uncrowning".[150]

Within the scope of the present study, this clown character is best exhibited through Saul. The clown-king in this context serves to undermine the ANE notion of kingship and the popular figure of the king. The pressure of attack and invasion by outside forces, principally the Philistines, during the time of the Books of Samuel is a strong motivation for desiring

[147] Ibid, 197.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 122. For a Bakhtinian analysis of the mockery of Jesus (Matt 27:27-31), see: James L. Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005) 77-78.
[150] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 197.

a king to be established in Israel, and this external threat was definitely a reality to some degree for the community.[151] The concept of kingship, much like the acquiring of other foreign gods, "would have been shared with the broader Near Eastern royal ideology as regards the authority, role, prestige, and power of the monarch".[152] In terms of general cultural cross-pollination of ideas, the "value of ancient Near Eastern literature for the interpretation of the OT [Old Testament] is profound".[153] So it is not the need *in itself* that is being undermined but rather the *concept* of the figure of a king as it existed in the ANE at the time. The king in other ANE communities is depicted as being either a "heroic man [or] a god who destroys his victims in the perfection of his power".[154] The Ugaritic concept of a king is as an adoptive son of the god who leads the pantheon, thus granting some degree of divinity to the figure of the king.[155] Overall, the king is perceived in other ANE communities as being "the chief executive in all aspects of the nation's life".[156] Samuel's grand denunciation of the role of a king seems to rely on such a construction of a monarch (1 Sam 8:10-18).

The monarchic figures of Saul and subsequently David exist in the narrative to destabilise this concept of a king, setting up a profoundly new image by ridiculing the former concept, utilising the conventional story beats of a heroic origin story. The initial and fundamental activity of the carnival is the "mock crowning and subsequent decrowning of the carnival king".[157] When reading the long quote from Bakhtin above, it is striking how much this description of the clown's rise and fall mirrors Saul's own crowning and demise. The carnival is initiated and necessitated by the cosmic terror – God – and this carnivalesque spirit is embodied in the newly-created figure of the clown-king. Saul is anointed, chosen, and elected (1 Sam 9:17; 10:1, 21), and dressed in kingly garb before he is subsequently debased.

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[151] Israel Finkelstein, 'The Emergence of the Monarchy in Israel: The Environmental and Socio-Economic Aspects', *JSOT* 44 (1989), 43-74, here 44.
[152] Bernard M. Levinson, 'The Reconceptualization of Kingship in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History's Transformation of Torah', *VT* 51/4 (October 2001), 511-534, here 511.
[153] J.J.M Roberts, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East: Collected Essays* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 44.
[154] Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, 10.
[155] Finkelstein, 'The Emergence of the Monarchy in Israel', 512.
[156] J.G. McConville, 'King and Messiah in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History', in *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East,* ed. John Day, LHBOTS 270 (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 271-295, here 276.
[157] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,* 124.

Within the narrative, Saul's demise is predominantly created through his own failures (cf. 1 Sam 13; 15), due to a fatal flaw of his character which denotes his being viewed as tragic. However, a scholarly focus on the tragic elements in Saul's life has led readers to overlook the carnivalesque dimensions present. The present study examines whether the text is carnivalesque and if Saul is the clown. Therefore, tragedy aside, the debasement of Saul commences once his authority is ended and his royal power is eclipsed so that the carnival may proceed and the renewal of the community may be acquired.[158] Saul is thus uncrowned and David takes his place of favour (1 Sam 15:28; 16:12-13; 18:12); the clown must make way as "abuse makes way for praise".[159] While Saul is killed in the narrative (1 Sam 31), it is purposeful from a Bakhtinian perspective and therefore does not become continually dejected in tone. Rather, his death provides a space for the continuance of the carnival and the continued revitalising of the kingship concept in the figure of David who faces his own debasement (cf. 2 Sam 6).

As the clown, the old form is dispatched to make way for the new. The initial crowning of Saul, much like the idea of the crowning of the clown-king in the Bakhtinian concept of the carnival, already points to the idea of the crown being removed. The act of coronation is ambivalent, always including within itself "a perspective of negation".[160] As birth always retains the image of death later on, so too here the crowning of Saul as the clown-king looks forward to his eventual decrowning in favour of the new king who will introduce the true renewal of the community. The old form is granted new shape which allows for the desired growth of the community: "the old king…jumps up alive and gay (the new king)".[161] The two figures are inextricably linked; what Saul ushers in, David completes (cf. 2 Sam 6). The two are closely connected, not just by narrative convention but by resemblance as well (cf. 1 Sam 9:2; 16:12). In different ways, both figures serve to undermine the ANE conception of how a king should be; Saul does so by mocking the conventions of establishment of the king, while David ridicules the activity of the king within the community.

The destruction of the clown-king works alongside the victory of the new king, almost as "one single, superindividual bodily life that…generate[s] and [is] generating".[162]

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[158] Danow, *The Spirit of Carnival*, 4.
[159] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World,* 198.
[160] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,* 125.
[161] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 199-200.
[162] Ibid, 226.

The clown must be debased in order to allow the renewed growth to enter the community. The new monarch is thus able to take prominence following the fall of the clown-king, and usher in the renewal and prosperity of the community. David is thus the new king of the Samuel narrative, who allows for the community of Israel to receive this advancement as well as the reorientation of their relationship to the cosmic terror of God (cf. 2 Sam 6). Therefore, Saul's eventual demise is far more than mere tragedy, nor is it merely a cog in the wheel of the carnival machine. Rather, Saul's activity facilitates this regeneration of the people with the cosmos. The "better turns the worse into ridicule and kills it" which finally allows "the world's mystery…to appear as something gay and carefree".[163]

2.8 - Comedy and Carnival:

To denote a biblical text as being humorous or as being in some way funny may seem erroneous at best and sacrilegious at worst. Yet there is a marked difference "between taking something humorously and taking it lightly".[164] The attempt here in applying a more parodic lens to the material of 1 and 2 Samuel is not to mock it. Rather it is to approach the text from another angle in order to appreciate better the material and seek to come to terms with some of the material's more challenging aspects, by utilising a perspective that is perhaps underused, that of the carnivalesque. Yet there is a recognition of the subjectivity of comedy or parody as a genre, with the "communication of humour [being] notoriously problematic".[165] With this in mind it would be prudent to perceive the Books of Samuel as being *darkly* comedic, possessing "this quality of 'grimmest humour'".[166] This darker form of comedy is opposed to lower forms of comedy as dark humour "does not necessarily seek to elicit laughter as a response".[167] Note that lower forms of comedy are those which explicitly aim to elicit laughter from the audience as a means of releasing the tension built up from the comedic experience. Darker forms of comedy do not necessarily have this as an end goal, and are more concerned with a moment of introspection or ironic reflection.

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[163] Ibid, 256 and 233.
[164] M. Conrad Hyers, "The Comic Profanation of the Sacred", in *Holy Laughter: Essays on Religion in the Comic Perspective*, ed. M. Conrad Hyers (New York: The Seabury Press, 1969), 9-27, here 13.
[165] Athalya Brenner and Yehuda T. Radday, "Between Intentionality and Reception: Acknowledgment and Application (A Preview)", in *On Humour and Comic in the Hebrew Bible,* Bible and Literature Series 23, ed. Yehuda T. Radday and Athalya Brenner, (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1990), 13-19, here 14.
[166] Styan, *The Dark Comedy,* 262.
[167] Jackson, *Comedy and Feminist Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible,* 9.

This darker form of comedy stands in contrast to more easily accessible or lower forms of comedy which merely seek to garner a laugh from the audience, and without necessarily wanting to "redouble" the pathos involved in more satirical or darker forms of comedy.[168] Such dark comedy derives from or encompasses the tragic within its boundaries. This presence of the tragic within the comedic adds another layer to proceedings. The comedy it possesses is an element of 'the "double-faced" kind.[169] This sort of Janus face utters both sides of the comic and tragic at the same time, reflecting a duality in the carnivalesque comedy which is darker than lower forms of comedy are able to retain.[170] Similarly, the hero, or "comic-pathetic hero", of the dark comedy is equally multi-faceted or "redoubled".[171] The hero of the dark comedy (or the clown in the carnival) is "a creature who at the crisis is so human as to remember and hope rather than heed and act".[172] The comic-pathetic hero encompasses the valour of the tragic hero, whilst also retaining that charisma or appeal of the comedic figure, which keeps an audience rooting for them even though the character is unlikely to succeed. Such iterations of the literary figure of the hero, in both tragedy and comedy, will fail to some degree. It is a distinct aspect of the dark comedy "to show [an audience] that a clown can also be a hero: [seen] playing both parts".[173] This is as true a representation of humanity as one is likely to find, with the "mixture of the comic and the pathetic" being easily discovered in most audience members.[174] The comic-pathetic hero will endeavour but will fail, but the true 'sting' of the tragedy of such a failure is softened by the comedy.

The carnival with its clown exists in such an environment of tragicomedy, yet retains a certain distance from being entirely entrenched in this parodied representation of reality. This distance is maintained by the presence of magical realism. Magical realism depicts the extraordinary occurring in and within the ordinary, and stands as the literary

[168] Styan, *The Dark Comedy*, 262. Styan is here referring to the presence of the tragic within the comedic, something tragic always existing in and with the comedic, and it is through this more humorous edge that the melancholy of the tragedy is thus "redoubled".
[169] Ibid, 263. Styan here references William Shakespeare's *King Lear*, speaking about the suffering of Lear, where the tragedy of the play itself, is incomplete without a comedic edge, sometimes brought about by the presence of the Fool.
[170] Danow, *The Spirit of Carnival*, 12. Danow also uses the image of the serpent eating its own tail, reflecting the unity of death and life, with the grotesque body consuming itself for nourishment.
[171] Styan, *The Dark Comedy*, 269.The "comic-pathetic hero" is Styan's term for the hero of the dark comedy, who possesses both the heroism and drive of the tragic hero, doomed to fail, yet also the charm and likability of the comedic hero, who is also doomed to fail.
[172] Ibid.
[173] Ibid, 270.
[174] Ibid, 272.

consciousness that holds the story world together, and is an element which is tied to the idea of folklore. It also lifts the narrative away from being a direct representation of historical reality but rather to become a chronotopic reality. For example: a person is sweeping their floor and discovers a trap door to a magical realm, another finds an oil lamp at an antique store and discovers it actually contains a genie, or Samson is travelling to Timnah and kills a lion with his bare hands with the sudden explosive intrusion of the "spirit of the LORD" upon him (Judg 14:5-6). The presence of magical realism within the narrative setting affords a "vision of life in which what might be termed fantastic is designed to appear plausible and real".[175] This sense of magical realism within a narrative is the emergence of the eccentric which "is a special category of the carnival sense of the world, organically connected with the category of familiar contact".[176] Within biblical narratives, this essence of the magical or extraordinary is usually portrayed through the presence of God within the story (e.g. Gen 18:10; 32:22-32, Exod 3:1-6, Judg 14:5-6; 15:14-16; 16:28-31).

Bakhtin's concept of the carnival is an effective example of such tragicomedy; keeping this tension between comic and tragic, while also introducing that bizarre element of magical realism into the literary frame. Carnival is an amalgamation of the duality of the tragicomic and magical realism, drawing on ambiguity between life and death (or the orderly and the grotesque) as the "generating principle" of its world-building venture.[177] This form of comedy is not 'shy' to expose the human body in all its hideous glory, to revel in excrement and riches alike, and to warp the dividing line between life and death.[178] Bakhtin opposes the Renaissance concept of the "closed" body – that of the perfected and closed body which was "strictly [a] completed, finished product".[179] The body for the carnival stands opposed to this, as the body which is "ever creating", is one which moves beyond the confines of its own form and into the world (hence the importance placed on protrusions and the "gaping" mouth and other orifices which are wide open to the world).[180] Instead of the Renaissance concept of the 'closed' body, the carnival celebrates this other, grotesque body which protrudes and extends out into the world, remaining open and

[175] Danow, *The Spirit of Carnival*, 9.
[176] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,* 123.
[177] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 27.
[178] Ibid, 28-36. here 29.
[179] Ibid, 29.
[180] Ibid.

unfinished. Thus the distinction between official and popular or unofficial bodies is removed.

The clown serves to play with this dichotomy of elements, standing as a figure of derision who is subsequently beaten and thrashed by those involved in the scene. The body of the clown figure, which is torn asunder, is thus reminiscent of the carcass which is to be eaten, while certain elements used in the consumption or preparation of food are parodied in the beating of the clown. It is through this image of the clown's beaten body that feasting and the grotesque body are portrayed, where "the kitchen and the battle meet and cross each other".[181]

Yet despite this apparent violence, the carnival is not a malicious form of comedy. Although it does not outwardly seek to see the clown-king destroyed, it "likes to see men hanged, because it refuses to be reticent about anything that may happen to the body".[182] This darker form of comedy does not shy away from the imperfections and violence that can happen to the human form, and instead pushes the corporeal vulnerability of the form to the fore. Again; it is a recognition of the way the world is and the real vulnerability that the human person can experience. The clown-king is crowned by all the people and then beaten down by the same people once the clown-king's reign is completed.[183]

In Bakhtin's perspective, the cosmic terror, the raison d'être of the carnival experience, drives the need for the carnival to begin. The cosmic terror is that which is unknowable and unfathomable, "the fear of the immeasurable, the infinitely powerful".[184] The immediate reaction arising from encountering such an entity is fear, but such terror and fear is a stagnating position. The only way to counteract fear is through laughter, which necessitates the engagement of the individual *with* the entity that terrifies.[185] Through interacting with said entity, it may not become knowable but it does become recognisable and therefore no longer terrifying. God is such a figure; unknowable, unfathomable, and at times utterly terrifying.[186] God emerges as the cohesive force that drives the carnival into

[181] Ibid, 197.
[182] Kerr, *Tragedy and Comedy*, 169.
[183] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 197.
[184] Ibid, 335.
[185] Danow, *The Spirit of the Carnival*, 39.
[186] Note here the attitude of Job towards God; he finds the presence of the Deity and God's intrusion into the world as something utterly terrifying and finally declines to argue or even interact with God (Job 40:3-5). Similarly with Jonah, as God interacts with the prophet, Jonah flees and is frightened of what interaction with Deity could bring (Jon 1:3).

becoming as well as this indecipherable entity that creates the need for the catharsis of the carnival.

The community requires a reorientation of the relationship with God, and perhaps laughter is the best route to such an extreme adjustment, with the concept of the ANE gods ridiculed by the familiar God of their own heritage and community. Saul, as the clown-king within the overall carnival scheme, "assumes the role of the scapegoat and receives the punishment for their half-hearted attempts at stepping outside of the common order".[187] This establishment of Saul as king within the carnival scheme may derive "from the primal experience of sacrifice that curbs rivalry and redirects violence in order to bring stability and peace".[188] David serves to complete the image of the clown-king, the aspect of this figure that further subverts the expected portrayal of the kingly hero (in both appearance and attitude) and ushers in the final steps in the carnival parade wherein the death of the old form gives way to the new mode of being. Accordingly, the following chapters will investigate carnivalesque elements in major scenes from Saul's early reign (1 Sam 9-11), as well as David's festive procession of the ark to Jerusalem (2 Sam 6).

[187] Wolfgang M. Zucker, "The Clown as the Lord of Disorder", in *Holy Laughter: Essays on Religion in the Comic Perspective*, ed. M. Conrad Hyers (New York: The Seabury Press, 1969), 75-89, here 82.
[188] Marty Alan Michelson, *Reconciling Violence and Kingship: A study of Judges and 1 Samuel* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 2012), 113.

CHAPTER 3: THE "CROWNING" OF THE CLOWN-KING (1 SAM 9:1-10:16)

3.1 - Introduction:

The present study begins with 1 Samuel 9:1-10:16 because here the narrative introduces the figure of Saul. Already, at the start of his reign, it can be seen how this hapless character enters rather helplessly into kingship. Accordingly, this study will employ the Bakhtinian notion of the clown-king to illuminate his character. To understand the 'crowning' of Saul, it is necessary first to consider the narrative context. By the beginning of 1 Samuel 8, originating in material far earlier than this, the community have already created an alternative order in which "every man did what was right in his own eyes" (Judg 21:25), rather than keeping a correct relationship between one another and God. The statement of there not being a king in Israel (Judg 21:25) takes on "a certain urgency [as] not even…God's directives can help any longer in establishing and maintaining communal wellbeing".[1]

The ancient Near Eastern (ANE) concept of kingship, and the relation of its deities to the community represents the popular hegemony which is being subscribed to by the people. There has been a repeated and prolonged pattern of the people incorporating these foreign influences into their own communal ideology, becoming popular to the detriment of the community's relationship with the one God.[2] God thus becomes a stranger, an entity of fear, rather than the people being able to recognise that "God [has allowed] something to exist outside of this order".[3] The people miss the point that God has allowed the notion of kingship to exist, despite the Deity's reckoning that such a form of leadership is tantamount to rejection (1 Sam 8:7). The people are under the impression their 'move' to have a king installed is something separate to God, but is in fact something that God is allowing to occur.[4] The cycle of sin-judgement-salvation-sin which appears in Judges (Judg 2:11; 3:7; 4:1; 6:1) proves to be ineffective in restabilising and keeping the relationship

[1] Paul Borgman, *David, Saul, and God: Rediscovering an Ancient Story* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 101.

[2] Cf. Judg 2:11-13, 17; 3:7, 12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1 as immediate literary examples of the Israelite community forsaking God in favour of these foreign gods and subsuming them within their own hegemony at the expense of God as their sole Deity.

[3] Zucker, "The Clown as the Lord of Disorder", 86.

[4] The narrative explicitly informs the reader that God has considered their request for a king as being a rejection of himself (1 Sam 8:7), something which Samuel relays to the people as well (1 Sam 12:12).

between Deity and community.[5] Perhaps what is required then is not a similar pattern – merely repeating the same pattern again and expecting a different result would be tantamount to insanity.

A new manner of relationship, to draw both God and the community back together, is needed at the onset of 1 Samuel 8, following the failure of Samuel's sons to judge the people correctly (1 Sam 8:3). It is the people who suppose that this new, stable form of community "can only be secured through uninterrupted, dynastic leadership".[6] This event of Samuel's sons' impropriety in the narrative undermines the dominant textual authority of the judges as being suitable for the community as a form of governance and thus exposes it as actually ineffective. It is said a while before the events of 1 Samuel 8 that "the word of the LORD was rare in those days" (1 Sam 3:1), indicating in some sense that communion with God was not a persistent or regular occurrence. God's interaction with the people has been infrequent and lax, and the people also do not recognise that they already have a (divine) king when they request of one from Samuel (1 Sam 8:5-6). Indeed, they also do not seem to know that this request is the equivalent of a rejection of God (1 Sam 8:7-8). One might expect the Deity to tell the people to go home and be content with another temporary contract judge to come. Yet something unexpected happens within the narrative. God acquiesces to the people's request: "And the Lord said to Samuel, 'Hearken to their voice, and make them a king'" (1 Sam 8:22).

Shaul Bar considers that the request stands as "an accurate tradition reflecting an historical process", because it reflects the popular Israelite desire for a new form of governance or leadership.[7] Yet the people's request for a king is not the community's attempt to "move to a 'secular' government away from theocratic rule".[8] In ANE communities, the king served as a 'middle man' between the people and the national deity, and the request may reflect the Israelites' desire for a more stable form of leadership. In Bakhtinian terms, the people's request for a king could thus be said to be a form of chronotope; being the assimilation of "real historical time and space" with the narrative.[9] There must have been a genuine and 'real' need for a change of institution to monarchy

[5] A. D. H. Mayes, *Judges*, OTG (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985), 32.
[6] Edelman, *King Saul in the Historiography of Judah*, 37.
[7] Bar, *God's First King*, 1.
[8] Edelman, *King Saul in the Historiography of Judah*, 39.
[9] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 84. For Bakhtin, the carnival stood as a literary representation of the true, social, and historical environment of early modern Europe (Dentith, *Bakhtinian Thought*, 66).

within Israel. Accordingly, the narrative represents this social development within the people coming to Samuel at Ramah, and God's subsequent acquiescence to the demand being the narrative rationale injecting the Deity into these events. Thus, the narrative can be perceived as being located within a tangible, historical setting, even if the full picture is now lost to us. The concepts of the ANE, including the format of kingship as authority and the distance of its deities from the active community, appear as a societal framework that was accepted as constructive for the stability of the community. The king exists so that the "established order" may be maintained "against the onslaught of the powers of chaos".[10] Narratively speaking, as the predecessor to the Books of Samuel, the Book of Judges reflects the popular and repeated pattern of behaviour to turn towards other gods, perhaps in the people's attempt to secure the community to be just like the other neighbouring nations (1 Sam 8:5).[11]

Throughout much of the narrative of 1 and 2 Samuel, God may be perceived as working 'behind the scenes' for the community and the same could be said here. The 1 Samuel material has previously narrated Hannah's miraculous conception of Samuel (1 Sam 1:17-20), and will later include the episode of the servant lad (as if magically!) producing a quarter-shekel for the "man of God" when travelling with Saul (1 Sam 9:7-8). It is "enough for a reader to ascribe the whole grand scheme of things to the divinity's desire and deed".[12] With the people's demand for a king, a new manner of relationship between Israel and God is required and perhaps this request by the people for something 'different' is recognised by God as allowing for such an opportunity. This situation may not necessarily be viewed as 'random', but rather as the acknowledgement that society and God "need a major [occurrence] in order to resuscitate the spirit of communal solidarity".[13] God may be able to utilise the people's desire for a king in order to allow himself, in Bakhtinian terms, to re-enter the community, to elect an individual to show that the people have nothing to fear in the unfathomable God and that the Deity may "begin to seek a new place and to achieve new formations" in the world.[14]

In response to the people's request, God grants them their first king, but the narrative of his anointing (1 Sam 9:1-10:16) is 'down-to-earth' and even comical, so that

[10] Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, 9.
[11] The Book of Samuel follows Judges directly in the Hebrew canon.
[12] Gunn and Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible*, 81.
[13] Žižek, *Violence*, 155.
[14] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 365.

Saul appears to be a clown-king. The narrative unfolds in three sections: Saul's search for lost donkeys (1 Sam 9:1-21), the carnival feast and Samuel's anointing of Saul (1 Sam 9:22-10:1), and the disorder and raving following the anointing of Saul (1 Sam 10:2-16). Each of these sections will now be considered in turn.

3.2 - Saul's Search for Lost Donkeys (1 Sam 9:1-21):

Table 3.2: Hebrew Translation

Hebrew Text (MT) of 1 Sam 9:1-21	Translation of 1 Sam 9:1-21[15]
וַיְהִי־אִישׁ [מִבִּן־יָמִין כ] (מִבִּנְיָמִין ק) וּשְׁמוֹ קִישׁ בֶּן־אֲבִיאֵל בֶּן־צְרֹר בֶּן־בְּכוֹרַת בֶּן־אַפִיַח בֶּן־אִישׁ יְמִינִי גִּבּוֹר חָיִל:	1 There was a man from Benjamin and his name was Kish, son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Bechorath, son of Aphiah, son of a male Benjaminite, a mighty man of power.
וְלוֹ־הָיָה בֵּן וּשְׁמוֹ שָׁאוּל בָּחוּר וָטוֹב וְאֵין אִישׁ מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל טוֹב מִמֶּנּוּ מִשִּׁכְמוֹ וָמַעְלָה גָּבַהּ מִכָּל־הָעָם:	2 And he had a son and his name was Saul; an attractive youth. There was not a man from any of the sons of Israel who was more attractive than him. From his shoulder upward he was taller than all the people.[16]
וַתֹּאבַדְנָה הָאֲתֹנוֹת לְקִישׁ אֲבִי שָׁאוּל וַיֹּאמֶר קִישׁ אֶל־שָׁאוּל בְּנוֹ קַח־נָא אִתְּךָ אֶת־אַחַד מֵהַנְּעָרִים וְקוּם לֵךְ בַּקֵּשׁ אֶת־הָאֲתֹנֹת:	3 The female donkeys of Kish, father of Saul, were lost. And Kish said to Saul, his son: "Please, take one of the lads with you and get up, go! Seek the female donkeys."[17]
וַיַּעֲבֹר בְּהַר־אֶפְרַיִם וַיַּעֲבֹר בְּאֶרֶץ־שָׁלִשָׁה וְלֹא מָצָאוּ וַיַּעַבְרוּ בְּאֶרֶץ־שַׁעֲלִים וָאַיִן וַיַּעֲבֹר בְּאֶרֶץ־יְמִינִי וְלֹא מָצָאוּ:	4 And he (Saul) passed through the hill country of Ephraim and he passed through the territory of Shalishah, but they did not find them. And they passed through the territory of Shaalim and they were not there. And he passed through the territory of Benjamin but they did not find them.
הֵמָּה בָּאוּ בְּאֶרֶץ צוּף וְשָׁאוּל אָמַר לְנַעֲרוֹ אֲשֶׁר־עִמּוֹ לְכָה וְנָשׁוּבָה פֶּן־יֶחְדַּל אָבִי מִן־הָאֲתֹנוֹת וְדָאַג לָנוּ:	5 They came into the territory of Zuph, and Saul said to his lad, who accompanied him; "Come and let us return! Otherwise my father will cease from (worrying about) the female donkeys and will become anxious about us".
וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ הִנֵּה־נָא אִישׁ־אֱלֹהִים בָּעִיר הַזֹּאת וְהָאִישׁ נִכְבָּד כֹּל אֲשֶׁר־יְדַבֵּר בֹּוא יָבֹוא עַתָּה נֵלְכָה שָּׁם אוּלַי יַגֵּיד לָנוּ אֶת־דַּרְכֵּנוּ אֲשֶׁר־הָלַכְנוּ עָלֶיהָ:	6 And he (the lad) said to him (Saul); "Look, please! A man of God is in this city and the man is respected. All that he will say certainly comes to pass. Now, let us go there. Perhaps he will make known to us our way which we are set upon".[18]

[15] Translation own. The thesis here and throughout uses the electronic form of the Hebrew text, which is taken from Biblehub [available at: https://biblehub.com/text/1_samuel/1-1.htm]. For the critical edition, see: Elliger and Rudolph, *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia.*

[16] Note the assonance between names of Saul (שָׁאוּל) and Samuel (שְׁמוּאֵל). In the narrative, both names are connected with the Hebrew word root שׁאל, which means "to ask/request/inquire". Saul is the one literally "asked for" by the people (1 Sam 8:5), while Samuel was previously "asked for" from God by Hannah (cf. 1 Sam 1:19-20).

[17] Note here the presence of three imperatives: "Get up!", "Go!", and "Seek!" (1 Sam 9:3). These are presented as singular in the MT yet the second and third verbs are in plural form in the LXX. McCarter explains that this may be due to the "confusion over the number of the verbs" in the subsequent verse (1 Sam 9:4). See: McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 168.

[18] From other texts (7:17; 15:34) the reader presumes that the seer's city is Ramah, though this passage never names the city.

וַיֹּ֨אמֶר שָׁא֜וּל לְנַעֲר֗וֹ וְהִנֵּה֙ נֵלֵ֔ךְ וּמַה־נָּבִ֖יא לָאִ֑ישׁ כִּ֣י הַלֶּ֤חֶם אָזַל֙ מִכֵּלֵ֔ינוּ וּתְשׁוּרָ֕ה אֵין־לְהָבִ֖יא לְאִ֣ישׁ הָאֱלֹהִ֑ים מָ֥ה אִתָּֽנוּ׃	7 And Saul said to his lad: “But look, if we shall go then what we will bring to the man? For the bread is gone from our kits, and there are no provisions to bring to the man of God. What is there with us?”
וַיֹּ֣סֶף הַנַּ֗עַר לַעֲנ֛וֹת אֶת־שָׁא֥וּל וַיֹּ֖אמֶר הִנֵּ֣ה נִמְצָ֗א בְּיָדִי֙ רֶ֣בַע שֶׁ֔קֶל כֶּ֖סֶף וְנָתַתִּ֣י לְאִ֣ישׁ הָאֱלֹהִ֑ים וְהִגֵּ֥יד לָ֛נוּ אֶת־דַּרְכֵּֽנוּ׃	8 The lad again answered Saul and said: “Look, a quarter shekel of silver is found in my hand, and I will give it to the man of God, and he will make known to us our way”.
לְפָנִ֗ים ׀ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל֮ כֹּה־אָמַר֒ הָאִישׁ֙ בְּלֶכְתּ֣וֹ לִדְר֔וֹשׁ אֱלֹהִ֖ים לְכ֣וּ וְנֵלְכָ֑ה עַד־הָרֹאֶ֔ה כִּ֣י לַנָּבִיא֮ הַיּוֹם֒ יִקָּרֵ֣א לְפָנִ֔ים הָרֹאֶֽה׃	9 Beforehand in Israel, thus said a man when he went to consult God: “Come, and let us go to the seer”. (For the prophet today was called the seer beforehand).
וַיֹּ֨אמֶר שָׁא֜וּל לְנַעֲר֗וֹ טוֹב֙ דְּבָרֶ֔ךָ לְכָ֖ה ׀ נֵלֵ֑כָה וַיֵּלְכוּ֙ אֶל־הָעִ֔יר אֲשֶׁר־שָׁ֖ם אִ֥ישׁ הָאֱלֹהִֽים׃	10 And Saul said to his lad: “Your word is good! Come, let us go!” And they went to the city, where the man of God was.
הֵ֣מָּה עֹלִ֗ים בְּמַעֲלֵה֙ הָעִ֔יר וְהֵ֣מָּה מָצְא֔וּ נְעָר֖וֹת יֹצְא֣וֹת לִשְׁאֹ֑ב מַ֚יִם וַיֹּאמְר֣וּ לָהֶ֔ן הֲיֶ֥שׁ בָּזֶ֖ה הָרֹאֶֽה׃	11 As they were going up at the ascent to the city, they found some young women going out to draw water. They (Saul and the lad) said to them (the young women): “Is there a seer in this place?”
וַתַּעֲנֶ֣ינָה אוֹתָ֗ם וַתֹּאמַ֙רְנָה֙ יֵ֣שׁ הִנֵּ֔ה לְפָנֶ֖יךָ מַהֵ֑ר ׀ עַתָּ֕ה כִּ֥י הַיּ֛וֹם בָּ֖א לָעִ֑יר כִּ֣י זֶ֥בַח הַיּ֛וֹם לָעָ֖ם בַּבָּמָֽה׃	12 And they (the young women) answered them (Saul and the lad) and said: “There is! Look, ahead of you! Hurry now! For today he is coming to the city for there is a sacrifice today, for the people, at the high place”.
כְּבֹאֲכֶ֣ם הָעִ֔יר כֵּ֚ן תִּמְצְאוּן֙ אֹת֔וֹ בְּטֶ֣רֶם יַעֲלֶ֔ה הַבָּמָ֖תָה לֶאֱכֹ֑ל כִּ֣י לֹא־יֹאכַ֗ל הָעָם֙ עַד־בֹּא֔וֹ כִּֽי־הוּא֙ יְבָרֵ֣ךְ הַזֶּ֔בַח אַחֲרֵי־כֵ֖ן יֹאכְל֣וּ הַקְּרֻאִ֑ים וְעַתָּ֥ה עֲל֛וּ כִּֽי־אֹת֥וֹ כְהַיּ֖וֹם תִּמְצְאֽוּן׃	13 “And as you come to the city then you will find him before he goes up toward the high place to eat. For the people will not eat until he comes, since he himself will bless the sacrifice. Afterwards those invited will eat. Now, go up! For you will find himself at once!”[19]
וַיַּעֲל֣וּ הָעִ֔יר הֵ֣מָּה בָאִ֔ים בְּת֖וֹךְ הָעִ֑יר וְהִנֵּ֣ה שְׁמוּאֵ֗ל יֹצֵא֙ לִקְרָאתָ֔ם לַעֲל֖וֹת הַבָּמָֽה׃ ס	14 And they went up to the city. As they were entering the city, just then Samuel was going out to meet them so he could go up to the high place.
וַיהוָ֗ה גָּלָ֤ה אֶת־אֹזֶן֙ שְׁמוּאֵ֔ל יוֹם֙ אֶחָ֔ד לִפְנֵ֖י בּ֣וֹא־שָׁא֑וּל לֵאמֹֽר׃	15 And the LORD had revealed in the ear of Samuel one day before Saul came, saying:
כָּעֵ֣ת ׀ מָחָ֗ר אֶשְׁלַ֤ח אֵלֶ֙יךָ֙ אִ֣ישׁ מֵאֶ֣רֶץ בִּנְיָמִ֔ן וּמְשַׁחְתֹּ֖ו לְנָגִ֣יד עַל־עַמִּ֣י יִשְׂרָאֵ֑ל וְהוֹשִׁ֗יעַ אֶת־עַמִּי֙ מִיַּ֣ד פְּלִשְׁתִּ֔ים כִּ֣י רָאִ֔יתִי אֶת־עַמִּ֖י כִּ֣י בָ֥אָה צַעֲקָתֹ֖ו אֵלָֽי׃	16 “Around this time tomorrow I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin. And you will anoint him as ruler over my people Israel. He will save my people from the hand of the Philistines. For I have seen my people, because its cry has come to me”.[20]
וּשְׁמוּאֵ֕ל רָאָ֖ה אֶת־שָׁא֑וּל וַיהוָ֣ה עָנָ֔הוּ הִנֵּ֣ה הָאִ֔ישׁ אֲשֶׁ֥ר אָמַ֖רְתִּי אֵלֶ֑יךָ זֶ֚ה יַעְצֹ֣ר בְּעַמִּֽי׃	17 When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said to him: “Look! The man about whom I spoke to you! This one will restrain my people”.[21]

[19] Note the repetition of pronouns here, which may be representative of the excited manner of speech of the women as they speak to Saul.

[20] The Greek iteration of the text reflects the story of Hannah (1 Sam 1-2) with the mention of humiliation (1 Sam 1:11).

[21] The text uses עצר (“to restrain” or “to hinder”) rather than משל (“to rule”) or מלך (“to reign”) which might otherwise be expected for a possible candidate for the kingship. The verb could have the sense of gathering or mustering the people together (McCarter, *I Samuel*, 179). Perhaps this verb hints at the future lack of success of the clown-king, who will eventually become more of a hindrance than a help (1 Sam 14).

וַיִּגַּשׁ שָׁאוּל אֶת־שְׁמוּאֵל בְּתוֹךְ הַשָּׁעַר וַיֹּאמֶר הַגִּידָה־נָּא לִי אֵי־זֶה בֵּית הָרֹאֶה׃	18 And Saul approached Samuel in the middle of the gate, and he said: "Please tell me; where is the house of the seer?"
וַיַּעַן שְׁמוּאֵל אֶת־שָׁאוּל וַיֹּאמֶר אָנֹכִי הָרֹאֶה עֲלֵה לְפָנַי הַבָּמָה וַאֲכַלְתֶּם עִמִּי הַיּוֹם וְשִׁלַּחְתִּיךָ בַבֹּקֶר וְכָל אֲשֶׁר בְּלִבָבְךָ אַגִּיד לָךְ׃	19 And Samuel answered Saul, and said; "I am the seer. Go up before me to the high place. You (pl.) will eat with me today and I will dismiss you (sg.) in the morning, and tell you (sg.) all that is on your mind".
וְלָאֲתֹנֹת הָאֹבְדוֹת לְךָ הַיּוֹם שְׁלֹשֶׁת הַיָּמִים אַל־תָּשֶׂם אֶת־לִבְּךָ לָהֶם כִּי נִמְצָאוּ וּלְמִי כָּל־חֶמְדַּת יִשְׂרָאֵל הֲלוֹא לְךָ וּלְכֹל בֵּית אָבִיךָ׃ ס	20 "And about your female donkeys, the ones lost to you three days ago, do not set your mind on them for they have been found. And (anyway), for whom is all the desire of Israel? Is not for you and for all the house of your father?"
וַיַּעַן שָׁאוּל וַיֹּאמֶר הֲלוֹא בֶן־יְמִינִי אָנֹכִי מִקְּטַנֵּי שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וּמִשְׁפַּחְתִּי הַצְּעִרָה מִכֹּל־מִשְׁפְּחוֹת שִׁבְטֵי בִנְיָמִן וְלָמָּה דִבַּרְתָּ אֵלַי כַּדָּבָר הַזֶּה׃ ס	21 Saul answered and said: "Am I not a Benjaminite, from the smallest ones of the tribes of Israel? And is not my family the tiniest out of all the families of the tribes of Benjamin? Why have you spoken to me like this?"[22]

3.2.1 - Discussion:

The present study seeks to explore carnivalesque elements in the presentation of Saul, and some of these already occur in this opening scene. The genesis of the carnival 'parade' is Saul's search for the lost donkeys of his father, Kish (1 Sam 9:1). The commission from his father serves as Saul's introduction into the narrative, while also creating a folkloristic air to the story. This folkloristic atmosphere in the Samuel narrative is reflective of the adventure chronotope, which occurs in other forms of satire, since travelling or wandering is the core movement of this segment of the narrative.[23] The adventure chronotope is centred on the figure of the hero, and the transformation he will undergo as well as his developing identity as he continues along the 'road' he is placed upon. The figure of Saul goes through this period of genuine metamorphosis and questions regarding his identity soon follow. Saul's' metamorphosis is bound up in the idea of "crisis and rebirth" as is the transformation of the hero in the adventure chronotope.[24] This cycle of crisis and rebirth is not a biographical reproduction of the life of the hero, but is rather a portrayal of the pivotal moments of the hero's life that result in transformation.[25] The physical 'road' upon which the hero travels fuses with the course of the hero's metaphorical 'road' and so the spatial

[22] The MT has the plural "tribes of Benjamin" which is corrected to the singular in the LXX. Could this Hebrew wording possibly be reinforcing the deferential speech by Saul, with the emphatic use of the plural? Alternatively, this may be an oversight due to the opening of the verse which notes Saul's deferential designation as being from the "smallest ones of the tribes of Israel".

[23] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 111. Sources of this adventure chronotope in satirical literature noted by Bakhtin include the *Satyricon* (Petronius) and *The Golden Ass* (Apuleius).

[24] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 115.

[25] Ibid.

setting is imbued with significance, and "extends through familiar native territory" which heightens the startling presence of these moments of magical realism.[26]

Shaul Bar describes the tale of Saul's search as being tantamount to folklore in form, and states that the editor of the narrative was possibly influenced by a 'call form' which is prevalent in stories regarding prophets, including the speech from God stating that the people's desire for a king has been noted by him.[27] While some biblical call narratives have an elevated style, such as Isaiah's call by the thrice holy God in the temple (Isa 6:1-8), Saul's call to be king emerges in an earthy, carnivalesque setting. The composition of most folkloristic stories (or 'fairy tales') is based predominantly on the "function of the dramatis personae" or the journey of the character that constitutes the overarching structure of the story.[28] Here, the overarching reason for Saul's journey which ultimately leads him to the kingship has a far more humble nature. This construction of Saul's introductory tale serves to draw on the "marketplace and billingsgate elements" that formed the basis of Bakhtin's carnival 'speech'.[29] Vladimir Propp establishes a morphological foundation – a series of "functions" as he terms them – which constitute the foundation of the fairy tale as a story.[30] Propp denotes the function of the fairy tale being that which drives the protagonist along the story. This notion of the function would be similar to the plot in narrative criticism. The narrative introduction of Saul hits on many of these story beats or functions which Propp puts forward as creating the framework of the fairy tale.

The tale here establishes an initial situation in which the "members of a family are enumerated [or where] the future hero…is simply introduced by mention of his name or indication of his status".[31] This expositional element establishes the initial conditions in which the protagonist is found so that the reader is able to compare his or her first condition to the character's concluding position in the narrative. Here the narrator gives Saul an enumeration of his family and his own social status: "There was a man from Benjamin and

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[26] Ibid, 120.

[27] Bar, *God's First King*, 9-10. See also: R.P. Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel*, OTG (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1984), 44.

[28] Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1968), 25.

[29] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 145. Bakhtin terms the type of folkloristic speech as the familiar and coarse words heard within the environment of the marketplace itself. For the purposes of reconciling this type of "marketplace" speech with the folktale, it can be best understood as both originating from a source which was divorced from the official language of society and rather sought to speak directly to the reader as the text 'found' the reader.

[30] Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, 25.

[31] Ibid. Similarly, narrative criticism when discussing the structure of the plot has an initial situation or exposition of the primary condition as a starting point of the plot. See: Ska, *Our Fathers Have Told Us*, 21.

his name was Kish, son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Bechorath, son of Aphiah, son of a male Benjaminite, a mighty man of power. And he had a son and his name was Saul; an attractive youth. There was not a man from any of the sons of Israel who was more attractive than him. From his shoulder upward he was taller than all the people" (1 Sam 9:1-2).

A lengthy genealogy typically introduces an important person (e.g. Tob 1:1). Judith is introduced with a genealogy of sixteen generations (Jdt 8:1), while Matthew introduces Jesus with a genealogy of forty-two generations (Matt 1:2-17). The reader is informed of the impressive heritage of Saul as well as his own equally impressive physical attributes which mark him out as seemingly the archetype of a hero (tall, strong, young, handsome and possessing a good 'pedigree'), and "prepares the reader for a description of his anointment as king".[32] The focus on Saul's physical stature which is "a trait of many heroes, immediately reinforces Saul's future potential…as one destined for greatness".[33] Saul's preliminary characterisation through his outward appearance and the description of his height as well as his affluent familial background serve to establish him as being the hero stereotype, yet his future conduct will contrast starkly with this initial depiction. The reader may be now aware of Saul's impressive physical stature yet in biblical narratives "there is no connection between appearance and nature".[34] Thus Saul's outward appearance is given to the reader to prove a point. Saul is established as 'looking' exactly as one would imagine the archetypal hero in a fairy tale to be. And it is important to recognise that the audience is only *looking*, but not necessarily *seeing* the young man do anything heroic.

Following this introduction Saul "absents himself from home" as per the directions of his father, in order to recover the lost donkeys.[35] Propp states that this removal of oneself from the familial unit can be done by older persons (whether through leaving the narrative landscape or through the death of the parents), thus leaving the younger generation to perform the central functions of the plot.[36] Saul thus leaves on his journey to recover his father's lost animals and it is here that an element of the humorous enters the narrative tone. The journey from Saul's home to the "territory of Zuph" (1 Sam 9:5) is a significant

[32] Michael Avioz, "The Motif of Beauty in the Books of Samuel and Kings", *VT* 59 (2009), 341-359, here 346.
[33] Edelman, *King Saul in the Historiography of Judah*, 43.
[34] Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 48.
[35] Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, 26.
[36] Ibid. For the purposes of this discussion, the idea of the "younger generation" absenting themselves will be of more interest as it forms the subsequent plot of the story.

distance to travel, with the most probable route seeing the pair moving through at least three territories before doubling back on themselves.[37]

The territories which the pair traverse - Ephraim, Shalishah, Shaalim, Benjamin, and Zuph – cover the full extent of the Ephraimite hill country. The first place name of Shalishah, also mentioned in 2 Kgs 4:42, may be located in north-east Benjamin. Therefore Saul would be undertaking his journey "in his own backyard".[38] The next location of Shaalim is not mentioned elsewhere but might be identified with the "land of Shual", which would then place Shaalim in the area north of Bethel. This would indicate that Saul was travelling in a north-westerly direction, heading directly towards Ramah.[39] The land of Zuph (1 Sam 1:1) which the pair had reached was part of the territory in which Samuel would make his "rounds" and judge the people (1 Sam 7:16-17). Just as Samuel had made his "circuit" through these northern territories to judge the people, so too does Saul come full circle in his mission to discover the lost donkeys, moving outward from his own home in Benjamin up to the land of Zuph and back again (cf. 1 Sam 9:1, 4-5; 10:1-13). This would indicate the movement of Saul from his own backyard and into Samuel's.

The amount of ground covered by Saul and the servant lad is considerable, with the narrated time of this segment reported far more succinctly than the actual journey of the pair would have actually been. The spatial details lend a certain degree of reality to the text, despite its more folkloristic tone, expanding the horizon of the narrative itself into a geographical setting even if the text itself does not exist within this space.[40] This report of the movement of the two serves to press the plot forward and towards Samuel in Ramah, as well as highlighting the total failure of their endeavour to find the lost donkeys as they had come a substantial distance and through two territories and yet were still unable to find the creatures (cf. 1 Sam 9:4-5). The change of the spatial setting through three territories also provides one of the first semblances of the carnivalesque within the narrative. A parade is taking place, with the clown-king, Saul, moving meekly at the front of the procession, wherein the "space is filled with real, living meaning, and forms a crucial relationship with the hero and his fate".[41] The road upon which Saul physically travels thus takes on special

[37] Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 163.
[38] McCarter, *I Samuel*, 174.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Bar Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 184.
[41] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 120.

significance as the site of the 'parade' which pushes the young man toward Ramah and Samuel.

The folkloristic elements of the journey to discover lost donkeys are the foundation for this odd carnivalesque narrative introduction of a future king. The birth and early life of Saul is not the point of departure for his story as king, but rather the significant yet whimsical account of his unsuccessful search for donkeys, reflective of the adventure chronotope's focus on the "unusual moments of man's life".[42] The longer the tale continues, the more the essence of carnival spirit enters into the landscape. This peculiar 'flavour' of the carnival is first tasted when the servant lad almost magically produces a quarter-shekel to Saul, which ends his uncertainty about continuing on to Ramah (1 Sam 9:8).[43] The reader leans both parties – Saul and Samuel – have been undertaking a journey to discover something. For Saul, it is donkeys. For Samuel, it is a king. Both characters also seem to exude the same lack of enthusiasm for the task at hand, even though this will be a decisive moment in Israel's national history. The begrudging attitude of the pair toward this mission is quite comical, being reminiscent of two individuals whom fate is dragging together for a necessity beyond either person's control. This throws further ambiguity on the concept of kingship which was prevalent in the ANE, reinforced by the narrative's reticence surrounding the choice of Saul as king at this juncture. Indeed, the choice of Saul itself could be seen as being a parody of the seeming illogical nature of hereditary leadership. This form of election had been confronted and undermined earlier in the narrative with Samuel and his two sons (1 Sam 8:1-3), and there is a certain irony in Samuel's dislike of the concept of kingship considering his own efforts at establishing a form of governance of comparable construction. Yet at this point in the narrative, Saul and Samuel will meet to establish the kingship for the community, whether they like it or not! God could almost be taken as an overbearing mother here, forcing two children to play together.

From his initial introduction in this narrative, Saul has been characterised as being physically impressive and exactly what a hero should look like (cf. 1 Sam 9:2), yet his interactions are quite understated and perhaps even clumsy as his failed mission to find the female donkeys would hint towards. Despite being a "mighty man of power" (1 Sam 9:1),

[42] Ibid, 116.
[43] Alter translates the servant lad's miraculous production of the quarter-shekel as "I happen to have" (Alter, *The David Story*, 48).

he meekly complies with his father's request to find the lost donkeys, and at the introduction of another fairy tale function the reader is able to see this meek and indecisive figure all the more clearly. Propp designates the appearance of an interdiction or obstacle to the protagonist as being the first hurdle which must be overcome in order for the hero to progress.[44] Yet it is Saul – the hero himself – in this instance who conjures up the interdiction, and does so twice (first by worrying about his father, and then worrying about a gift for the seer), which necessitates the interjection of the servant in order to overcome Saul's uncertainty (1 Sam 9:5-10). The fuller solution to this obstacle will come through the intervention of the man of God (Samuel), characterised as "respected" (1 Sam 9:6). In carnivalesque fashion, the anointing of Saul by this respected seer will ironically lead to Saul's rather unrespectable behaviour, raving with a band of prophets (1 Sam 10:10).

Rather than being concerned with completing the mission which he had been given, Saul is far more anxious over his father and his father's possible anxiety regarding his son (1 Sam 9:5). Saul's first words of speech are revealing of his character: "Come and let us return! Otherwise my father will cease from (worrying about) the female donkeys and will become anxious about us" (1 Sam 9:5). Saul is far more concerned about whether his father will be worried about him rather than the completion of the mission he has been given. This moment of indirect characterisation reveals the less than heroic bent of Saul; he did not seek this 'adventure' nor does he care about its completion and instead is far more concerned with returning home to his father. This moment of characterisation of Saul begins to undermine the popular concept of the heroic king, and exposes the concept itself to ridicule in an attempt to show the pedestal which such figures are placed upon as faulty; the king, in the end, is just a man. Indeed, unlike David (cf. 1 Sam 17:32), Saul is far from ready to act independently, even in with simple task.

The narrative retains a singular spatial plane perspective by remaining alongside Saul for the vast majority of his journey with the servant lad, until the narrative necessitates the 'cut away' to God and Samuel (1 Sam 9:15-17). Through this viewpoint the reader is better able to perceive events as Saul does, as the reader is "kept in proximity to this one character".[45] The reader enabled to perceive the indecisiveness within Saul and his desire

[44] Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, 26. Propp mentions the absentation as being the primary movement of the plot with the interdiction usually being the second. The violation of the interdiction is thus brought about by the servant lad which is the third function of Propp's fairy tale plot structure (Ibid, 27).
[45] Yamasaki, *Perspective Criticism*, 19.

to return home by witnessing the conversation between himself and the servant lad (1 Sam 9:5-10), and there is a degree of humour in Saul's uncertainty about continuing. It is the reversal of the expected image of the heroic king (like David), who is determined, self-assured, and to some degree autonomous. While the narrator moves the reader in a sequential survey from place to place, and viewing Saul as well as Samuel, God, and the women at the well (1 Sam 9:11-14), Saul retains a substantial degree of approachability and openness which would be accessible for the reader.[46] There is a vulnerability to Saul portrayed here which makes his character more endearing – less heroic, but more endearing. It is through this relatable vulnerability that the more comedic elements are able to enter the narrative, with the undermining of the epic hero or king archetype allowing for the moments of humour to permeate the narrative.

Such a reversal of expectation creates a gap for this comical air to suffuse the narrative space, wherein the form of the heroic king is destabilised. Initially there exists the expectation that Saul will emerge as a grand hero; statuesque and possessing all those external qualities which one expects from the hero. Yet the vulnerability which the physically impressive son of Kish exudes is unexpected, but it is also incredibly human and *relatable*. There exists an element of "self-understanding of the audience that interacts with the clown".[47] People are keenly aware of their own inadequacies, and these 'everyday' vulnerabilities when played out before an audience are shown to be relatively pathetic and thus 'funny'. It originates in the human "delight in being helpless…because our vulnerability has brought us, even as infants, so many warm comforts".[48] Saul's discomfort at this mediocre adventure is humorous because the reader is now aware of Saul's limitations, and these limitations cannot be overcome by his social status or his physicality: "we are deeply enamored of our limitations" and the audience recognises Saul's limitations as being similar to their own.[49] This process succeeds in refracting the conventional image of how a king should be, undoing it, and showing the king not as a divine figure but one who is definitely human. Saul does not truly shy away from the journey *itself*; rather he is hesitant of the discomfort that continuing could bring, both to himself and his father. Such a hesitation of 'I'd-rather-not' is ridiculous and so it is funny.[50] In fact, there may well be

[46] Ibid, 31.
[47] Zucker, "The Clown as the Lord of Disorder", 77.
[48] Kerr, *Tragedy and Comedy*, 172.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.

humour in Saul's concern for the lost female donkeys. Saul's inability to find these lost donkeys contrasts with David's successful self-proclaimed protection of his sheep (1 Sam 17:34-35), which symbolises his victorious defence of the Israelites from enemies.

This vulnerability of Saul's is reiterated in the narrative as it progresses. There is little agency on the part of the clown-king of 1 Samuel; he appears to merely do as he's told and be led about the narrative landscape by various characters. Kish commissions Saul with finding the lost donkeys, which he sets out to do with no word (1 Sam 9:3). The servant lad easily dismisses Saul's hesitations over continuing on, even magically producing a quarter-shekel in his hand at the most opportune moment (1 Sam 9:5-10).[51] The women that Saul and the servant lad encounter at the outskirts of Ramah drive the young man, all but shoving him in the right direction amid a "discordant symphony of female voices" (1 Sam 9:12-14).[52] In this carnivalesque context, it is young women rather than male elders who tell the future king what to do. The participants of the carnival parade are on 'stage', driving the procession forward as they 'push' Saul in the direction of Ramah. The road again becomes a stage of sorts for the continuance of Saul's transformation, becoming central to the movement of Saul toward his eventual metamorphosis.

Keith Bodner notes that this interaction of Saul with the group of young women, which he then leaves, is typical of an aborted type-scene which is also proleptic of Saul's future career as king.[53] The type-scene which is aborted here is the betrothal type-scene (cf. Rebekah, Rachel, and Zipporah interacting with young men at wells: Gen 24:10-27; 29:1-11; Exod 2:15-22). Wells are the location for such betrothal type-scenes because the young women would generally be unaccompanied by male relatives and so this gave a young men the best opportunity to socialise with them. Despite the similar 'set-up' here (1 Sam 9:11), the type-scene is aborted or the direction of the narrative changes to the mission to find the seer, resulting in the kingship rather than a prospective bride for Saul. There is an element of the comedic here again; the women are clearly flustered by the young Benjaminite (note the hurried and sporadic style of their speech – 1 Sam 9:12-13) yet Saul seems oblivious of the young women and dutifully carries on to meet the seer. The future king of Israel is

[51] Does this mention of a quarter shekel hint that Saul is deficient, perhaps not being the 'full shilling'?
[52] Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 84. For more on the deflected or aborted type-scene in 1 Samuel 9:11 see: Alter, *The David Story*, 48; Miscall, *1 Samuel*, 55.
[53] Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 84-85.

clearly not a ladies' man![54] The suave and controlled figure of the stereotyped hero is being undone here. The projects which he undertakes end in failure, staring with the failed mission to find the lost donkeys. Yet the hunt for the animals brings Saul face to face with the seer. After clarifying for Saul that he is the seer who was being sought (1 Sam 9:18-19), Samuel then leads Saul to a feast with little argument from the young man (1 Sam 9:22) and then to where he is to sleep for the night (1 Sam 9:25), before finally leading Saul toward the kingship and anointing him in secret (1 Sam 9:27-10:1). The commission of Saul's father to find the lost donkeys has been a failure, or at the very least not rendered successful by Saul (1 Sam 9:20). There is something comical in this failure, and yet something also relatively pathetic.

Yet what is promising for Saul's portrayal in terms of the carnival is the feast imagery, and the movement from shortage to abundance. As Saul has his first hesitation with continuing on the journey to seek out the seer, he comments that they have no food to offer (1 Sam 9:7). The journey is brought to a halt by this and is nearly aborted. There is a pivotal moment in the narrative, as the servant lad prevails in his miraculous ability to produce a quarter-shekel seemingly out of thin air, and the pair continue on to Ramah, thus enabling the narrative to continue. Once the narrative is linked with Samuel, the previous food shortage is overcome. Feast imagery becomes heavily prevalent. For the carnival, eating and drinking is one of the most "significant manifestations of the grotesque body" and portrays a body which is open and taking something from the world into itself.[55] Herein lies one of the most important concepts of the carnival: the ambiguous cycle of life and death, growth and destruction, renewal and degradation. The world is consumed, mashed up, and swallowed in the gaping human maw in order to provide life.[56] Death and life are inextricably connected, and feasting provides the best (and possibly most tangible) expression of this ambiguous idea. The lack of food for Saul at the outset of his journey is overturned as he comes to Samuel, and the ultimate continuation of the carnival at Ramah.

[54] A contrast exists with the uxorious David (1 Sam 25:42-43; 2 Sam 3:2-5), and his son Solomon (1 Kgs 11:3).
[55] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 281.
[56] Ibid, 197. As a person tears at the world to gain significant nutrients he also grants it new life as he "introduces it into his body, makes it a part of himself".

3.3 - The Carnival Feast and Samuel's Anointing of Saul (1 Sam 9:22-10:1):

Table 3.3: Hebrew and Greek Translations

Hebrew Text (MT) of 1 Sam 9:22-10:1	Translation of 1 Sam 9:22-10:1 (MT)[57]	Greek Text (LXX) of 1 Sam 9:22-10:1	Translation of 1 Sam 9:22-10:1 (LXX)
וַיִּקַּח שְׁמוּאֵל֙ אֶת־שָׁא֔וּל וְאֶת־נַעֲרֹ֖ו וַיְבִיאֵ֣ם לִשְׁכָּתָ֑ה וַיִּתֵּ֤ן לָהֶם֙ מָקוֹם֙ בְּרֹ֣אשׁ הַקְּרוּאִ֔ים וְהֵ֖מָּה כִּשְׁלֹשִׁ֣ים אִֽישׁ׃	22 Samuel took Saul and his lad, and brought them to a side-chamber and gave them a place at the head of the ones invited, who were about thirty men.[58]	καὶ ἔλαβεν Σαμουηλ τὸν Σαουλ καὶ τὸ παιδάριον αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰσήγαγεν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ κατάλυμα καὶ ἔθετο αὐτοῖς τόπον ἐν πρώτοις τῶν κεκλημένων ὡσεὶ ἑβδομήκοντα ἀνδρῶν	22 And Samuel took Saul and his young man, and led them into the guest room, and set them a space among the most important of those who had been invited, about seventy men.
וַיֹּ֤אמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל֙ לַטַּבָּ֔ח תְּנָ֕ה אֶת־הַמָּנָ֖ה אֲשֶׁר־נָתַ֣תִּי לָ֑ךְ אֲשֶׁ֥ר אָמַ֛רְתִּי אֵלֶ֖יךָ שִׂ֥ים אִתָּ֖ךְ עָמָֽךְ׃	23 And Samuel said to the cook: "Bring the portion that I gave you about which I said to you: 'place it with you'".	καὶ εἶπεν Σαμουηλ τῷ μαγείρῳ δός μοι τὴν μερίδα ἣν ἔδωκά σοι ἣν εἶπά σοι θεῖναι αὐτὴν παρὰ σοί	23 Samuel said to the cook: "Give me the portion that I gave to you, which I told you to put beside you".
וַיָּ֤רֶם הַטַּבָּח֙ אֶת־הַשּׁ֔וֹק וְהָעֲלָיָ֖ה וַיָּ֣שֶׂם ׀ לִפְנֵ֣י שָׁא֑וּל וַיֹּ֣אמֶר הִנֵּ֤ה הַנִּשְׁאָר֙ שִׂ֣ים־לְפָנֶ֔יךָ אֱכֹ֔ל כִּ֣י לַמּוֹעֵ֔ד שָׁמ֖וּר־לְךָ֑ לֵאמֹ֗ר הָעָ֥ם ׀ קָרָ֖אתִי וַיֹּ֣אכַל שָׁא֧וּל עִם־שְׁמוּאֵ֛ל בַּיּ֥וֹם הַהֽוּא׃	24 And the cook lifted up the thigh and what was above it, and he placed them before Saul and he (Samuel) said: "Look, the reserved part is set before you. Eat; because it was kept for the appointed time for you, when I said: "I have summoned the people". And Saul ate with Samuel that day.[59]	καὶ ὕψωσεν ὁ μάγειρος τὴν κωλέαν καὶ παρέθηκεν αὐτὴν ἐνώπιον Σαουλ καὶ εἶπεν Σαμουηλ τῷ Σαουλ ἰδοὺ ὑπόλειμμα παράθες αὐτὸ ἐνώπιόν σου καὶ φάγε ὅτι εἰς μαρτύριον τέθειταί σοι παρὰ τοὺς ἄλλους ἀπόκνιζε καὶ ἔφαγεν Σαουλ μετὰ Σαμουηλ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ	24 So the cook lifted up the leg, set it before Saul, and Samuel said to Saul: "There! A remnant! Set it before you and eat, for in witness it was placed for you above the others! Cut it off". And Saul ate with Samuel that day.
וַיֵּרְד֖וּ מֵהַבָּמָ֣ה הָעִ֑יר וַיְדַבֵּ֥ר עִם־שָׁא֖וּל עַל־הַגָּֽג׃	25 And they came down from the high place into the city, and he spoke with Saul on the roof.[60]	καὶ κατέβη ἐκ τῆς Βαμα ἐν τῇ πόλει καὶ διέστρωσαν τῷ Σαουλ ἐπὶ τῷ δώματι	25 And he went down from the Bamah in the city, and they spread out [a bed] for Saul on the roof.[61]
וַיַּשְׁכִּ֖מוּ וַיְהִ֣י כַּעֲלֹ֣ות הַשַּׁ֑חַר וַיִּקְרָ֤א שְׁמוּאֵל֙ אֶל־שָׁא֔וּל [הַגָּג כ] (הַגָּגָה ק) לֵאמֹ֖ר קוּמָ֑ה	26 They got up early, and about sunrise, Samuel summoned Saul to the roof, saying: "Arise and I	καὶ ἐκοιμήθη καὶ ἐγένετο ὡς ἀνέβαινεν ὁ ὄρθρος καὶ ἐκάλεσεν Σαμουηλ τὸν Σαουλ ἐπὶ τῷ δώματι λέγων	26 And he slept. As the dawn arose, Samuel called to Saul upon the roof, saying: "Arise and I will

[57] Translation own. Due to the divergences between the Hebrew and the Greek here, both forms of the text are included. Here and throughout the thesis, the electronic form of the Greek text is taken from Blue Letter Bible [available at: https://www.blueletterbible.org/lxx/1sa/1/1/s_237001]. For a scholarly edition, see: Rahlfs and Hanhart, *Septuaginta, id est Vetus Testamentum Graece Iuxta LXX interpretes*.

[58] Before the word "place," LXX MS B adds the word "there."

[59] Whereas the MT mentions "the thigh and what was above it", LXX says simply "the leg", but the Origenic and Lucianic MSS add "and that which is on it". The LXX also has ἀπόκνιζε ("tear/cut off") which may be a misreading of the Hebrew קרא ("to summon") as the verb קרע ("to tear"). The verb "lifted up" (ὕψωσεν) is a widely accepted reading (e.g., Rahlfs), conjectured by J. E. Grabe (1707-1720). LXX MS B and the Origenic MSS have the verb "boiled" (ἥψησεν), while the Lucianic MSS convey the sense using the verb "raised" (ἦρεν). For more on the problematic phrasing in this verse, see: McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 170. In addition, LXX specifies that Samuel is the speaker, whereas MT leaves the speaker unidentified.

[60] Where the MT has "and he spoke" (וַיְדַבֵּר), the original reading was probably "and they spread a bed" (וַיְרַבְּדוּ; cf. Prov 7:16); cf. McCarter, *I Samuel*, 171. MT may have abandoned the reference to a bed here.

[61] References to a bed and Saul's overnight stay are in the LXX and not mentioned in the MT. The Greek διέστρωσαν ("they spread") reflects the narrative image of a bed being hastily prepared for Saul following the feast.

וַאֲשַׁלְּחֶךָּ וַיֵּלֶךְ שָׁאוּל וַיֵּצְאוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם הוּא וּשְׁמוּאֵל הַחוּצָה׃	will dismiss you". And Saul arose and both of them, he and Samuel, went out toward the street.	ἀνάστα καὶ ἐξαποστελῶ σε καὶ ἀνέστη Σαουλ καὶ ἐξῆλθεν αὐτὸς καὶ Σαμουηλ ἕως ἔξω	send you away". So Saul arose and he came out, he and Samuel, to the outskirts.
הֵמָּה יֹרְדִים בִּקְצֵה הָעִיר וּשְׁמוּאֵל אָמַר אֶל־שָׁאוּל אֱמֹר לַנַּעַר וְיַעֲבָר לְפָנֵינוּ וַיַּעֲבֹר וְאַתָּה עֲמֹד כַּיּוֹם וְאַשְׁמִיעֲךָ אֶת־דְּבַר אֱלֹהִים׃ פ	27 As they were going down to the outskirts of the city Samuel said to Saul: "Tell the lad to pass on before us, and when he has passed on, stop at once, and I will make known to you the word of God".	αὐτῶν καταβαινόντων εἰς μέρος τῆς πόλεως καὶ Σαμουηλ εἶπεν τῷ Σαουλ εἰπὸν τῷ νεανίσκῳ καὶ διελθέτω ἔμπροσθεν ἡμῶν καὶ σὺ στῆθι ὡς σήμερον καὶ ἄκουσον ῥῆμα θεοῦ	27 As they were going down to a part of the city, Samuel said to Saul: "Speak to the young man so he may pass on before us, and you stand a while and hear the declaration of God".[62]
וַיִּקַּח שְׁמוּאֵל אֶת־פַּךְ הַשֶּׁמֶן וַיִּצֹק עַל־רֹאשׁוֹ וַיִּשָּׁקֵהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר הֲלֹוא כִּי־מְשָׁחֲךָ יְהוָה עַל־נַחֲלָתוֹ לְנָגִיד׃	10:1 And Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it out on his head. He kissed him, and said: 'Has not the LORD anointed you as ruler over his heritage?'[63]	καὶ ἔλαβεν Σαμουηλ τὸν φακὸν τοῦ ἐλαίου καὶ ἐπέχεεν ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐφίλησεν αὐτὸν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ οὐχὶ κέχρικέν σε κύριος εἰς ἄρχοντα ἐπὶ τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ Ισραηλ καὶ σὺ ἄρξεις ἐν λαῷ κυρίου καὶ σὺ σώσεις αὐτὸν ἐκ χειρὸς ἐχθρῶν αὐτοῦ κυκλόθεν καὶ τοῦτό σοι τὸ σημεῖον ὅτι ἔχρισέν σε κύριος ἐπὶ κληρονομίαν αὐτοῦ εἰς ἄρχοντα	10:1 Then Samuel took out a vial of oil and poured it on his head, kissed him, and said to him: 'Has not the Lord anointed you as ruler over his people, Israel? You will rule over the people of the Lord, and you will rescue it from the hand of its enemies round about. This will be the sign for you that the Lord anointed you as ruler over his inheritance'.

3.3.1 - Discussion:

The temporal setting of this section of the narrative serves to elongate the state of Saul's abject confusion over Samuel, with the rationale behind Samuel's clandestine behaviour only being revealed the next day (cf. 1 Sam 9:19, 2-25, 26-27). After the passing from night (the feast and sacrifice – 1 Sam 9:22-24) to the next day, there is the revelation of Samuel's (and God's) intentions (1 Sam 9:26-27), which is recounted within a comparatively brief amount of narrated time. Saul here moves from the darkness of his ignorance during the night to a semblance of illuminating knowledge in the daylight. However, this illumination may prove to be rather dim since the young man still seems to be lost as to what he is meant to do, as he dutifully follows Samuel's directions much like a child obeying a parent (1 Sam 10:8-9). The true portrayal of Saul as the clown-king who is "elected by all the people and is mocked by all the people" will not be completed until later in the narrative, yet here Saul is being established as the fool or oaf who has all the appearance of heroism but is in

[62] LXX MS A adds: "And he [= the servant lad] passed on".

[63] The flask - פַּךְ – is here used only in reference to Saul's anointing, and later with the anointing of King Jehu by an unnamed prophet (2 Kgs 9:1,3). McCarter states that it was probably a small, clay juglet, containing olive oil spiced or blended with other ingredients. Note also that the last section of 1 Sam 10:1 is retained in the LXX only, and has not been preserved in the MT. Presumably it was lost by haplography with the word נָגִיד ("ruler"). See: McCarter, *I Samuel*, 170-171.

fact the carnival harlequin to be laughed at, undermining the popular concept of the king in favour of the clown.[64]

The initial promise of the switch from lack of food to abundance has been introduced through Saul's encounter with the party of young women at the outskirts of Ramah (1 Sam 9:11). The women have reiterated that the seer will host a feast following the sacrifice, with the allusion to feasting and eating, and the reiteration of sacrificing (1 Sam 9:12-13).[65] Saul thus has moved on (or been led) to the feast which had been promised to him by the flock of young women, as Samuel invites Saul to eat with him, leaving no room for refusal (1 Sam 9:19).

Saul is accorded the place of honour at the head of "those who had been invited" (1 Sam 9:22). The clown-king is granted the special position of honour rather than the illustrious figure of the prophetic judge who is hosting the feast. The celebration then begins as Saul is given the portion which had been set aside for him which the cook portions out for the esteemed guest (1 Sam 9:24). Saul is apportioned a choice cut of the meat, described as the "leg with the upper portion" (1 Sam 9:24 RSV) or phraseology which denotes a piece of flesh that is above the thigh. Josephus speaks of Saul being given the "royal portion" (*A.J.* 6.4.2). Here is present the problematic phrase of אֶת־הַשֹּׁק וְהָעָלֶיהָ. In the MT this denotes "the thigh and that which was upon it", but 4QSam[a] mentions "the upper [thigh?]". There is also the possibility of amending the phrase to read "the fatty tail".[66] Here the connotation could be something more risqué, with the focus of the attention being on the upper thigh area of the animal in question with the action of eating or devouring being incorporated, which is highly carnivalesque; the merging of life (the notion of procreation with the "fatty tail" or the "upper thigh" as well as the act of eating at the feast) with that of death (the animal is killed and then devoured in order to grant sustenance to the consumer) in addition to the iteration of the open and devouring grotesque body.

A sacrificial meaning for the cook's action of lifting up Saul's portion is possibly suggested by a comparison to the Exodus description of a ritual during a priestly ordination: "You shall consecrate the breast of the wave offering, and the thigh of the priests' portion,

[64] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World,* 197.

[65] Note here the double use of זֶבַח "sacrifice" (1 Sam 9:12-13), and יֹאכַל "he will eat" or לֶאֱכֹל "to eat" (1 Sam 9:13).

[66] McCarter, *I Samuel*, 170.

which is waved, and which is offered from the ram of ordination" (Exod 29:27 RSV).[67] Interestingly, however, Saul will be anointed as a king, not as a priest, though a few early texts connect kingship with priesthood (2 Sam 8:18; Ps 110:4).[68] While the Hebrew used in 1 Samuel 9:24 is obscure, this upper piece which Saul was given could be said to have some lewd connotations, with the portion given to Saul being meat located above the thigh of the animal. Just as in ancient societies sacrifice led to feasting, so here the meal depicted here turns out to be a sacrificial feast that "adumbrates a rite of coronation" even though no specific action of crowning is reported.[69] It is the duality of death and life, contained in one image. For Bakhtin, at the moment of feasting the "limits between man and the world are erased" in the act of eating.[70] It is within this image of the mouth devouring, of the tearing apart of meat for consumption, that "the struggle of man against the world, ending in his victory" is depicted.[71] Similarly for the narrative at this point, the promise and fulfilment of the feast is "the potentiality of a new beginning instead of the abstract and bare ending".[72]

A further element of the carnival which may be discerned here is that of the marketplace language. Here it is best exposited by Samuel when he encounters Saul for the first time. The language of the marketplace is encapsulated in well-meaning cynicism, indecent talk, and the 'taking the proverbial' out of another.[73] This is not malicious talk but is speech which is designed to bring about that downward swing from being elevated to lowered; the closer to the ground the better for the chances of renewal and rebirth within the life-giving earth.[74] The unofficial language of the marketplace wherein the carnival existed is populated almost exclusively with such speech, as well as laughter. This familiar speech emerges here within the talk and colloquialisms of the marketplace vendors,

[67] Ibid, 180.
[68] Ibid, 186.
[69] Alter, *The David Story*, 48. See also McCarter's comments on the action of the cook being that of "set apart, separate, reserve" (1 Sam 9:24) rather than "raise up" (*1 Samuel*, 180), referring to the separating of the priestly portion from the rest of the meat. Arguably this image of "reserving" the portion of meat ties in more with the image of a meal or feast than the offering of sacrificial meat. The meat is divided up or torn apart, rather than being "sent up" (עלה) as is usually said of a sacrificial offering.
[70] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World,* 281.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid, 283.
[73] Ibid, 152.
[74] Ibid, 21 and 370. According to Bakhtin, it is this thrust downward, away from "heaven", which permeates and animates all of Rabelais' images. Being closer to the earth means being nearer to that which generates new life and rebirth. The earth is described as a womb into which humanity is placed in order to promote new life. Note that before Samuel anoints Saul as king, he brings him down from the roof to ground level (1 Sam 9:26-27).

including curses, oaths, profanities, and performances comprised of familiar and flippant talk.[75] This environment serves as a site in which the figure of the hero-king can be ridiculed, replaced by that of the clown-king, and thus debased; hence its prominence in the carnival space. Samuel's speech to Saul seems reflective of such talk. When Samuel invites Saul to the feast he rhetorically inquires: "And (anyway), for whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not for you and for all the house of your father?" (1 Sam 9:20). In some ways, Samuel sounds not unlike a salesman trying to hawk his wares.

Samuel has not been shown at any point in 1 Samuel 9 informing Saul of what is supposed to happen in relation to this pair of rhetorical questions (1 Sam 9:20).[76] The prophet easily pulls the simple young man along from feast, to bed, and finally to the outskirts of Ramah to pour oil on his head and dictate more rhetorical questions about how suitable Saul is (1 Sam 10:1). The questions are structured as open questions and this aspect of Samuel as the performing salesman will reappear later in the narrative. Thus Samuel is drawing the crowd in – the reading audience – to inspect the commodity of Saul: isn't Saul the most promising hero for Israel? Isn't he the figure upon whom all the hopes of a nation will be pinned? Who else is available to be king anyway, so why not Saul? The tone is seemingly derisive, and may stem from Samuel's resentment of seemingly being "caught in the middle" of the desire of the people to have a king, as his "authority is recognised and undermined at the same time by both the people and the LORD".[77] Is Samuel being sarcastic or 'poking fun' at Saul? Samuel studiously follows God's command to appoint Saul as leader over the people, yet the tone portrayed here would suggest that Samuel is dubious of the success Saul will have as the newly minted king. This ambiguity of intent serves to undermine the election process as well as subsequently the figure of the king.

The narrator gives no explicit mention to which 'side' should be taken – anti-monarchy or pro-monarchy – and instead there is a reliance on the polyphonic perspectives of the various characters towards the institution.[78] For the people there is no issue; they require a figure to "govern" them, "go out before" them, fight their battles, and enable them to be like the "other nations" (1 Sam 8:5b, 20). These exact reasons are what seem to

[75] Ibid, 153.
[76] Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 89. Samuel later makes a promise to tell him (1 Sam 10:8, and possibly fulfilled in 1 Sam 10:25).
[77] Miscall, *1 Samuel*, 51.
[78] For further on Bahkhtin's notion of polyphony as "a struggle among socio-linguistic points of view", see: Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 273.

displease Samuel (1 Sam 8:6), being tantamount to a verbal dismissal notice by the people. God seems almost indifferent to the whole affair or perhaps is cognisant that while this request is a rejection of divine kingship over Israel, it is not something completely out of the ordinary for the people to do (cf. 1 Sam 8:7-9). The 'actors' on stage and the reader are thus drawn into a moment of dialogue on the issues of kingship, with the reader invited to also consider the purpose of the figure of Saul as king. Throughout this ideological back-and-forth, the narrator remains silent on which side to be taken, and instead reports the speech and internal thoughts of certain characters. Samuel, being the most vocal of these narrative figures, expresses his own seeming incredulity through this rhetorical marketplace speech. The style of Samuel's speech here seems similar in tenor to that of a second-hand car salesman attempting to vendor a thirty-year-old Toyota. Much like such a prospective customer considering this car, the reader is dubious as to whether Saul is fit for purpose. Propp depicts the villain of the fairy tale as performing the function of persuasion in order to fool or mislead the hero.[79] Samuel here is rhetorically attempting to draw Saul into the trap of kingship which Saul will later show is not something he wishes to be part of. The subsequent plot function after the villain's deceit is that of the hero falling for it.

It is as Saul continues on to Ramah that the narrative sequence is interrupted and 'cuts away' to Samuel in whom God's presence is irrefutably depicted in the story twice. The first is an analeptic snapshot of God informing Samuel of Saul's future coming to Ramah (1 Sam 9:15-16). The second interference is God exclaiming to Samuel; "Look! The man about whom I spoke to you! This one will restrain my people" (1 Sam 9:17). God – in what comes across as almost excitedly – informs Samuel that Saul is the one who will lead Israel as king. The question of who is to be king was never in doubt; however the rationale is never provided as to *why* Saul is chosen.[80] There is a ring of familiarity to kingship here yet noticeably the "ring of kingship is faint"; the rationale behind God's choice of Saul is never told and neither is the word 'king' (מֶלֶךְ) used at this juncture of the narrative.[81] The previous *Leitwort* of 'king' as the designated role being requested by the

[79] Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, 29-30.
[80] Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 86.
[81] Miscall, *1 Samuel*, 56-57. God states that Saul is to be *nagid* (נָגִיד) which means "ruler" or "prince" rather than king. Miscall thus questions if Saul's role was to be more of a judge than a monarch. Or perhaps Samuel could not bear to utter the word "king" in 1 Sam 10:1.

people (1 Sam 8:5) is temporarily abandoned in this episode of the narrative, with a preference for "ruler" (נָגִיד) as the role being constructed for Saul (1 Sam 10:1).[82]

In response to the people's request, God has taken the initiative in this task to establish a leader-cum-king, yet the logic behind his choice is never elucidated.[83] While there is a degree of divergence between the reader and Saul over what is occurring in terms of the kingship (the knowledge that Saul will eventually be made king), there is a definite convergence on the axis of information – between reader and Saul seemingly – with regards the lack of understanding of Saul for the role in its totality.[84] The reader – like Samuel – knows Saul is to be king. Yet neither the reader nor Saul understands the specificities inherent in said role. This lack of understanding is never resolved, and much like God, the situation remains inexplicable. The eruption of the Deity into the narrative landscape proves to be the essence of the peculiar which marks out the carnival from other types of comedy or dark comedy, wherein "what cannot be, for a moment, *is*".[85]

There is no detailed introduction for God in the early stages of the narrative, apart from the mention of the "man of God" and the motif of consulting God (1 Sam 9:6-10), as well as the LORD giving revelation to Samuel (1 Sam 9:15-17). God is simply speaking, acting, and driving the characters. It is this presence of the divine amongst the mundane and with little 'pomp' of an introduction that makes the appearance of God highly reflective of the spirit of the carnival. It is the "sense that seemingly anything can happen…where 'possible' is instantly transformed into probable".[86] The essence of God in the narrative invites a sense that the parameters of the world have been broadened; the presence of a deity means that mortal constraints hold little weight. Yet God, as the cosmic terror, is held at a distance from the human characters of the narrative.

God, much like the cosmic terror, is that which is uncontrollable and unknowable.[87] This sense of distance is first encapsulated in his picking Saul as the future king of Israel;

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[82] This root word or *Leitwort* of "king" (מלך) is repeated ten times in the twenty-two verse chapter (1 Sam 8:5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11 [bis], 19, 20, 22 – in a noun as well as verbal form).
[83] Bar, *God's First* King, 9. Although the choice of Saul is never explained in the narrative, perhaps it is exactly Saul's physical appearance which is the rationale. Saul is the image of what a hero should be, yet he does not possess that character which marks him out as a king. Samuel's rhetorical questions become more humorous as a result, as though the prophet is questioning God's choice openly: "Are we sure Saul is the one? Do we have anyone else? Who else can be king?"
[84] Yamasaki, *Perspective Criticism,* 54.
[85] Danow, *The Spirit of Carnival*, 14.
[86] Ibid, 68.
[87] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World,* 335.

the mysterious reasoning behind his selection of Saul is never told, not even to Samuel. God will remain indecipherable for the rest of the narrative. Yet, in a Bakhtinian perspective, there exists a desire for the Deity to press into the world, even at this early point of the narrative (cf. 1 Sam 9:16-17). Perhaps it is through the story's human figures selected by God that he will be able to be brought into the downward thrust towards the earth wherein he may become "closer, more intimate, more easily grasped" by the world.[88]

Saul's movement in search of his father's lost donkeys is thus the beginning of the carnival parade, with the feast imagery, marketplace language, and the presence of that peculiar carnival spirit brought about by God as the cosmic terror. The clown is at the head of this movement; guileless and to a certain degree rather clueless as he is led toward the next destination of Ramah (1 Sam 9:10). The mission to discover the lost donkeys is ultimately a failure, thus reinforcing the image of Saul as the inept clown-king (proleptic of his future career as monarch).[89] The construction of Saul as the clown is similarly underway; because he is the oaf who has all the appearance of the hero, the heroic king is thus undone.[90] The use of "ruler" (נָגִיד) rather than "king" (מֶלֶךְ) to denote Saul's position further serves to obscure the actual role to which Saul has been assigned (perhaps on purpose).[91] The system of images related to the carnival has now begun in 1 Samuel, which has the clown-king as its 'monarch'. This system is closely related to that of feasting and thrashings which the clown-king is part of, contained within the portrayal of the beaten body.[92]

The body which is set up to be beaten and thrashed at a later point is one which possesses all the physically impressive and heroic attributes. Yet despite his appearance, Saul possesses none of the inner 'physicality' which would make him the true hero. There exists for the reader that 'tongue-in-cheek' moment; the wrong person has been selected for the job and the audience will await the inevitable fallout. Saul is less the archetype of a

[88] Ibid.
[89] Saul is informed by Samuel that the donkeys have been found by a mysterious third party, and not to worry about them any longer (1 Sam 9:20). This response is potentially dubious. See these subsequent references for more detail of Saul's career as a successful failure: 1 Sam 13:8-15; 14:1-48; 15:7-23; 17:11; 18:12; 19:10-18.
[90] Katharine J. Dell, 'Incongruity in the Story of Saul in 1 Samuel 9-15: A Methodological Survey', *Studies on the Text and Versions of the Hebrew Bible in Honour of Robert Gordon,* ed. Geoffrey Khan and Diana Lipton, VT Sup 149 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 49-64, here 50. Dell refers to the juxtaposition of Saul's initial mission to discover the donkeys and his eventual placement as king as 'comical'.
[91] Firth, *1 & 2 Samuel,* 120.Firth notes that God is not mentioned as having designated Saul as king either.
[92] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World,* 197.

hero and more reflective of a *clown* who has not grasped what he is. Saul's degradation at the outset of this carnival 'parade' is not there merely to witness a vulnerable character brought low. It is a "coming down to earth" for the benefit of the community, a reformation of the established order which has been put into action, wherein the dominant hegemony of the ANE concept of kingship is undone.[93] Degradation is the returning to the earth with this contact with the earth as an element "that swallows up and gives birth at the same time".[94] Saul is the heroic figure par excellence, exactly as one would expect as the official construction of a hero. Yet Saul only *looks* the hero! The established order is already being scrutinised by the narrative as to what to expect for a king. The subsequent result will be the emergence of the Davidic dynasty (2 Sam 5-7).

The parade which had begun with a fruitless mission to find lost donkeys continues. Saul is led from his sleeping place to the outskirts of the city, with the servant lad in tow (1 Sam 9:26-27). It is at this point that the rationale behind Samuel's invitation to the feast and his special placement of Saul becomes revealed, yet in a convoluted manner. Samuel instructs Saul to tell the servant lad to continue on – and almost disappear from the narrative for a considerable period – before the prophet will tell the would-be king "the word of God" (1 Sam 9:27). Yet Samuel does not immediately tell Saul what God has said or the overall plan that has now been brought to fruition. The prophet anoints the Benjaminite in secret before issuing another piece of rhetorical vendor speech: "Has not the LORD anointed you as ruler over his heritage?" (1 Sam 10:1). The marketplace vendor speech of the initial interaction of the pair (cf. 1 Sam 9:20) is reiterated here, and serves by implication to undermine the popular image of the king's crowning by immediately questioning the choice, and thus conjuring up the image of the king's ultimate uncrowning. Is Samuel asking the question to himself in disbelief, or 'bigging' up the hapless young man with the prophet's tongue firmly planted in his own cheek?[95] The issue here with such rhetorical questions is that there is "always the possibility, however slight, of answering them in a way that runs counter to the 'obvious meaning' of the text".[96] Samuel's speech here and

[93] Ibid, 21.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Samuel's true "feelings" towards the institution of the monarchy can only really be guessed at. Yet it would be logical to assume some degree of distaste on the part of the prophet for what he has been asked to do. There could be an element of resentment towards the task, as Samuel's own attempts at establishing a hereditary authority base with his sons failed (cf. 1 Sam 8:1). Now, Samuel has to elect his own replacement as it were (see: Miscall, *1 Samuel*, 47-51).
[96] Miscall, *1 Samuel*, 57.

previously (cf. 1 Sam 9:20) may betray the prophet's distaste for what is being asked of him, and his derision spills into his dialogue as he speaks to Saul. The use of this "folk idiom" by Samuel penetrating the "official sphere" of the conferring lends a decidedly ambiguous tone to Samuel's words which are supposed to be clear and concise.[97]

The outline of Saul's new occupation is verbally hurled at the young man by the prophet. After Samuel had taken a flask of oil and poured it out on his head, he says: "Has not the LORD anointed you as ruler over his heritage?" (1 Sam 10:1).[98] As the proverb goes, there is no such thing as a free lunch! The reason for this clandestine manner of conferring the kingship onto Saul is never elucidated, but perhaps there is something lacking in Saul which Samuel (much like the audience at this point) has recognised; a certain quality that would make him a proper king is lacking in the strapping young man.[99] At this juncture of the narrative there is again a convergence on the information plane for both the reader and Saul, as neither party knows what is to follow. The whole arrangement of conferring seems *off*. Even the vessel which Samuel uses to anoint Saul is odd, using a "vial" (1 Sam 10:1) as opposed to a horn which is the usual and quite common method of anointing, further undermining the process of the king's crowning. It is at even this early juncture that the reader may find a contrast "between the two instances of anointing with a vial and David's anointing with the normative horn".[100] For instance, a horn is used when David and Solomon are anointed (1 Sam 16:13; 1 Kgs 1:39). Bodner states that the use of the vial rather than a horn hints at the flawed career which Saul will have, and that other less than regal northern kings will follow (cf. Jehu in 2 Kgs 9:1).[101]

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[97]Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 154.

[98] Although Saul is conferred with the title of "ruler" or "leader" (נָגִיד) rather than "king" (מֶלֶךְ) by Samuel, 1 Sam 10:16 speaks of the matter of kingship (see: McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 171).

[99] Alter, *The David Story*, 52. Alter points out that the people have already made a public demand for a king, so the reasoning behind Samuel's covert anointing may be more of a personal dislike on the part of the prophet than a desire to keep the formation of a new institution secret from the people. The MT retains that essence of Samuel's words being contentious with his first statement being structured as a question, whereas the LXX preserves more text which constructs the prophet's words as a clear directive for the newly commissioned king (see: Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 93).

[100] Edelman, *King Saul in the Historiography of Judah*, 51.

[101] Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 92-93.

3.4 - Disorder and Raving Following the Anointing of Saul (1 Sam 10:2-16):

Table 3.4: Hebrew Translation

Hebrew Text (MT) of 1 Sam 10:2-16	Translation of 1 Sam 10:2-16[102]
בְּלֶכְתְּךָ הַיּוֹם מֵעִמָּדִי וּמָצָאתָ שְׁנֵי אֲנָשִׁים עִם־קִבְרַת רָחֵל בִּגְבוּל בִּנְיָמִן בְּצֶלְצַח וְאָמְרוּ אֵלֶיךָ נִמְצְאוּ הָאֲתֹנוֹת אֲשֶׁר הָלַכְתָּ לְבַקֵּשׁ וְהִנֵּה נָטַשׁ אָבִיךָ אֶת־דִּבְרֵי הָאֲתֹנוֹת וְדָאֵג לָכֶם לֵאמֹר מָה אֶעֱשֶׂה לִבְנִי׃	2 “When you go from being with me today, you will find two men near the tomb of Rachel, in the territory of Benjamin in Zelzah. They will say to you, ‘The female donkeys that you went to seek have been found. But look, your father has abandoned the matters of the donkeys and is anxious over you (pl.), saying: ‘What will I do about my son?’”[103]
וְחָלַפְתָּ מִשָּׁם וָהָלְאָה וּבָאתָ עַד־אֵלוֹן תָּבוֹר וּמְצָאוּךָ שָׁם שְׁלֹשָׁה אֲנָשִׁים עֹלִים אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים בֵּית־אֵל אֶחָד נֹשֵׂא ו שְׁלֹשָׁה גְדָיִים וְאֶחָד נֹשֵׂא שְׁלֹשֶׁת כִּכְּרוֹת לָחֶם וְאֶחָד נֹשֵׂא נֵבֶל־יָיִן׃	3 “When you pass further on from there, and come as far as the oak of Tabor, three men going up to God at Bethel will find you there – one carrying three young goats, one carrying three loaves of bread, and one carrying a skin of wine.”
וְשָׁאֲלוּ לְךָ לְשָׁלוֹם וְנָתְנוּ לְךָ שְׁתֵּי־לֶחֶם וְלָקַחְתָּ מִיָּדָם׃	4 “When they ask after your welfare, and give to you two loaves of bread, then you will take them from their hands”.[104]
אַחַר כֵּן תָּבוֹא גִּבְעַת הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר־שָׁם נְצִבֵי פְלִשְׁתִּים וְיִהְיֶ כְּבֹאֲךָ שָׁם הָעִיר וּפָגַעְתָּ חֶבֶל נְבִיאִים יֹרְדִים מֵהַבָּמָה וְלִפְנֵיהֶם נֵבֶל וְתֹף וְחָלִיל וְכִנּוֹר וְהֵמָּה מִתְנַבְּאִים׃	5 “Afterwards you will come to Gibeath-elohim where there are Philistine garrisons. And when you come to the city there you will happen upon a band of prophets, going down from the high place; with harp, tambourine, flute and lyre before them while they are prophesying/raving”.
וְצָלְחָה עָלֶיךָ רוּחַ יְהוָה וְהִתְנַבֵּיתָ עִמָּם וְנֶהְפַּכְתָּ לְאִישׁ אַחֵר׃	6 “And the breath of the LORD will rush upon you, and you will prophesy/rave with them, and be turned into another man.”
וְהָיָה כִּי [תְבֹאֶינָה כ] (תָּבֹאנָה ק) הָאֹתוֹת הָאֵלֶּה לָךְ עֲשֵׂה לְךָ אֲשֶׁר תִּמְצָא יָדֶךָ כִּי הָאֱלֹהִים עִמָּךְ׃	7 “And it shall happen as these signs come to you, do for yourself what your hand finds, for God is with you.”
וְיָרַדְתָּ לְפָנַי הַגִּלְגָּל וְהִנֵּה אָנֹכִי יֵרֵד אֵלֶיךָ לְהַעֲלוֹת עֹלוֹת לִזְבֹּחַ זִבְחֵי שְׁלָמִים שִׁבְעַת יָמִים תּוֹחֵל עַד־בּוֹאִי אֵלֶיךָ וְהוֹדַעְתִּי לְךָ אֵת אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה׃	8 “And you are to go down before me to Gilgal. Look, I am going down to you to offer up burnt offerings, to offer in sacrifice peace offerings. You are to wait for seven days until I come to you, and I will make known to you what you are to do.”

[102] Translation own.

[103] The place name of Zelzah (צֶלְצַח) is evidently meant to be taken as a location near Rachel’s tomb. Yet the mention of a location here is odd, following the previous phrases which should occur after the place name, so perhaps the resolution is to render this oddity as being something which the company of men are carrying. The LXX phrase ἀλλομένους μεγάλα, meaning “leaping greatly”, may reflect some of the verbal qualities of צלח (“to rush upon/leap forward” as in 1 Sam 10:6) and so a sense of movement or perhaps limping. It might be conjectured the original text had: “in their limping on their staffs” (McCarter, *I Samuel*, 171).

[104] Note that the LXX has “two firstfruits of loaves” (ἀπαρχάς), but the MT reads “two loaves of bread”. Here “loaves” will be used to designate an amount of food being offered.[104] 4QSam[a] specifies the bread as “wave offerings” (תנופות). As in 1 Sam 9:24, a sacrificial meaning is possibly suggested by a comparison to the Exodus description of a ritual during a priestly ordination: “You shall consecrate the breast of the wave offering, and the thigh of the priests’ portion, which is waved, and which is offered from the ram of ordination” (Exod 29:27 RSV). Alternatively, the narrator may have wished to make a connection with the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), because this offering is specified in Lev 23:17 (RSV): “You shall bring from your dwellings two loaves of bread to be waved”. See: McCarter, *I Samuel*, 181 and 186.

וְהָיָה כְּהַפְנֹתוֹ שִׁכְמוֹ לָלֶכֶת מֵעִם שְׁמוּאֵל וַיַּהֲפָךְ־לוֹ אֱלֹהִים לֵב אַחֵר וַיָּבֹאוּ כָּל־הָאֹתוֹת הָאֵלֶּה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא: ס	9 And it happened when he turned his back to go from being with Samuel, God turned for him another heart, and all these signs came to pass on that day.
וַיָּבֹאוּ שָׁם הַגִּבְעָתָה וְהִנֵּה חֶבֶל־נְבִאִים לִקְרָאתוֹ וַתִּצְלַח עָלָיו רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים וַיִּתְנַבֵּא בְּתוֹכָם:	10 When they came there to Gibeah, just then there was a band of prophets to meet him, and the breath of God rushed upon him and he prophesied/raved amongst them.
וַיְהִי כָּל־יוֹדְעוֹ מֵאִתְמוֹל שִׁלְשׁוֹם וַיִּרְאוּ וְהִנֵּה עִם־נְבִאִים נִבָּא וַיֹּאמֶר הָעָם אִישׁ אֶל־רֵעֵהוּ מַה־זֶּה הָיָה לִבֶן־קִישׁ הֲגַם שָׁאוּל בַּנְּבִיאִים:	11 And when all who had known him from before saw him now with the prophets, prophesying/raving, the people said to one another: "What has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets (ravers)?"
וַיַּעַן אִישׁ מִשָּׁם וַיֹּאמֶר וּמִי אֲבִיהֶם עַל־כֵּן הָיְתָה לְמָשָׁל הֲגַם שָׁאוּל בַּנְּבִאִים:	12 And a man from there answered and said: "Who is their father?" Therefore, it became a proverb: Is Saul also among the prophets (ravers)?[105]
וַיְכַל֙ מֵהִתְנַבּ֔וֹת וַיָּבֹא הַבָּמָה:	13 When he finished prophesying/raving, he came to the high place.[106]
וַיֹּאמֶר֙ דּ֣וֹד שָׁא֔וּל אֶ֥לֶיו וְאֶל־נַעֲרֹ֖ו אָ֑ן הֲלַכְתֶּ֖ם וַיֹּ֣אמֶר לְבַקֵּ֔שׁ אֶת־הָאֲתֹנֹ֑ות וַנִּרְאָ֣ה כִי־אַ֔יִן וַנָּבֹ֖וא אֶל־שְׁמוּאֵֽל׃	14 And Saul's uncle said to him and his lad; "Where did you go?" And he said; "To seek the female donkeys and when we saw there were none, we came to Samuel".[107]
וַיֹּאמֶר דּ֣וד שָׁא֔וּל הַגִּ֥ידָה־נָּ֖א לִ֑י מֶה־אָמַ֥ר לָכֶ֖ם שְׁמוּאֵֽל׃	15 Saul's uncle said; "Tell me now – what did Samuel say to you (pl.)?"
וַיֹּאמֶר שָׁא֣וּל אֶל־דֹּודֹ֗ו הַגֶּ֤ד הִגִּיד֙ לָ֣נוּ כִּֽי־נִמְצְא֣וּ הָאֲתֹנֹ֔ות וְאֶת־דְּבַ֥ר הַמְּלוּכָ֖ה לֹא־הִגִּ֣יד לֹ֑ו אֲשֶׁ֥ר אָמַ֖ר שְׁמוּאֵֽל׃ פ	16 And Saul said to his uncle: "He told us plainly that the female donkeys had been found" But of the matter of the kingship, he did not tell him what Samuel (had) said.

3.4.1 - Discussion:

This section can be regarded as the first trial of Saul, because of the set assignments or tasks which will be given to Saul (as dictated by Samuel). Whereas this trial section begins abruptly in the MT, the LXX preserves Samuel's introductory words: "This will be the sign for you that the LORD anointed you as ruler over his inheritance" (1 Sam 10:1 LXX). The peculiar procession of the now anointed clown-king Saul continues, as Samuel instructs the young man on what is to follow this anointing. There is an extensive report of encounters Saul will have once he has left the company of Samuel (1 Sam 10:2-8). In 10:8 Samuel tells Saul: "Seven days you shall wait." This timespan could suggest an extended carnival. But this phrase ominously foreshadows Samuel's later command to Saul to wait seven days—a command that he broke (1 Sam 13:8-9).The narrative has aspects of folk tale in the increasing numerical progression: two men (1 Sam 10:2), three men (1 Sam

[105] Describing the speaker, the LXX has αὐτῶν ("out of/from them", representing מֵהֶם) whereas the MT has מִשָּׁם ("from there") which appears as a repeated phrase, and may be some form of colloquial speech.

[106] Instead of this confusing reference of again coming הַבָּמָה ("to the high place"), an emendation to read "to home" (הַבַּיְתָה) would match Josephus (*A.J.* 6.58). See: McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 172.

[107] Whereas Hebrew דּוֹד is usually understood as "uncle," Greek οἰκεῖος has the wider sense of "relative."

10:3), and a band of prophets (1 Sam 10:5). According to the report given by Samuel, Kish, Saul's father has asked a question in relation to his son (1 Sam 10:2). The reported question is unanswered as is the previous rhetorical question posed by Samuel, yet for Kish there is a tone of urgency. The uncertainty of Kish thus is projected into the narrative and the hanging question of what *has* become of Saul also moves toward what *will* become of Saul.[108]

This ambiguity moves further into the unresolved question of how the kingship will be installed into the community, a question that will hang for the rest of Saul's career and one for which no person has a definitive answer. This openness of interaction and unfinalisability of the discussion invites the reader to continue this dialogue with its consideration of the kingship itself.[109] The plot of resolution (will Saul find the donkeys?) has been resolved (with the answer being a resounding 'no'), yet the plot of revelation (what will Saul become?) is still yet to be answered, and for Kish this is seemingly the far more pertinent question to be answered.[110] This could also be Samuel flexing his prophetic 'muscles' in the face of the physically imposing yet meek Saul, with the prophet thereby retaining a certain degree of control over the young man; he tells Saul where to go and Saul complies unquestioningly. The interaction between Samuel and Saul, with the prophet dictating movements to the young man emerges as a relationship that is reminiscent of the one between Saul and Kish (cf. 1 Sam 9:3). From the indirect characterisation of Kish, taken from Saul's impression of his father's concern (1 Sam 9:5), the reader gains a sense that Kish is a paternal figure who worries about his son and through this Saul is portrayed as less of an active and conscious adult and more akin to a child that has been lost. Yet, following the recent encounter, Samuel takes up a role as Saul's second father.

This section of the narrative of Saul's prophesied encounters possesses "a vast portion of sign language" and within it the reader can see a "comprehensive inventory" of the Deuteronomistic History, with none of it being particularly positive.[111] This is a moment recalling previous Old Testament literature and history against the ANE popular

[108] Green, *How Are the Mighty Fallen?* 207.
[109] Bakhtin describes this unfinalisability as certain responses can "never [be] fully actualised [or] never be fused into finished utterances, but their insufficiently developed forms are nevertheless acutely felt" in the text (Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 361).
[110] Ska, *Our Fathers Have Told Us*, 18.
[111] Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 93-94. See also: McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 181. Whereas 1 Samuel 10:2 (like Jer 31:15) situates Rachel's tomb in the territory of Benjamin, other sources depict it further south near Bethlehem in Judah (Gen 35:19; 48:7).

ideology and memory. Such a moment serves to further undermine the concept of kingship itself by undercutting the thought of the king. For instance the mention of Rachel's tomb recalls the death of Rachel as she gave birth to Benjamin (Gen 35:16-21) which underscores Saul's own tribal connection as well as the premature death which Saul will also suffer later in his career (1 Sam 31). There is also the mention of Gibeath-elohim (1 Sam 10:5) which would seem to be the same as the Gibeah mentioned in Judges 19, where the inhabitants of the city perpetrated a lethal rape of a concubine which initiated a civil war.[112]

This allusion to Saul's heritage reinforces the image of Saul as the compliant oaf; the clown following the path cut out by the parade. The search for the lost donkeys has been completed by an unnamed third party, if it has been completed at all (1 Sam 10:2). Although Saul is going to be king, he appears rather like a child, terrified of causing worry to his father. Saul is moved and pushed from one spot to another, like the clown following the movement of the carnival procession as it moves through the streets. There is little agency here, as Saul "becomes a pawn in a life predestined by God and executed by Samuel".[113] The physically impressive yet internally limp Saul failed in the relatively simple task of retrieving some donkeys and yet he is to be conferred as Israel's leader.

There still exists the possible anticipation of Saul's aptitude as a leader; the mention of a Philistine garrison (1 Sam 10:5) which could possibly hint proleptically at his defeat of Ammonite king, Nahash, and rescue of the people of Jabesh-gilead in 1 Samuel 11. The garrison is mentioned in passing with no further attention, yet its presence in the text may hint also at the "forthcoming conflict with the Philistines", although the mention of the Philistine garrison "deep within Benjaminite territory" may reflect the historical reality of the Philistine control of the area which would also explain the secrecy of the anointing.[114] At this point the clown, seemingly quite inept and incapable, is designed and handed royal robes "to slip into later, if possible", if there can be some change internally in the would-be hero, Saul.[115]

The 'feel' of a parade-like procession is most evident at this point of the narrative, wherein both the physical and metaphorical road upon which Saul is travelling is imbued

[112] Alter, *1 Samuel*, 54.
[113] Dell, "Incongruity in the Story of Saul in 1 Samuel 9-15", 51.
[114] Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 95. See also: Alter, *1 Samuel*, 54. Similarly, although David originated from Bethlehem, a Philistine garrison was later based there (2 Sam 23:14) during the time that David was on the run from Saul.
[115] Green, *How Are the Mighty Fallen?* 178.

with significance for his transformation. The journey first undertaken (1 Sam 9:2-5) is coming to its completion as Saul leaves Samuel, and moves toward coming full circle, as he returns home, having been anointed rather than having discovered his father's lost donkeys. The pageant is underway as the 'actors' and participants move about the line and get into position, and this procession enables the plot to progress. The prophet is more like a stage director as he moves Saul into place and into the path of the other carnival players. The feast imagery also reappears at this juncture of the narrative, with the switch from shortage to abundance continuing.

Just as in the previous chapter with the promise of the young women at the well for the appearance of a banquet (1 Sam 9:12-13), so too does Samuel here assure Saul that there will be provisions given to him, through the signs that will come to the younger man (1 Sam 10:3-4). From the provisions the three men are carrying, two loaves of bread will then be given to Saul along with a sign of peace from these unnamed travellers (1 Sam 10:4). The bread being given to Saul can be recognised as some form of "wave offering" which is "sacrificial fare [intended] for the priests".[116] Again as with Samuel's feast in Ramah and the select portion being given to Saul (1 Sam 9:24), here too Saul is again being given the priestly share of sacrificial food items. These food items – the kids (meat), wine, and bread – are all "symbolic staffs of life", and Saul is then gifted the primary of the three with the bread.[117] This depiction of the sharing of food corresponds to that grotesque body which is open and devouring of the world around it, waiting for sustenance to be given. Within the scope of the carnival, so too with the Bible, "bread [depicting] the world defeated through work and struggle [thus portrays] the merry triumphant encounter with the world in the act of eating [being] a concrete, tangible, bodily" expression of the conquered world.[118] Saul is drawn into this sense of joyful eating, while also being drawn into contact with other players in the parade system. Moreover, if we note that "two loaves of the wave offering" (Lev 23:17) were to be offered on the Feast of Weeks, which was for

[116] McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 181. Note however that Saul receives only two out of the three loaves (10:3-4) and this may hint at some kind of deficiency in him. The Qumran MS reads "two wave offerings of bread" while the LXX reads "two first fruits of loaves." Hence the bread given to Saul can be considered a "wave offering", such as would be given to a priest (Lev 23:17).

[117] Alter, *The David Story*, 54. Note that the Hebrew uses the same word (נֵבֶל) for wineskin (v. 3) and harp (v. 5).

[118] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 285. For Rabelais, the conquering of the world through eating and drinking lent a 'taste' to the cosmos, thus making it recognisable to humanity and no longer a terrifying and unknowable chaotic force. Samuel gives a further mention of sacrifice and thus food (1 Sam 10:8).

"the first fruits of the wheat harvest" (Exod 34:22), the carnival feasting would fit a Pentecost setting.

It is after the fulfilment of the signs given by Samuel that the particular and peculiar tone of the carnival – encapsulated in magical realism – enters the narrative landscape proper. As stated previously, the central essence of the 'magical' or extraordinary is usually portrayed through the presence of God within biblical narratives. The presence of the super-ordinary or the extraordinary allows for that which is "least likely [to emerge] as temporarily established fact".[119] God – or more specifically the "breath/spirit of the LORD" (1 Sam 10:6) – comes upon Saul with the Deity giving Saul "another heart" (1 Sam 10:9 – לֵב אַחֵר). Saul is transformed in some fundamental manner, a new 'man' to fit the oncoming of the new institution and the renewed environment of the carnival. Samuel's prophetic statement of God coming upon Saul is thus proven correct, and Saul is changed by the invasion of God's essence or spirit into the story at this point. The intrusion of such forces into the narrative, here created by God, seeks in the carnival perspective "to see change, no matter the cost" to the individual.[120]

The need or the motive behind the irruption of God's presence into the narrative and upon Saul is not truly explained. Saul's status or newly conferred role does not necessitate divine empowerment as a privilege. Saul's empowerment with God's spirit here contrasts with the divine status given to ANE leaders such as the Egyptian Pharaoh who appears as "a god incarnate [and] invincible, nay, inassailable – intangible" as a leader.[121] Perhaps God has recognised what Samuel and the audience has perceived; Saul lacks the mettle to continue and has decided to give a helping hand (or spirit, as the case may be). Yet, as the narrative will later show, God's presence coming upon prospective kings is not unusual (1 Sam 16:13; Isa 11:1-2). Similarly, the Book of Judges describes God's spirit or breath rushing upon Samson (Judg 14:6, 19; 15:14), while the story of the war against Nahash recounts Saul being impelled into action when the divine spirit or breath rushed upon him (1 Sam 11:6). Therefore the only plausible explanation is that there *is no* logical rationale for God's spirit rushing into the story and then falling upon Saul. The presence of the supernatural creates supernatural scenarios; boundaries become blurred along with rational and cognisant awareness. That is just a part of the change which the narrative

[119] Danow, *The Spirit of the Carnival*, 14.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, 5 and 8.

landscape undertakes when the divine mingles with the mundane, and is reflective of the desire of the cosmic terror to traverse these boundaries. Israel's God is here portrayed as a dynamic Deity, involved in the life of the community. This is in contrast to the inactive figures of many ANE gods which were contained within their singular manifestation in the natural world that was recognised by the people but did not engage with the people; rather it happened *to* the people.[122] For instance, the universe and consequently the gods of Egypt are viewed as being static and lacking that essence of "insecurity, of human frailty" which would otherwise inspire renewal.[123]

It is at this point, as Saul comes upon the band of prophets or ravers (1 Sam 10:10), that the cosmic terror as God "acquires a bodily nature" in Saul and is able to act within the world.[124] This is hugely significant for the carnival as a system; the cosmic terror in some form has entered the tangible and concrete world of becoming. In Bakhtinian terms, the cosmos has taken on flesh and form through the figure of Saul. Yet this action of the unpredictable spirit unleashes volatile reactions. As Saul "prophesied/raved" (1 Sam 10:11) with the band of prophets, the people gathered to watch do not immediately recognise the figure of Saul and they are baffled as to what the "son of Kish" is doing with such a group: "What has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets (ravers)?" (1 Sam 10:11).[125] The sayings in 1 Samuel 10:11-12 are full of ambiguity, and this particular proverb stands as both a moment of popular speech but also a subtle attempt to further undermine the figure of the king by questioning his origin or heritage.[126] Saul's new-found ability to prophesy would suggest to those witnessing his display that Saul "had become a prophet, not Yahweh's king-elect".[127] The heritage of the king, whether it be from a line of monarchs or being divinely adopted as seen in Egyptian kingship, is the preliminary point of monarchic legitimacy. As the people question this, they unwittingly question the legitimacy of kingship or at least the kingship being instituted in Israel. The core image of the hero of the adventure chronotope is centred on the "motifs of transformation and

[122] Ibid, 146. For example: Horus is equated with the figure of the king, Ra is equated with the image of the sun, and Osiris is equated with the embodiment of the Nile.
[123] Ibid, 4.
[124] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 339.
[125] Note here the proverb of "Is Saul also among the prophets?" as another form of colloquial speech (1 Sam 10:12).
[126] Being at the head of a band of prophets may be considered improper in some way, given the proverbial saying of the people (1 Sam 10:11) yet Samuel is seen as standing as head over another prophetic band in 1 Sam 19:20 (Klein, *1 Samuel*, 93).
[127] Edelman, *King Saul in the Historiography of Judah*, 53. Perhaps there is a hint that he is now (in some way) a rival to Samuel the prophet.

identity", and becomes of interest at this point in the narrative.[128] The former nature and person of Saul has been fundamentally transformed through this moment of prophesying with the band of prophets, reflecting the central idea of rebirth through transformation rather than a more gradual change taking place in the character of Saul.

The word prophet can be a positive term when applied to Samuel (1 Sam 3:20) but negative when used of a band of ravers (1 Sam 19:20). It is noteworthy that 1 Samuel 9:1-10:16 avoids the noun נָבִיא for Samuel (cf. 1 Sam 9:9), and instead calls him "man of God" (1 Sam 9:6) and "seer" (1 Sam 9:19). While elsewhere the hithpael verb "to prophesy" (Hebrew form: הִתְנַבֵּא) usually has a positive sense (cf. Num 11:26; Ezek 37:10), here it seems to mean "rave" or "be in a frenzy" (cf. 1 Sam 18:10; 19:23-24; 1 Kgs 18:29; Jer 29:26). The subsequent question in 10:12 ("And who is their father?") is also ambiguous. The father or guru can be the leader of the prophetic group called "sons of the prophets" (2 Kgs 2:7), like the group led by Samuel (1 Sam 19:20), and Elisha calls his prophetic guru Elijah "my father" (2 Kgs 2:12). Saul himself at this juncture can be said to have two fathers; Samuel and Kish. Both figures are seen to direct the young man as to what he is to do; Kish initiates the narrative by sending Saul on his mission while Samuel perpetuates it by directing Saul on his path back home (cf. 1 Sam 9:3, 27; 10:2-7). In both interactions, Saul is portrayed as being near childlike in his obedience and lack of initiative. Saul could be likened here to a child being caught between two parents – Kish and Samuel – or even between the defective partnership of God and the people. In either instance Saul is pulled toward one grouping and pushed toward another. The root issue for Saul, although it is something out of his control, is that he has been caught between "a squabbling couple who [decided] to have a baby; perhaps it will consolidate and heal…but the odds are really much against it".[129] The issue of definitive parentage is never clarified for either the ravers or for Saul.

Nevertheless, asking here about the paternity could imply a veiled accusation of illegitimacy levelled against these ravers, including Saul. This would be the carnivalesque language of the marketplace, where one of the crowd cries out a veiled insult. Is Saul really "the son of Kish" as he is known? The proverb itself is ironic, and suggests that someone was "very seriously out of place".[130] This proverb by the people themselves also serves to

[128] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 112.
[129] Green, *How Are the Mighty Fallen?* 218.
[130] Good, *Irony in the Old Testament,* 62.

ridicule or call into question the concept of hereditary leadership, by questioning the very basis of Saul's ability to lead; namely, who or where he came from, and hence by what right does he claim to lead others. There is a further comic irony. Saul is here one of the prophets, yet he does not even know where his lost donkeys are! He has obviously got caught up in the carnival atmosphere and been distracted from his everyday task. The people gathered "have already known something – or better, someone – for a long time, but what they now see is different from what they have long known".[131]

The occurrence here of Saul's prophetic activity is recalled later in the narrative as Saul pursues David. Here too the spirit of God comes upon Saul (1 Sam 19:23), yet it is said that Saul "stripped off his clothes and he also prophesied (or raved) before Saul, and lay down naked all that day and all the night" (1 Sam 19:24). There is the sense in 1 Samuel 19:18-24 as here in 10:10-11 of Saul's prophetic activity as in some sense raving or being engaged in some ecstatic display with the band of prophets, if reading both chapters together. The verb used in both scenarios is נבא which can convey the sense of "raving" as well as "prophesying", giving this sense of mania or manic energy to what Saul is taking part in, in both chapters. Bodner pinpoints the focal point of the issue at hand as being the activity which is being undertaken rather than the group which Saul is seen with, which lends credence to the idea that Saul's activity is abnormal.[132] The oddity of Saul's prophetic action does not negate the action of "cosmic elements [being] transformed into the gay form of the body" through such encounters.[133] This is a substantial moment in the carnival parade, and is the central nucleus of the carnival action, that "sweeps away conventional perceptions and usual categories of understanding".[134] Through the figure of Saul, God has traversed the boundaries of the tangible to become enmeshed in the world. The cosmic terror, even for a moment, is witnessed in the world even if it is not readily recognisable to the people, as Saul is "permitted his narrative of power and transformation".[135]

The character of Saul as the clown-king and de-facto target of the joke of the narrative continues, following his prophetic activity. Saul reaches the "high place" (1 Sam

[131] Auld, *I & II Samuel*, 112.
[132] Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 96; Matthew Michael, 'Saul's Prophetic Representations and Its Parody in 1 Samuel', *OTE* 26.1 (2013), 111-136, here 113. Perhaps this raving here suggests mental instability, like the behaviour caused by the evil spirit sent by God (1 Sam 16:14)? Even looking at 1 Samuel 19 in isolation, stripping naked for an entire day is not the behaviour of a normal monarch.
[133] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 339.
[134] Walter Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel*, IBC (Louisville: John Knox, 1990), 75.
[135] Ibid, 71.

10:13 MT), perhaps to be emended to "home", as Samuel had instructed him and is subsequently quizzed by his uncle as to where he and the servant lad had been (1 Sam 10:14 - the servant lad magically reappearing at this juncture). The narrative does not recount the end of Saul's prophetic activity and his travelling to the "high place", and the reader may assume that this was done for the sake of narrative 'speed', acting as a storytelling gap which does not require "filling in".[136] It can be safely assumed that nothing of narrative note occurred, and thus the inquisition of the uncle toward Saul (and the servant lad) is of greater importance to the story. The plethora of questions from the uncle (1 Sam 10:14-15) is awkwardly fielded by Saul, who keeps silent regarding any talk of the kingship or what Samuel had told him about leading Israel. Saul's responses are rather simple in terms of rebuttal, each time returning the focus to the donkeys that he has initially been sent out to discover. The reader is fully aware that the donkeys had been found by a third party (1 Sam 9:20). The fate of the donkeys is still not fully clarified. Yet what can be established is that Saul had nothing to do with finding them. So it seems odd that he would keep reminding his curious uncle of his own failure. The conversation between the pair is akin to a comedy of misunderstanding. There is an element of "childish literalism" at play between the two in dialogue.[137]

The initial mission of discovering donkeys was abandoned at some point, since they were collected by a mysterious third 'other', and yet Saul was gone for a considerable stretch of time.[138] What was Saul doing all that time, if the donkeys had already been found? The utter conviction with which Saul speaks about his ill-fated and inevitably failed mission is what is humorous here, as "what he is doing is true and *not* a trick".[139] One can imagine the exasperation of his uncle as all he is told is about a bunch of donkeys that have been found by someone else. Saul's action remains secretive, and perhaps the meek young king is simply following orders as he had been doing thus far in the narrative, because regarding the "matter of the kingship, of which Samuel had spoken, [Saul] did not tell [his uncle] what Samuel had said" (1 Sam 10:16).[140] Saul, now the anointed clown-king, has

[136] Ska, *Our Fathers Have Told Us*, 9.
[137] Francesca Aran Murphy, *1 Samuel* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2010), 78.
[138] The narrative mentions "three days" (1 Sam 9:20) and then "seven days" (1 Sam 10:8).
[139] Kerr, *Tragedy and Comedy*, 15.
[140] Saul's secrecy here about the kingship matches Samuel's earlier secrecy about it (1 Sam 10:27).

been moved from "the kennel to the throne", with his circumstances changed for the better, yet not quite to his liking, as will be seen.[141]

3.5 - God as the Cosmic Terror or the Unpredictable Spirit?

When assessing the character of God within the scope of the carnival, a particular problem arises. What is God's role in the carnival? At this juncture it would be helpful to delineate the two 'titles' of cosmic terror and unpredictable spirit for God in the narrative and to affirm just what God's role within the carnival is, or how each concept of the deity is contained within the carnival system. Within the scope of 1 Samuel, God is presented as an active participant in the story and its events, interjecting and interacting with surrounding human figures (1 Sam 9:15-17; 10:9-10). This would grant God a level of sentience. But can the cosmic terror, which is being termed as God in this narrative, be denoted as being sentient?

According to Bakhtin, the cosmic terror is that which terrifies the world, being completely uncontrollable and inexplicable, and which cannot be struggled against.[142] Bakhtin denotes these cosmic terrors as not being "mystic" in any great sense but rather "the fear of the immeasurable, the infinitely powerful".[143] These fears and terrors are not described as being human in any sense, but are rather naturally occurring entities: stormy seas with crushing giant waves, the massive and seemingly immovable mountains, hurricanes and storms that rip roofs off homes, floods that cannot be stemmed that destroy farms, the stars which hint at the vastness of the unknowable space above. There is a level of inanimate activity with these elemental features that would not correspond to the idea of their being sentient, unlike the figure of God. Yet what is God but an entity that is infinitely unknowable, unconquerable, and at times terrifying?[144] God as a narrative construct is multi-faceted, and is a deity "whose personality includes a 'dark side'".[145] God is enigmatic, even as an entity as "he is neither hidden in eternity, nor available on

[141] Danow, *The Spirit of the Carnival*, 13.
[142] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 335.
[143] Ibid.
[144] Cf. Gen 6-8; Exod 9:12, 32-33; Num 14:17-24; 25; 32:13; Deut 20:16-18; 1 Sam 4-6 for examples of God as unfathomable and an inexplicably violent and capricious Deity. God is also an entity which Saul comes to be fearful of, specifically fearful of the lack of presence of the deity. See: Gunn, *The Fate of King Saul*, 29-30.
[145] Lasine 'Characterising God in His/Our Image', 465.

demand".[146] Even within the narrower scope of 1 Samuel, God's inexplicable nature is evident (cf. 1 Sam 8:22).

The images of God as unknowable and destructive as a presence closely resemble those of the "memory of cosmic perturbations in the distant past and the dim terror of future catastrophes" which constitute the basis of the imagery associated with the carnivalesque cosmic terrors.[147] Yet can these cosmic terrors be said to have any type of sentience that resembles God's own personal activity in the world? It is by humanity's own assimilation with these cosmic and elemental facets of the world that the terrors themselves are given a form of sentiency. The human reaction to cosmic terrors, such as a storm or tornado, is similar to that of an invading army; get out of the way and hope it moves past. There is then a dull competency which is given to such forces, yet it is through the consumption and interaction of these forces within the carnival that they truly gain a sense of genuine responsiveness. The flood which encroaches upon one's doorstep in a heavy downpour seems almost alive as it slips closer to destruction. Yet when these terrors are engaged with in an unofficial and non-serious capacity within the carnival they are given a new form; the gay monster.[148]

God is not a figure that is 'mocked' within the narrative to become an overtly parodic copy of himself. Nevertheless, through even the singular interaction with Samuel (1 Sam 9:15-17) the Deity gains a certain human 'flavour' which the reader may recognise as not being entirely dissimilar to them. Here God undermines this widespread concept of some ANE deities as being confined to a singular nature or being removed from the people. The people's tendency to fall for the allure of foreign gods is well established in the Book of Judges (Judg 2:11-13, 17; 3:7, 12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1; cf. 1 Sam 12:10-11), becoming a standard of behaviour for the people. Therefore the ANE ideology of deities and consequently kingship becomes a dominant hegemony within the authoritative attitude of the people. The First Book of Samuel itself points towards Egypt as an immediate dominant hegemony that can be said to have influenced the people in their approach to the ideology

[146] Talstra, '"What You See Is What You Get", 171.
[147] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 335.
[148] Ibid, 237. The "gay" monster is that which was once terrifying that has been transformed into something comical yet which still retains its horrific visage. A modern example of this process would the merchandising of horror villains; Freddy Kruger's face is placed on a bobble head and he becomes far less frightening. The same parodic representation of fearful elements is done in the carnival.

of kingship.[149] God opposes this removed or distanced state of ANE deities, as shown specifically concerning the Philistine god, Dagon (1 Sam 5), and within the narrative of 1 Samuel itself the inactivity of such pagan gods is ridiculed by the far more dynamic and active God of Israel, even if his ways are often unfathomable and terrifying.

As the narrative progresses and God becomes more of an active participant in the story, the reader can posit of God "the enigmatic ambiguities found in complex human characters", rather than just being a lifeless entity within the narrative space.[150] In narrative terms, God may initially be described as having the more flat or simple characteristics of being a redeemer or a helper or a god of justice. Yet from this occasion in isolation (1 Sam 9:15-17), the reader can perceive a more 'human' essence to God than a distant and often capricious deity. Yet God retains that sense of the incomprehensible, as the reader never learns *why* exactly Saul was chosen. God speaks to Samuel, who is capable of understanding him. God sees Saul's arrival into Ramah, and excitedly informs Samuel of the importance of this young man. There exists the desire of God, as the cosmic terror of 1 Samuel, to interact and project himself into the world despite being an omniscient and incomprehensible entity that cannot be fully known. Within the Bakhtinian carnival, the cosmic terrors are given a degree of human form with "protrusions and sprouts which reach beyond their own form and into the world of the tangible and bodily and are transformed".[151]

The cosmic terrors which result in stagnating fear are given form within the larger grotesque body that comprises the form of the carnival. In a Bakhtinian perspective, through the utilisation of those popular festive images – the gaping maw, the bodily lower stratum, hyperbolic quantities of dung and urine – the true fear which is brought about by the cosmic terror is degraded and transformed within the material body.[152] Life and death are intermingled in these images and in the grotesque corporeal form, and the terror which had existed before is conquered by laughter. Through this construction of the grotesque

[149] The text of 1 Samuel itself points towards Egypt as a point of contact between Israel and the ANE community that surrounded it. Cf. 1 Sam 8:8; 10:18; 12:6, 8.
[150] Gunn and Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible*, 85.
[151] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 339.
[152] Ibid, 336. For instance, Rabelais describes a story of Pantagruel in which a whole town is flooded and overcome by a torrent of urine which in fact quenches the thirst of the people. Herein lies the interplay of life and death; the flood is transformed into something comical through the use of a gargantuan body which in fact gives life (cf. François Rabelais, *The Complete Works of François Rabelais*, trans. Donald M. Frame [Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991], 131-134).

body and the interaction of the cosmic terrors within and through this same body, they lose their terrifying stance and become known. Yet this assimilation into the carnivalesque body is not something which is done against the will of the cosmic elements. The ever-expanding and perpetually open body of the carnival creates a home for the cosmic terrors, and a location where the people may also find a place for themselves. God may be regarded as such a cosmic terror. Similarly to the cosmic terrors described by Bakhtin, God too has left his "former place in [his] hierarchy and moved to the single horizontal plane of the world of becoming", becoming enmeshed in the world rather than being stationed over it.[153] God's activity in the narrative is for the people, showcasing him as a Deity that has a keen interest in his community, as the establishment of kingship is "not for the sake of the monarchy, not to establish a new institution [alone], not to enhance Saul" and not even for God's own sake.[154]

The question of where to place the unpredictable spirit, whether alongside or as part of God, is thus resolved. The unpredictable spirit is that which affects those whom God has interacted with. God's body cannot readily enter the world, but the spirit or essence of this divine entity is capable of interacting with the community as a whole. In Bakhtinian terms, to speak of God's 'body' is an anthropomorphism which does not help an understanding of God's activity within 1 Samuel; his *spirit* or breath is that which interacts and not any actual body parts.[155] As Saul starts to partake in the carnival, with the clown-king 'robes' ready to be placed on his frame, the spirit of God drastically affects his person to the point where he becomes unrecognisable to those around him: "And when all who had known him from before saw him now with the prophets, prophesying/raving, the people said to one another: "What has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets (ravers)?' And a man from there answered and said: 'Who is their father?' Therefore, it became a proverb: Is Saul also among the prophets (ravers)?" (1 Sam 10:11-12). It is as God interacts with the world that the unpredictable spirit influences certain characters, and here Saul's physical form and mentality are transformed to such a degree that the onlookers

[153] Ibid, 365. Bakhtin describes this transferral of the cosmic and heavenly bodies moving into a more "mundane" axis as being rooted in the general tendencies of the Renaissance to associate such natural phenomena as being sympathetic to the world which was terrorised and transformed by them.
[154] Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel*, 72.
[155] Smith, *How Human is God?*, 6-7. Smith speaks of anthropomorphism as being the most basic manner of understanding God as an entity, but for the carnival to speak of God's body is not useful as that is not what is affecting Saul in 1 Samuel 10:11-12. God's body is also something which cannot be accessed or interacted with, lest the person be destroyed (cf. Exod 33:20-23).

have to question his identity, as well as his social status. In that moment, being overcome by the spirit of God, something fundamental has happened to Saul and he loses that essence of himself that he once possessed. The handsome and debonair son of a wealthy Benjaminite is thus changed significantly, even if temporarily

CHAPTER 4: THE CLOWN-KING'S EARLY EXPLOITS (1 SAM 10:17-27; 11:1-15)

4.1 - Introduction:

To this point in the narrative, Saul as the clown-king of this carnival has been visually impressive yet his nature is definitively lacking. He has displayed a distinct lack of initiative when confronted with the action of the narrative, and is not given agency but is rather pulled from one location to another, either by the ebb and flow of the narrative or by other characters. The story establishes Saul as king only to chip away at this façade which is the text 'poking holes' in the infallible notion of the king. The rationale behind God's choice of Saul is never explained, with the Deity vocally pressing into the narrative space to tell Samuel to corral the young man (1 Sam 9:17). God, as the cosmic terror of the carnival thus far, is an enigma and the LORD's rationale is not immediately clarified for the reader (cf. 1 Sam 8:22; 9:17). God has pressed himself into the world and amongst the people in order to offer a reorientation of the world which stands in contrast to the common ANE concept of how a deity relates to the world. The reader is left to hope that God knows what he is doing in choosing Saul, and perhaps the establishment of a monarchy will allow for a more stable community to emerge around God, who may no longer be the unknowable Other but rather a fundamental member of the community. The stress here is on the establishment on *a* form of monarchy, rather than the prevailing conception of such an institution as witnessed in other ANE communities with this dominant form being undermined through the course of the Samuel narrative as being inadequate for the Israelite community. There is already present the obvious practical need for a figure such as a king, to lead Israel against its enemies and to make the community similar to the neighbouring nations (1 Sam 8:5, 19-20). This may fly in the face of God's initial reasoning for his selecting Israel as his chosen people (Exod 19:5-6; Deut 7:7-8), yet God is nothing if not pragmatic![1]

Nevertheless, Saul to this point in the narrative, has not yet *shown* any indication of his being an able leader beyond his outward appearance. There is a sense of the gentle oaf in Saul which elicits a degree of humour, and this humour arises from the recognition of such failings or vulnerabilities which Saul has – uncertainty, insecurity, degrees of

[1] McCarter, *I Samuel*, 71.

ineptitude – also being present within the reader themselves. These failings of Saul also serve to subvert the expected image of a heroic king by undermining the figure itself, thus showing the ineffectiveness of such a figure through Saul's own failings. Comedy, and in particular the darker forms of comedy which form the basis of the carnival, "will speak of nothing but limitation" and it is these limitations being displayed that the audience may recognise, access, and laugh at upon reflection.[2] These new kingly robes are in the process of being made – with an erratic communication of their design between God, Samuel, and the people – and it seems Saul will be placed into these garments, ill-fitting (and as a willing participant) or not.[3] A noticeable aspect of comedy is that the "costume…doesn't fit" its performer well, and they are "patently never destined for the frame that carries them".[4] Saul does not appear to be an adequate fit for these robes, yet perhaps there may be a moment when he fills them out better than expected.

There must be a degree of success for the clown-king, or else the whole enterprise of the carnival is rooted in a sterile negativity. Yet the narrative aims to demonstrate the flaws of the ANE concept of kingship that was the driving or primary conception behind the people's request for a king, in order to be governed "like all the nations" (1 Sam 8:5) around them. Yet the aim is not to undermine the concept of the whole enterprise itself. God has selected this young man for a reason, though that may remain elusive to the reader (even to Samuel and Saul). Indeed, there may come a moment in the narrative when Saul is given the opportunity to fit into these robes even if he is intransigent to the idea at this point in the narrative. The clown-king must be capable of becoming king in the first place in order for the rejuvenating and renewing action of his debasement to commence as "within this system [of the carnival and grotesque imagery] death is followed by regeneration".[5] The dominant, stagnant hegemony surrounding the concept of king and deity in the ANE, embodied and parodied in the figure of Saul, must eventually give way to the rebirth of such a leadership in a new image. This section of the narrative unfolds in two scenes: Saul's election by the people at Mizpah (1 Sam 10:17-27) and Saul's first military victory (1 Sam 11:1-15).

[2] Kerr, *Tragedy and Comedy*, 146.
[3] Green, *How Are the Mighty Fallen?* 178.
[4] Kerr, *Tragedy and Comedy*, 158.
[5] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 198.

4.2 - Saul's Election by the People at Mizpah (1 Sam 10:17-27):

Table 4.2: Hebrew Translation

Hebrew Text (MT) of 1 Sam 10:17-27	Translation of 1 Sam 10:17-27[6]
וַיַּצְעֵק שְׁמוּאֵל אֶת־הָעָם אֶל־יְהוָה הַמִּצְפָּה:	17 Then Samuel called together the people to the LORD at Mizpah.
וַיֹּאמֶר ו אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל פ כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אָנֹכִי הֶעֱלֵיתִי אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרָיִם וָאַצִּיל אֶתְכֶם מִיַּד מִצְרַיִם וּמִיַּד כָּל־הַמַּמְלָכוֹת הַלֹּחֲצִים אֶתְכֶם:	18 And he said to the sons of Israel: "So says the LORD, God of Israel: 'I myself brought up Israel from Egypt, and I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all the kingdoms oppressing you'".
וְאַתֶּם הַיּוֹם מְאַסְתֶּם אֶת־אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־הוּא מוֹשִׁיעַ לָכֶם מִכָּל־רָעוֹתֵיכֶם וְצָרֹתֵיכֶם וַתֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ כִּי־מֶלֶךְ תָּשִׂים עָלֵינוּ וְעַתָּה הִתְיַצְּבוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה לִשִׁבְטֵיכֶם וּלְאַלְפֵיכֶם:	19 "But today you yourselves have rejected your God, who himself saves you from all your troubles and distresses. You (pl.) have said, 'No, but you (sg.) are to place a king over us'. Now present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and your clans".[7]
וַיַּקְרֵב שְׁמוּאֵל אֵת כָּל־שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּלָּכֵד שֵׁבֶט בִּנְיָמִן:	20 And Samuel brought near all the tribes of Israel, and the tribe of Benjamin was taken by lot.
וַיַּקְרֵב אֶת־שֵׁבֶט בִּנְיָמִן לְמִשְׁפְּחֹתָו וַתִּלָּכֵד מִשְׁפַּחַת הַמַּטְרִי וַיִּלָּכֵד שָׁאוּל בֶּן־קִישׁ וַיְבַקְשֻׁהוּ וְלֹא נִמְצָא:	21 And he brought near the tribe of Benjamin by its families and the families of the Matrites was taken by lot. Then Saul son of Kish was taken by lot. But when they sought him, he could not be found.[8]
וַיִּשְׁאֲלוּ־עוֹד בַּיהוָה הֲבָא עֹוד הֲלֹם אִישׁ ס וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה הִנֵּה־הוּא נֶחְבָּא אֶל־הַכֵּלִים:	22 They asked again of the LORD: "Did the man yet come here?" And the LORD said: "Look, he has hidden himself among the baggage".[9]
וַיָּרֻצוּ וַיִּקָּחֻהוּ מִשָּׁם וַיִּתְיַצֵּב בְּתֹוךְ הָעָם וַיִּגְבַּהּ מִכָּל־הָעָם מִשִּׁכְמֹו וָמָעְלָה:	23 So they ran and seized him from there. He presented himself among the people and he was taller than all the people from his shoulder upwards.[10]
וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל אֶל־כָּל־הָעָם הַרְאִיתֶם אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר־בֹּו יְהוָה כִּי אֵין כָּמֹהוּ בְּכָל־הָעָם וַיָּרִעוּ כָל־הָעָם וַיֹּאמְרוּ יְחִי הַמֶּלֶךְ: פ	24 Samuel said to all the people: "Do you see the one whom the LORD has chosen? There is none like him

[6] Translation own.

[7] The LXX understands Hebrew לֹו as "no"—using a rare MT spelling found in 1 Samuel 2:16; 20:2. It would also be possible to understand Hebrew לֹו in its usual prepositional sense: "You have said to him [= God.]". This would indicate at some point there was a confusion over לֹא and לוֹ ("to him"). MT here displays the noun אֶלֶף (usually "thousand") in a secondary sense of "clan" (cf. Judg 6:15; 1 Sam 23:23). Whereas MT has "לִשְׁבָטֵיכֶם וּלְאַלְפֵיכֶם" ("by your tribes and by your clans"), the LXX offers a double translation of the first ambiguous Hebrew term שֵׁבֶט: "by your sceptres and by your tribes." The Greek σκῆπτρον means stick or staff, but the LXX uses it as another term for tribe (e.g., LXX 1 Sam 9:21; 15:17; 1 Kgs 11:31; 12:20), copied by Josephus (*A.J.* 6.61). See: McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 190.

[8] The LXX retains the longer doubling mention of the Matrites: καὶ κατακληροῦται φυλὴ Ματταρι καὶ προσάγουσιν τὴν φυλὴν Ματταρι εἰς ἄνδρας ("and the tribe of Mattari was taken by lot, and they present the tribe of Mattari, man by man").The rendering of the text in the MT jumps from the Matrite selection right into Saul's selection. McCarter denotes this as the scribe having moved from the first mention of the Matrites straight to the second, being an error of haplography. See: McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 190.

[9] The MT has the inexplicable addition of "again" (עוֹד) as the people ask of the whereabouts of Saul. This may be understood in its other sense of "yet". The final noun הַכֵּלִים could also mean "weapons" (as in 1 Sam 16:21). See: McCarter, *I Samuel*, 190.

[10] Note the pluralisation of the verbs in the MT versus the singular form as presented in the LXX. Here the LXX reads: καὶ ἔδραμεν καὶ λαμβάνει αὐτὸν ἐκεῖθεν ("and he [= Samuel] ran and seized him from there").

	among all the people". And all the people shouted and said: "Long live the king!"
וַיְדַבֵּר שְׁמוּאֵל אֶל־הָעָם אֵת מִשְׁפַּט הַמְּלוּכָה וַיִּכְתֹּב בַּסֵּפֶר וַיַּנַּח לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וַיְשַׁלַּח שְׁמוּאֵל אֶת־כָּל־הָעָם אִישׁ לְבֵיתוֹ׃	25 Samuel told the people the constitution of the kingship, and inscribed it in the book and set it down before the LORD. Samuel dismissed all the people, each man to his house.[11]
וְגַם־שָׁאוּל הָלַךְ לְבֵיתוֹ גִּבְעָתָה וַיֵּלְכוּ עִמּוֹ הַחַיִל אֲשֶׁר־נָגַע אֱלֹהִים בְּלִבָּם׃	26 Saul also went to his house, at Gibeah. The valiant men, whose hearts God touched, went with him.[12]
וּבְנֵי בְלִיַּעַל אָמְרוּ מַה־יֹּשִׁיעֵנוּ זֶה וַיִּבְזֻהוּ וְלֹא־הֵבִיאוּ לוֹ מִנְחָה וַיְהִי כְּמַחֲרִישׁ׃ פ	27 But worthless men said: "How will this one save us?" They despised him and did not bring him a tribute. But he held his peace.[13]

4.2.1 - Discussion:

The narrative gives no indication of any significant time passing between Saul's being questioned by his uncle (1 Sam 10:14-16) to this point in the text, so it may be assumed that once Saul left the company of his uncle it was then that Samuel convened the people at Mizpah. Even if a smaller period of narrative time had passed, nothing of merit had occurred to warrant its inclusion or detail within the narrated space. The location of Mizpah means literally 'watchtower' or 'look out', with the place-name occurring at several points in other biblical narratives (cf. Gen 31:3, 21, 45-49; Josh 13:26; Judg 11:11, 30-31, 34-35). The spatial setting of Mizpah here more specifically recalls the same space which was the assembly point in Judges, when the charge of gang rape was brought against Gibeah and where the Israelites mustered themselves for war against Benjamin (Judg 20:3, 12-17).[14] This location was also the place of Samuel's greatest victory in the narrative, as he displayed his own leadership as well as God's ability to dispatch Israel's enemies (1 Sam 7:5-14). It was after this confrontation with the Philistines that Samuel consolidated his own authority and established a continual presence within the community by doing a circuit to judge the people (1 Sam 7:15-17).

[11] Note the use of "law/judgement of the king" in the LXX versus the "law/judgement/constitution of the kingship" in the MT. The notion of a kingdom has not yet been alluded to within the narrative, and the MT translation is more in keeping with the previous grammar of the narrative (cf. 1 Sam 8:9, 11). Both 4QSam[a] and the LXX agree in retaining "to his place", instead of "to his house" (MT).

[12] The MT is preferred here which has the men of valour going "with him", instead of the LXX which has "with Saul". Here the contrast being made between the "valiant men" who go with Saul and the "worthless men" of the subsequent verse. The verb describing God's interaction with the valiant men – נגע – can have two connotations of either "touched" or "struck". While "touched" has a beneficent nuance, the verb often has an aggressive sense in "struck" (1 Sam 6:9; Job 19:21). Note that the Qumran fragment has "the LORD" (יהוה) whereas the MT has "God" (אֱלֹהִים).

[13] The MT here has literally the rendering of Saul's silence as being "like one who keeps silent". The Qumran text also retains a segment of text which is missing from the MT, which recounts the actions of Nahash the Ammonite along the Jordan River (see the next section of this study for further on this).

[14] The place name itself is derived from the verb צפה ("to look out/spy"), so Mizpah may have been a sort of watch tower or outlook post before becoming a definite location.

It may be taken as no coincidence that Samuel chooses this location to gather the people and to have a king selected at Mizpah. The prophet may be attempting to prove a point that a king, by Samuel's estimation, is not required to protect the people from any outside threat.[15] God has not specified a location for the gathering of people or at least no such interaction is recounted in the text, and so the reader may safely assume that the choice of Mizpah was decided by Samuel, and the hope of recollecting the previous salvific action of prophet and Deity (1 Sam 7:5-17) may be the rationale behind the choice. The narrator has left many things unexplained. If this scene is read in a carnivalesque key, the point of the magical or unusual is reflected in this reticence of God's choice of Saul. What is being transmuted here is not the character of Saul but rather the philosophical idea of kingship, contained within the human person of Saul. God's otherworldly presence moves into the narrative world in order to personally point out Saul publicly as the right candidate, positing Saul as the point at which he becomes "the testing of an idea [rather than] the testing of a particular human character".[16]

Samuel's speech to the people once they have been assembled comes across as definitively bitter and resentful (1 Sam 10:19), which reinforces the arguably passive aggressive (or just outright aggressive) choice of Mizpah by the prophet. Samuel first reports to the people the words of God, which draws the salvific action back further to the Exodus tradition (1 Sam 10:18) yet it would seem that after this segment of speech Samuel interjects with his own rhetoric.[17] Samuel states that by choosing a king the people have rejected God as their king (1 Sam 10:19), yet this is removed from the 'mouth' of God and placed into Samuel's own. The ending piece of speech reflects the antipathy with which Samuel views the whole process of establishing a king: "you have said, 'No, but you are to place a king over us'" (1 Sam 10:19).[18] The iniquity of Samuel's sons (1 Sam 8:3) as the pretext for the request by the people is not addressed nor raised by Samuel, and the reader may imagine the people biting their tongues from informing the sullen prophet of such a fact.[19] The issue of deficient hereditary leadership is at fault here surrounding the failure of Samuel's sons as judges by hereditary election, and is something which Samuel stridently ignores. There is a certain irony also in Samuel's failed attempt to establish his own form

[15] Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 98.
[16] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 114.
[17] Samuel's previous description of Saul's task (1 Sam 9:16) has also echoed the Exodus story (Exod 3:9).
[18] It is no coincidence that Samuel has just pointed out the harmful effect of monarchies by mentioning "the kingdoms oppressing you" (1 Sam 10:18).
[19] Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 99.

of judgeship-cum-kingship through his sons, when he is decidedly 'put out' by the notion of kingship. Samuel's re-enactment of the people's request does not involve this detail, and is constructed as an unflattering impression of the people. This speech by Samuel also pulls the reader into the dialogue as a bystander or part of the assembled crowd, and the reader becomes aware with the others gathered that Samuel is reacting poorly to what is happening, and could be read as "an expression of Samuel's sarcasm and bitterness".[20]

The repetition of the people's words by Samuel reflects all that he harvested from said interaction earlier in the narrative, overlooking any of the relevant reasons behind the request. It thus could be taken as a form of mockery of the people by the prophet. There is a sense of Samuel reacting like a grumpy old man to the people's irritation of the established order, while the people may very well react to Samuel's outbursts with a roll of the eye and a sigh. Neither the narrator nor God places the request into such negative terms as Samuel does, and even God's own confirmation of what the request entails comes across within the narrative more as the Deity stating the factual position of himself within the community rather than an immediate condemnation, bolstered by divine acquiescence to the request itself (1 Sam 8:7-9, 22). This reinforces the notion that is it not the enterprise of kingship as a *whole* that is the issue, but rather the dominant conception that was currently employed in the rest of the ANE that was being subscribed to by the people. This dismissal by Samuel of the people's request thus reflects far more about the prophet's view of the whole endeavour rather than God's, as his final segment of speech is himself seemingly reluctantly organising the people as per God's command for the king to be selected: "Now present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and your clans" (1 Sam 10:19). Samuel can no longer argue the point and must do as he is told and establish a new form of institution for the people. The age of judgeship must make way for the era of kingship.

The tribes are brought forward and are whittled down from tribes, to families, to individual men, until finally the whittling stops at Saul (1 Sam 10:20-21). The threefold repetition, which is stronger in the LXX rendition, matches the rhyming or repetition styling which occurs in folktales.[21] The narration time and the narrated time would be

[20] Miscall, *1 Samuel*, 73.

[21] Consider the use of round numbers in popular folk tales and fairy-tales, which allows for the creation of patterns in narratives which become easier for the reader to follow (e.g. the seven dwarves in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*, the three bears in *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, or the three little pigs in the fairy-tale of the same name).

proportional at this juncture of the story, yet there is a sense of the narrative prolonging the tension for the reader as the narrative has already spent much time establishing the fact that Saul is to be the new king for the people. This elongation could be considered as a mockery of the crowning process itself as it seems to be fixed already upon Saul; the quasi-democratic election is undermined before it had even begun. This may be a deriding sideward glance toward the concept of hereditary leadership within the structure of kingship itself as the people will never truly have a say on who will become king. It may also be prolonged to give a sense of a 'comedy of errors', as the narrative moves from one tribe, family, and group until Saul is finally chosen. Yet the young man is not even present! One can imagine the 'camera' swinging about Mizpah desperately looking for Saul, yet he is nowhere to be found.

Many commentators read 1 Samuel 10:18-19 as a serious theological statement, but miss the tone of mockery here.[22] With the previous introduction of Samuel's mocking rhetoric towards the people and their request in the preceding portion of speech, this form of colloquial speech (and thus a carnival sense of proceedings) may enter the narrative space again. Mizpah has become more of a marketplace setting, which allows for such speech and more of a carnivalesque tone to colour the narrative. The moment of Saul's triumph is undone at the time of crowning, and the grandiose sense surrounding the crowning process is mocked as Saul literally hides from the 'honour' of kingship. It is within this more open marketplace environment that the "so-called familiar speech of the public square" becomes more readily accessible, wherein the pageantry of crowning is mocked and becomes a sort of decrowning, highlighting the carnivalesque duality of positive-negative ambiguity. Such 'talk' is "permeated with a carnival sense of the world [which allows] an enormous fund of unrestrained carnivalisitic gesticulations" to enter the space of the narrative.[23] This form of familiar speech emerges again as before when Saul is chosen by lot, dragged from his hiding place, and presented to the people (1 Sam 10:21-23). The moment of Saul's hiding amongst the baggage will be spoken about at length shortly, but for the moment it would be important to focus on the attention Saul receives from Samuel and the people.

[22] Klein, *1 Samuel*, 98.
[23] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 130.

The people immediately notice Saul's immense height, and the narrator halts the narrative progress in order for the reader to see with the people the stature of this young man: "He presented himself among the people and he was taller than all the people from his shoulder upwards" (1 Sam 10:23). Samuel repositions himself as the salesman once more as he announces to the people; "Do you see the one whom the LORD has chosen? There is none like him among all the people" (1 Sam 10:24). The reappearance of these rhetorical questions as earlier in the narrative stand as an opportunity for the people to answer Samuel with a negation, and yet the people are impressed by Saul enough to immediately confirm that he is the newly-minted king (1 Sam 10:24), based on sight alone. This could be said to be mocking the idea of the hero perceived as capable or valiant based purely on looks alone. Here the people attempt to 'affix' the carnival mask of the king to Saul yet it is ill-fitting. Samuel, in the process of 'showing off' Saul to the people, may also be hoping for a denunciation of the young man by the people, yet this response is not forthcoming.

The narrator stations the reader nearer the people as they view Saul, utilising an expression of sight, as they see how physically impressive the young man is.[24] While the reader is not aligned intimately with the people, the sense of the imposing stature of Saul is conveyed through the expression of what the people see in that moment; they see a leader. Yet the narrative has poked enough holes through this heroic image of Saul that he now resembles a fine looking Swiss cheese! Through Samuel's words the text becomes a carnivalised form of a legend, with the clown-king of the parade acting as the de-facto hero of this narrative segment. Saul, as this figure, is built up and crowned but then humiliated and debased, thereby making this 'hero' far more familiar, humble, and close to the people.[25] Herein lies the crux of the carnival laughter; the king is no grand or quasi-divine figure, he is just a man.

The moment of Saul's hiding amongst the baggage will now be discussed. Saul's previous construction within the narrative has depicted him as the carnival clown-king, and now his moment of public coronation is at hand. He has been portrayed by the narrative as being physically impressive yet has been shown to be lacking a matching nature. Ironically, this characteristic allows the clown-king to remain 'close to the ground', and restricts him

[24] Yamasaki, *Perspective Criticism*, 42.
[25] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 133.

from becoming too lofty for the carnival. This is the role of the clown-king, and it makes the audience "aware of the ambivalence of order", particularly those established orders which stand against the growth of the community, such as the ANE concept of kingship and deities which is both oppressive and stagnant.[26] The Egyptians saw the universe as being essentially static and unchanging in nature, which seemingly does not allow for the carnivalesque renewal of the community through the death of one and the rebirth of another.[27] This humility with which the clown-king is constructed is maintained, and much like the previous interactions with Saul, his actions are not coherent with his impressive form as he is apparently not even visibly present at Mizpah for his own election (1 Sam 10:21). Saul is not mentioned until after the process of election has taken place, yet the mention of Saul's tribe should not be overlooked. Mizpah, as discussed previously, was the location of Israel's other tribes mustering themselves for civil war against the Benjaminites.

So it would not be outside the realm of possibility to assume that Saul may associate negative connotations with this site, and so his reluctance at being singled out for special attention at this location is only reinforced. As in the case of the discovery of Achan (Josh 7:16-18), the process of lot casting was also "designed to identify offenders and individuals whose behaviour was detrimental to the common good".[28] While Saul may not be on trial here, the inadequacies of the common construction of kingship which the people have requested may very well be. It was also at Mizpah that Jabesh-gilead was singled out by lot as a tribe that did not assemble there and were consequently utterly destroyed for this absence (Judg 21:8-12). Saul, coming from a northern tribe also, has been singled out by the Israelite assembly (1 Sam 10:20-21). Thus Saul's disinclination to make himself known to the assembly is seemingly well founded. The very fact that lots had been cast in order to find the king of Israel "gives the impression that Saul might be guilty of something".[29] Of what? Not even Saul seems to know, but he will hide just in case! There is a further comical dimension. Just as in 1 Sam 9:1-10:16 Saul searched for lost donkeys but could not find them without divinely arranged help, so now the people seek the concealed Saul and cannot find him without divine assistance.

[26] Zucker, "The Clown as the Lord of Disorder", 84-85.
[27] Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, 4.
[28] Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 99.
[29] Bar, *God's First King*, 17.

There is a comical aspect to Saul's hiding amongst the baggage with the tallest man trying to make himself physically as small and inconspicuous as possible (1 Sam 10:22), yet the audience may empathise with Saul's hesitancy at appearing at such a gathering considering its past uses. Again, it is within this comical sphere that a degree of recognition takes place and this is what makes the situation humorous, and it is this failure that undermines the figure of the king, contained within the dual image of crowning-decrowning within the carnival space. It is within this failure that "comedy [discovers] humour in the humbling of the free spirit" through the impediments and botches of persons.[30] The process of humiliation or debasement of the clown-king through such mocking is a primary carnivalisitic action, embodied by the unwitting Israelites as they drag Saul forward.[31] The mention of the tribe name of Benjamin creates a sense of anticipation for the reader, having been made well aware of Saul's heritage (1 Sam 9:1-2) and the fact that he has been made king in a private anointing ceremony (1 Sam 9:17, 27; 10:1). There is the expectation that Saul will make himself known or that there will be some sort of triumphant entry, yet that is not what is given. Instead, once Saul has been singled out, there is a prolonged moment of silence: "But when they sought him, he could not be found" (1 Sam 10:21).

There exists the probability that Saul was present and seen up until the moment of his selection, as his absence is not detailed by the narrative until this point. Therefore a question may be posed: did Saul jump into the baggage once his name was called, and no one noticed? The mere fact that Saul hid himself at the moment of his selection "suggests that he anticipated the outcome" and was not enthused by it.[32] This moment of undermining Saul's 'grand entrance' could be considered almost a parody of the general's grand entrance or the moment the hero presses himself onto the stage for special recognition. Thus the moment is portrayed here not unlike a "system of crooked mirrors" reflecting what should have been a hugely triumphant moment for Saul, a movement that is thoroughly undermined and ridiculed.[33] There is a sense that a key part of the carnival is not in attendance at this moment – the clown-king, Saul – and this must be rectified. Carnival possesses an oddly fraternal mood, and invites onlookers to partake in the occasion on display and to become enmeshed within it. Carnival, just like comedy, "loves company,

[30] Kerr, *Tragedy and Comedy*, 171.
[31] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 124.
[32] Long, *The Reign and Rejection of King Saul*, 193.
[33] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 127.

because it is miserable and because everybody else is too".[34] Therefore Saul must partake in order for the carnival to complete itself; he must play his role even he is unhappy with it. The king must be present to be crowned, even if he will be subsequently decrowned.

The request for a king is repeated here, but whereas before it was for a hypothetical king to be found (1 Sam 8:5, 19-20), now it concerns the physical location of their proposed monarch. The people thus inquire of God where Saul is, or if the man even came to the assembly point (1 Sam 10:22). This is perhaps a nonsensical question to ask; if the man is not present, then the people have been convened for no reason at all. This absurd and comical moment of confusion by the people and their subsequent question could be construed as further rhetorical speech, similar in tone to that used by Samuel when starting the process of lot casting (1 Sam 10:19), and when Saul is eventually found and presented before the people (1 Sam 10:24). Either the people assembled genuinely believe that a non-entity has been chosen as king or this proverbial speech from Samuel is being reutilised by the people, emerging from their incredulity at Saul's absence. If the latter is indeed the case, then Mizpah has become the carnivalesque space in which such speech may occur. Mizpah is now the marketplace square, being a central arena for the carnival to thrive as the space belongs to all the people: "it is universal, everyone must participate in its familiar contact".[35] It is within this familiar and free space that all are invited, and the more proverbial or colloquial forms of speech may occur. The irony of the event cannot be lost on the people; they must *ask* God about the location of the king they have *asked for* and the name of the man means '*asked*'.[36] And it is into this familiar space that God is able to press into the narrative, and engage with the people in free contact.

The people have specifically called upon God to reveal the man chosen to be king, and with the use of this possible rhetorical speech, they have opened the space for God to communicate in return. God speaks directly to the people at this moment of the story, and the people listen to the Deity's words. The inquiry the people make to God enables the LORD to move himself toward the horizontal plane of the earth and amongst the people. It is also worth noting that God's 'voice' being present on its own terms is the closest that Saul and God ever come to communicating together, without a 'middle man' translating for the Deity, which compounds the 'awkward' relationship between the two as the story

[34] Kerr, *Tragedy and Comedy*, 176.
[35] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 128.
[36] Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 99.

progresses.[37] God's response to the people also allows for a further moment of humour to enter the narrative: "And the LORD said; 'Look, he has hidden himself among the baggage" (1 Sam 10:22). Samuel does not try to rectify the situation or try to uncover Saul, or he is at least not shown to do so in the Hebrew. So the task of locating the lost Saul is left to God. However, as soon as Saul's location is revealed, the LXX depicts Samuel running and seizing Saul (1 Sam 10:23 LXX).

From the outset of this narrative, beginning in 1 Samuel 8 with the establishment of the monarchy, God has been shown to be far more immersed in the human world than may otherwise have been thought and far more "at the whim of human deed, more permissive" than might be originally considered versus that of other ANE deities.[38] The God portrayed in this narrative does not design events and abandon people to watch from afar, but is stimulated by interaction with the people. Discussing this moment in isolation, God's contact with the assembled people shows the ability of the Deity to bring himself into this "thrust downward" toward the earth (to use Bakhtin's phrase).[39] It is within this 'downward swing' that this moment of humour exists; the people call out to God and God 'yells' back at the people Saul's location (1 Sam 10:22). God may be likened to an exasperated instructor trying to assist his clueless pupils who are attempting to complete a task, and doing so badly. There is a sense of the pantomime to this exchange. Where is he? Over there!

Saul's hiding place is revealed, and though he may be able to hide from the people for a period of time, he is unable to hide from God. A similar comic motif occurs in the Book of Jonah, where the reluctant prophet seeks to run away from God (Jonah 1:3). The humour of the previous scene is carried forward to Saul's discovery: "So they ran and seized him from there" (1 Sam 10:23). Saul, for all appearances, is found hiding beneath a pile of cloaks and bags! From the outset of his involvement with the kingship Saul has "recoil[ed] from the crown when it is offered to him…and hides away as the lots are drawn".[40] The imagery here of Saul being forcibly pulled back among the people is reminiscent of a process of giving birth; as Saul is grabbed, yanked, and dragged forward

[37] Green, *How Are the Mighty Fallen?* 179. Green refers to the relationship between the pair as being challenging from the outset.
[38] Ibid, 177.
[39] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World,* 370.
[40] Moshe Garsiel, *The First Book of Samuel: A Literary Study of Comparative Structures, Analogies, and Parallels* (Ramat Gan, Israel: Revivim, 1985), 70.

from his place of stagnant comfort it could be viewed symbolically as this new clown-king being pulled from the earth, which stands as a place of swallowing up and giving forth new life.[41] The seizing of Saul by the people from his hiding spot could be taken as Saul being ripped away from the comfort of obscurity and into the 'limelight' before the people; the death of one life and the birth of a new one, and combining "the grave and birth in their lightest, most comic, least terrifying form".[42]

Saul does not deploy any great strategy of wits to escape this undesired fate, but rather employs a rather childish tactic of avoidance, which seems successful on the people at least. This undermines the image of the clever, adroit hero which is Saul is evidently not; he is just a man who is subject to the same failings as any other man despite his impressive physical stature that singles him out from the rest of the community. Here, Saul stands as a comic and clueless hero as he does not strive or attempt to acquire this attention but rather seeks to "merely get along and have a good time".[43] This process of Saul's 'birth' as king at Mizpah, being dragged from the baggage, revels in the discovery that "we [all] have a backside and that it is going to be slapped".[44] So while the audience may sympathise with Saul's predicament, there still exists the desire to *laugh* at his misfortune and the predicament in which he finds himself, thus undermining the conventional seriousness associated with the figure of the hero-king. The question is then posed as to whether Saul owed "his election to his being the best or the best-looking of the Israelites".[45]

Once Saul is forced to show himself among the people, his impressive stature is portrayed as *the* defining aspect of his character. His reluctance to make himself known and his hiding from the people (or Samuel, or even God) seems almost immediately forgotten. Samuel's rhetorical speech is imparted to the people, glibly extolling the apparently acceptable nature of this young man for the task of king (1 Sam 10:24). Samuel's pantomime question of whether the people 'see' Saul seems redundant; they cannot but see him! The image of the gargantuan Saul towering over the people and yet himself fearful of this moment is itself humorous, as it is this moment of discomfort. Indeed, this change of fortune reflects the limitations of Saul as a character. Saul's fear and reluctance pays tribute to that aspect of a person that recognises flaws and weaknesses, and

[41] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 88.
[42] Ibid, 176.
[43] Jackson, *Comedy and Feminist Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible*, 17.
[44] Kerr, *Tragedy and Comedy*, 149.
[45] Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 355.

yet cannot overcome them. Yet the inability to overcome such a failing also leads to the satisfaction of these weaknesses; recognition may allow for a moment of clarity and development. That which frightens Saul now may in turn lead to his becoming something more than what he appears now: "Comedy shows man shivering; but the shiver itself instantly suggests how nice it is to come in out of the cold".[46]

Saul's impressive stature (akin to a circus giant) may be deemed as a sort of distortion of the human form, as he stands out immediately from the rest of the people. This distortion becomes a reversal of the expected convention of the handsome and well-proportioned image of the king; he does not stand out for being immaculate in appearance but rather for appearing different in a near-freakish manner. His outward appearance forms a significant part of his initial characterisation (1 Sam 9:2), and it is upon this feature alone that the people decide he is a capable leader. Though his height and physicality are viewed as a positive by the people (1 Sam 10:24), Saul may consider them a huge inconvenience. Had he been smaller, he may have hidden himself more effectively! It is when 'deformity is functional rather than organic [that] it continues to be funny".[47] The direct characterisation of Saul by this outward appearance is completely incongruous with the indirect shaping of his character zone by his own actions, giving the reader a sense of a "certain incomprehension and ineptitude in Saul's actions".[48] Saul may appear every part the king, but his reluctance and uncertainty prove otherwise (cf. 1 Sam 9:5-8, 21; 10:16, 22-23). His impressive stature might be a positive aspect for the people yet "the tall are prone to topple".[49]

The selection of Saul as king here seems to undermine the process of selecting an able leader, becoming a carnivalesque parody of the process of 'king making'. Yet it is he "who is crowned [that] is the antipode of a real king [and it is] this act [that] opens and sanctifies the inside-out world of carnival".[50] The contorted image of the carnival crowning with Saul as the clown-king establishes a mirrored sense of convention, of the 'proper' way to do things, yet with the carnivalesque flavour, thereby enabling the process to retain a certain credibility. The 'inside-out' method of crowning the clown-king undermines the concept itself, and ridicules it. Yet the carnival cannot be merely a stage for total ridicule.

[46] Kerr, *Tragedy and Comedy*, 173.
[47] Ibid, 167.
[48] Long, *The Reign and Rejection of King Saul*, 204.
[49] Green, *King Saul's Asking*, 40.
[50] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 124.

There must be cause for some sort of celebration, and perhaps Saul may be given a narrative reprieve from this state of mockery and parody.

The people and Saul are subsequently dismissed by Samuel and God's presence is experienced within the narrative again, alongside the experience of God's voice entering the narrative space. The 'breath' of God interacts with one group of attendees; the "valiant men" (1 Sam 10:26). It is this presence of the Deity that interacts with these men and affects them, causing them to follow Saul.[51] The period of derision toward Saul is lifted here momentarily as "this company that joins Saul seems a rather positive moment for the freshly acclaimed monarch".[52] Yet there remains a negative contingent, as another group is present that God does not interact with and these "worthless fellows" (1 Sam 10:27) despise and mock Saul. The effect of God's interaction and non-interaction between the groups is apparent, and this may be the Deity attempting to bolster the newly-minted king with a contingent of esteemed men, which is another moment of Saul being raised up that ultimately anticipates the same figure as being 'knocked down' a few 'pegs'. A comparison is being deliberately drawn between the two groups of men, principally between those who are loyal and those who are disloyal.[53]

The words of these worthless men involves the scepticism surrounding Saul's ability to lead the people: "'How will this one save us?' They despised him and did not bring a tribute. But he held his peace" (1 Sam 10:26). Their protest is not unfounded but the narrator has already denoted their words as being untrue or unreliable by their designation as worthless, therefore the reader is placed into a position of rooting for Saul to overcome these men who question his capability.[54] Saul is posited as the "unlikely hero" of the carnival narrative, and the reader looks for his success, temporary as it may be.[55] The mockery of these men is not to be equated with the rhetorical speech of Samuel and that of the people displayed earlier (1 Sam 10:19, 22), as the mockery on show does not allow for a genuine sense of laughter to enter the carnival space and thus does not create the opportunity for the community's renewal or growth.

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[51] Whereas most translations say that God "touched" their heart, the Hebrew verb נָגַע can mean "struck" (as in 1 Sam 6:9), which would suggest a less pleasant and more violent action by God.
[52] Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 100.
[53] McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 194.
[54] In light of the following events, mention of "worthless men" (lit., sons of Belial) recalls the same phrase in Judg 19:22 and 20:13. Note that 1 Sam 2:12 similarly calls Eli's sons "worthless men" (lit., sons of Belial). Such a designation expresses the narrator's viewpoint.
[55] Gunn, *The Fate of King Saul*, 61.

Saul's silence at their insolent behaviour could be viewed as showing admirable restraint, and the question posed by these worthless men will be given an opportunity to be answered by Saul as the narrative progresses.[56] The destructive attitude of these worthless men is to be overcome by the clown-king, in some fashion, and Saul will be given the opportunity to refute their derogatory words. The clown-king may be thrashed by the people as a whole but these secondary reservations by the worthless men attempt to undermine the renewing action of the carnival. It is this "abuse [that] is followed by praise; they are two aspects of one world, each with its own body".[57] The actions of the men of valour and the dismissing words of the worthless men serve to embody the duality of the carnival; life and death.

The establishing of the "rights and duties of the kingship" by Samuel (1 Sam 10:25 RSV) is recounted quickly, speeding up the narrated time of the text, so the story may move on to the more important portion of the narrative; that of Saul's first military undertaking. The inaction and insolent attitude of the worthless men serve as a segue for the moment of Saul proving himself as well as the formal establishment of the kingship as the new and renewing form of organisation within the communal body. The worthless men's derogatory words open up a space in the narrative in which a challenge anticipates a response to follow. The narrative goes on to narrate Saul's first military victory, where the clown-king achieves some success. Due to textual variations, the following translations compare the Hebrew text in the MT and 4QSam^{a}, and also the Greek in the LXX and Josephus.

4.3 - Saul's First Military Victory (1 Sam 11:1-15):

Table 4.3: Hebrew Translations

Hebrew Text (MT) of 1 Sam 11:1-15	Translation of (MT) 1 Sam 10:27b-11:15[58]	Hebrew Text (4QSam^{a}) of 1 Sam 10:27-11:15[59]	Translation of (4QSam^{a}) 1 Sam 10:27 -11:15
		ובני הבליעל א[מרו]מ[ה יושיענו] [זה וי]בזוהו ולוא הביאו לו מנחה. [ונ]חש מלך בני עמון הוא לחץ את בני גד ואת בני	10:27 But the sons of worthlessness said: "How can this one save us?" And they despised him and they did not bring a tribute to him [missing…]. 10:27b But Nahash, king of the sons of

[56] The Hebrew expression "like one who keeps silent" (cf. Gen 24:21; Prov 17:28) could also be understood as an unflattering description: "like one who is deaf" (cf. 1 Sam 7:8).
[57] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 198.
[58] Translation own.
[59] The Hebrew text (including all the reconstructed text) is from: Frank Moore Cross, Donald W. Parry, Richard J. Saley, and Eugene Ulrich, *Qumran Cave 4: XII, 1-2 Samuel*, DJD 17 (New York: Clarendon Press, 2008), 65-68.

		ראובן בחזקה ונקר להם כ[ול] [ע]ין ימין ונתן אין [מושי]ע ל[י]שראל ולוא נשאר איש בבני ישראל אשר בע[בר הירדן] [אש]ר ל[וא נ]קר לו נחש מלך בני עמון כול עין ימין והן שבעת אלפים איש [נצלו מיד] בני עמון	Ammon, himself oppressed the sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben by force. And he gouged out every right eye and he did not allow a saviour to Israel and no man was left among the sons of Israel across the Jordan whose right eye Nahash king of the sons of Ammon did not gouge out. But then, seven thousand men escaped from the hand of the sons of Ammon.[60]
וַיַּ֤עַל נָחָשׁ֙ הָֽעַמּוֹנִ֔י וַיִּחַ֖ן עַל־יָבֵ֣שׁ גִּלְעָ֑ד וַיֹּ֨אמְר֜וּ כָּל־אַנְשֵׁ֣י יָבֵישׁ֮ אֶל־נָחָשׁ֒ כְּרָת־לָ֙נוּ֙ בְּרִ֔ית וְנַעַבְדֶֽךָּ׃	11:1 [About a month later] Nahash the Ammonite went up and encamped against Jabesh-gilead; and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, “Make a covenant with us, and we will serve you.”	ויבאו אל יבש גלעד ויהי כמו חדש ויעל נחש העמיני ויחן על יבישׁ ויאמרו כול אנשי יבישׁ אל נחש מלך בני עמון כרת לנו ברית ונעבדך	11:1 And they came to Jabesh-gilead, And there was about a month, and Nahash the Ammonite went up and encamped against Jabesh. And all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, king of the sons of Ammon: “Make a covenant with us and we will serve you”.[61]
וַיֹּ֨אמֶר אֲלֵיהֶ֜ם נָחָ֣שׁ הָֽעַמּוֹנִ֗י בְּזֹאת֙ אֶכְרֹ֣ת לָכֶ֔ם בְּנָק֥וֹר לָכֶ֖ם כָּל־עֵ֣ין יָמִ֑ין וְשַׂמְתִּ֥יהָ חֶרְפָּ֖ה עַל־כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵֽל׃	11:2 But Nahash the Ammonite said to them, “On this condition I will make one with you; that I gouge out all your right eyes, and thus make it a disgrace upon all Israel.”	ויאמר אליהם נחש [העמוני בזאת אכרת לכם]	11:2 But Nahash the Ammonite said to them: “By this condition I will make with you *[missing…]*”
וַיֹּ֨אמְר֜וּ אֵלָ֗יו זִקְנֵי֙ יָבֵ֔ישׁ הֶרֶף֩ לָ֙נוּ֙ שִׁבְעַ֣ת יָמִ֔ים וְנִשְׁלְחָ֥ה מַלְאָכִ֖ים בְּכֹ֣ל גְּבוּל֑ יִשְׂרָאֵל֒ וְאִם־אֵ֣ין מוֹשִׁ֣יעַ אֹתָ֔נוּ וְיָצָ֖אנוּ אֵלֶֽיךָ׃	11:3 The elders of Jabesh said to him: “Grant a respite to us for seven days and we will send messengers through all the territory of Israel. And if there is none to save us, then we will come out to you”.[62]		*{11:3-6 missing…}*

[60] The concluding fragment of 1 Sam 10:27b is unique to the Qumran source but is also paralleled by Josephus, being represented in a more protracted form in *Antiquities* (*A.J.* 6.68-85). Nothing of this fragment is retained in either the MT or the LXX. The RSV follows the MT while the NRSV retains this fragment of text as witnessed in the Qumran source and that of Josephus’ rendition of the text. There does not appear to be any theological reason to have triggered the omission of this passage from the MT or the LXX. Rather, it may be as simple as a scribe having erroneously skipped over this section when transcribing. This fragment of 1 Samuel 10:27b will thus be read as part of 1 Sam 11 due to the thematic connection between the two sections, otherwise the immediate introduction of Nahash at the beginning of chapter eleven seems odd or disjointed. The concluding fragment of 1 Samuel 10:27b can be considered as part of Saul’s first military campaign and thus part of 1 Samuel 11.

[61] The phrase “About a month later” appears in 4QSam[a] and LXX but not in MT. The MT phrase “But he was like one who keeps silent” may be a corruption of an original Hebrew: “And there was about a month/after the new moon.” The LXX uses the title or designation of “the Ammonite” (“Ναας ὁ Αμμανίτης”).

[62] The MT has “elders of Jabesh” while the LXX has “the men of Jabesh”, as in keeping with 1 Sam 11:1.

וַיָּבֹאוּ הַמַּלְאָכִים גִּבְעַת שָׁאוּל וַיְדַבְּרוּ הַדְּבָרִים בְּאָזְנֵי הָעָם וַיִּשְׂאוּ כָל־הָעָם אֶת־קוֹלָם וַיִּבְכּוּ׃	11:4 When the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul, they reported the words in the ears of the people, and all the people lifted up their voices and they wept.		
וְהִנֵּה שָׁאוּל בָּא אַחֲרֵי הַבָּקָר מִן־הַשָּׂדֶה וַיֹּאמֶר שָׁאוּל מַה־לָּעָם כִּי יִבְכּוּ וַיְסַפְּרוּ־לוֹ אֶת־דִּבְרֵי אַנְשֵׁי יָבֵישׁ׃	11:5 And just then Saul [was] coming from the field behind the oxen. And Saul said: "What [has happened] to the people that they weep?" So they recounted to him the words of the men of Jabesh.		
וַתִּצְלַח רוּחַ־אֱלֹהִים עַל־שָׁאוּל בְּשָׁמְעוֹ אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַיִּחַר אַפּוֹ מְאֹד׃	11:6 And the breath of God rushed upon Saul when he heard these words, and his anger was greatly kindled.[63]		
וַיִּקַּח צֶמֶד בָּקָר וַיְנַתְּחֵהוּ וַיְשַׁלַּח בְּכָל־גְּבוּל יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּיַד הַמַּלְאָכִים ו לֵאמֹר אֲשֶׁר אֵינֶנּוּ יֹצֵא אַחֲרֵי שָׁאוּל וְאַחֲרֵי שְׁמוּאֵל כָּה יֵעָשֶׂה לִבְקָרוֹ וַיִּפֹּל פַּחַד־יְהוָה עַל־הָעָם וַיֵּצְאוּ כְּאִישׁ אֶחָד׃	11:7 He took a yoke of oxen, and cut them into pieces and sent them into all the territory of Israel by the hand of the messengers, saying: "Whoever does not go out to fight after Saul and Samuel, so shall it be done to his oxen!" Then the dread of the LORD fell upon the people, and they came out as one man.[64]	בק[ר וינתחהו וישלח בכל גבול ישראל ביד מלאכים לאמר אשר איננו יצא אחרי] שאול וא[חרי שמואל כה יעשה לבקרו ויפול פחד יהוה על עם ישראל ויצעקו] כאיש אחד	11:7 …oxen and he cut them into pieces and he sent them into all the territory of Israel by the hand of messengers saying: "Whoever does not go out to fight after Saul and after Samuel so it will be done to his oxen". And the dread of the LORD fell upon the people of Israel and they were summoned like one man.
וַיִּפְקְדֵם בְּבֶזֶק וַיִּהְיוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת אֶלֶף וְאִישׁ יְהוּדָה שְׁלֹשִׁים אָלֶף׃	11:8 When he mustered them at Bezek, the men of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand.	[ויפקדם בבזק בבמה כול איש ישראל שש מאות אלף ואיש יהודה] שבעים אלף	11:8 When he numbered them in Bezek at the high place, all the men of Israel were six hundred thousand and the men of Judah were seventy thousand.
וַיֹּאמְרוּ לַמַּלְאָכִים הַבָּאִים כֹּה תֹאמְרוּן לְאִישׁ יָבֵישׁ גִּלְעָד מָחָר תִּהְיֶה־לָּכֶם תְּשׁוּעָה בְּחֹם הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וַיָּבֹאוּ הַמַּלְאָכִים וַיַּגִּידוּ לְאַנְשֵׁי יָבֵישׁ וַיִּשְׂמָחוּ׃	11:9 And they said to the messengers who had come: "So shall you say to the men of Jabesh-gilead: tomorrow when the sun is hot, you will have salvation". And the messengers came and told the men of Jabesh, and they rejoiced.[65]	[ויאמר שאול למלאכים הבאים כה תאמרון לאיש יביש מחר לכם] מיהוה התש[ועה בחם השמש ויבאו המלאכים ויגידו לאנשי יביש וישמחו ויאמרו] לכם פתחו השער	11:9 And Saul said to the messengers who came: "So you will say to the men of Jabesh: tomorrow for you salvation will be from the LORD by the heat of the sun". And the messengers came and they reported it to the men of Jabesh and they

[63] The MT has the "spirit/breath of God" as influencing Saul, whereas the LXX has "the spirit of the LORD".

[64] MT has the "hand of *the* messengers" whereas the LXX has "by the hands of messengers". So the MT would seem to indicate the messengers who brought the news of Jabesh-gilead are being used to send the divided oxen throughout the territories, yet those messengers are reutilised in 1 Sam 11:9.

[65] The clause here – "and they rejoiced" – remains seemingly open-ended, with the concluding phrase possibly having been lost. The longer text of 4QSam[a] preserves a portion which reads: ויאמרו] לכם פתחו השער.

			rejoiced. And they said: "Therefore open the gate".
וַיֹּאמְרוּ֙ אַנְשֵׁ֣י יָבֵ֔ישׁ מָחָ֖ר נֵצֵ֣א אֲלֵיכֶ֑ם וַעֲשִׂיתֶ֥ם לָּ֛נוּ כְּכָל־הַטּ֖וֹב בְּעֵינֵיכֶֽם׃ ס	11:10 Then the men of Jabesh said: "Tomorrow we will give ourselves up to you, and you may do to us whatever [is] good in your eyes."	ויאמרו אנשי יביש גלעד מחר נצא אליכם ועשיתם לנו ככול הטוב בעיניכם	11:10 Then the men of Jabesh-gilead said: "Tomorrow we will come out to you and you may do to us whatever is good in your eyes".
וַיְהִ֗י מִמָּחֳרָת֙ וַיָּ֣שֶׂם שָׁא֔וּל אֶת־הָעָ֖ם שְׁלֹשָׁ֣ה רָאשִׁ֑ים וַיָּבֹ֨אוּ֙ בְּתוֹךְ־הַמַּחֲנֶ֔ה בְּאַשְׁמֹ֖רֶת הַבֹּ֑קֶר וַיַּכּ֤וּ אֶת־עַמּוֹן֙ עַד־חֹ֣ם הַיּ֔וֹם וַיְהִ֕י הַנִּשְׁאָרִ֖ים וַיָּפֻ֑צוּ וְלֹֽא־נִשְׁאֲרוּ־בָ֥ם שְׁנַ֖יִם יָֽחַד׃	11:11 And it happened on the next day that Saul set the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the camp during the morning watch, and struck down the Ammonites until the heat of the day. And it was [that] there were survivors, and they were scattered so that no two among them were left together.	[…ויהי ממ]חרת וי[שים שאול את העם שלושה ראשים ויבאו] [בתוך המחנה באשמרת ה]בקר[ויכו את בני עמון עד חם היום ויהי הנשארים] l	11:11 And it happened on the next day that Saul set the people in three companies and they came into the midst of the camp during the morning watch. And they struck down the sons of Ammon until the day was hot. And there were the survivors and they were scattered, so that no two among them were left together.
וַיֹּ֤אמֶר הָעָם֙ אֶל־שְׁמוּאֵ֔ל מִ֚י הָאֹמֵ֔ר שָׁא֖וּל יִמְלֹ֣ךְ עָלֵ֑ינוּ תְּנ֥וּ הָאֲנָשִׁ֖ים וּנְמִיתֵֽם׃	11:12 But the people said to Samuel: "Who [is] the one saying, 'Shall Saul reign over us?' Bring the men, that we may put them to death."[66]	ויאמר העם אל שמואל מי [ה]אומר[שאול	11:12 But the people said to Samuel: "Who is the one saying: Saul… *[missing…]*".
וַיֹּ֤אמֶר שָׁאוּל֙ לֹא־יוּמַ֣ת אִ֔ישׁ בַּיּ֥וֹם הַזֶּ֖ה כִּ֣י הַיּ֑וֹם עָשָׂ֥ה יְהוָ֛ה תְּשׁוּעָ֖ה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵ֥ל׃ ס	11:13 But Saul said: "Not a man shall be put to death this day, for today the LORD has brought about salvation in Israel."		*{11:13-15 missing…}*
וַיֹּ֤אמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל֙ אֶל־הָעָ֔ם לְכ֥וּ וְנֵלְכָ֖ה הַגִּלְגָּ֑ל וּנְחַדֵּ֥שׁ שָׁ֖ם הַמְלוּכָֽה׃	11:14 Then Samuel said to the people: "Come, let us go to Gilgal and there renew the kingship".		
וַיֵּלְכ֣וּ כָל־הָעָ֗ם הַגִּלְגָּל֙ וַיַּמְלִ֣כוּ שָׁ֔ם אֶת־שָׁא֖וּל לִפְנֵ֣י יְהוָ֑ה בַּגִּלְגָּ֗ל וַיִּזְבְּחוּ־שָׁ֛ם זְבָחִ֥ים שְׁלָמִ֖ים לִפְנֵ֣י יְהוָ֑ה וַיִּשְׂמַ֤ח שָׁם֙ שָׁא֣וּל וְכָל־אַנְשֵׁ֔י יִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל עַד־מְאֹֽד׃ פ	11:15 So all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before the Lord in Gilgal. There they sacrificed peace offerings before the Lord, and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.		

This seems to have been a piece of the people's directive following Saul's message to them. The Hebrew word "therefore" normally ends in the letter *nun* (לָכֵן), but the Hebrew MS of Sirach 46:8 also has a similar form ending in *MEM* (לָכֵם).

[66] The translation has been compiled, reading the MT and the LXX as the people inquiring of the people who said those exact words, rather than in a tone of irony. Otherwise the statement would be contradictory to the passage itself. See: McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 201.

Table 4.3: Greek Translations

Greek Text (LXX) of 1 Sam 11:1-15	Translation of (LXX) 1 Samuel 11:1-15[67]	Josephus (Greek) Text of *A.J.* 6.68-85 (1 Sam 10:27b-11:15)[68]	Translation of Josephus (Greek) Text of *A.J.* 6.68-85 (1 Sam 10:27b-11:15)
καὶ ἐγενήθη ὡς μετὰ μῆνα καὶ ἀνέβη Ναας ὁ Αμμανίτης καὶ παρεμβάλλει ἐπὶ Ιαβις Γαλααδ καὶ εἶπον πάντες οἱ ἄνδρες Ιαβις πρὸς Ναας τὸν Αμμανίτην διάθου ἡμῖν διαθήκην καὶ δουλεύσομέν σοι	[11:1]After about a month, Nahash the Ammonite went up and besieged Jabesh-gilead, and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash the Ammonite: "Make a covenant with us and we will submit to you".	[68] Μηνὶ δ' ὕστερον ἄρχει τῆς παρὰ πάντων αὐτῷ τιμῆς ὁ πρὸς Ναάσην πόλεμος τὸν τῶν Ἀμμανιτῶν βασιλέα: οὗτος γὰρ πολλὰ κακὰ τοὺς πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου ποταμοῦ κατῳκημένους τῶν Ἰουδαίων διατίθησι μετὰ πολλοῦ καὶ μαχίμου στρατεύματος διαβὰς ἐπ' αὐτούς: [69] καὶ τὰς πόλεις αὐτῶν εἰς δουλείαν ὑπάγεται ἰσχύι μὲν καὶ βίᾳ πρὸς τὸ παρὸν αὐτοὺς χειρωσάμενος, σοφίᾳ δὲ καὶ ἐπινοίᾳ πρὸς τὸ μηδ' αὖθις ἀποστάντας δυνηθῆναι τὴν ὑπ' αὐτῷ δουλείαν διαφυγεῖν ἀσθενεῖς ποιῶν: τῶν γὰρ ἢ κατὰ πίστιν ὡς αὐτὸν ἀφικνουμένων ἢ λαμβανομένων πολέμου νόμῳ τοὺς δεξιοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐξέκοπτεν. [70] ἐποίει δὲ τοῦθ', ὅπως τῆς ἀριστερᾶς αὐτοῖς ὄψεως ὑπὸ τῶν θυρεῶν καλυπτομένης ἄχρηστοι παντελῶς εἶεν. [71] καὶ ὁ μὲν τῶν Ἀμμανιτῶν βασιλεὺς ταῦτ' ἐργασάμενος τοὺς πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου ἐπὶ τοὺς Γαλαδηνοὺς λεγομένους ἐπεστράτευσε καὶ στρατοπεδευσάμενος πρὸς τῇ μητροπόλει τῶν πολεμίων, Ἰαβὶς δ' ἐστὶν αὕτη, πέμπει πρὸς αὐτοὺς πρέσβεις κελεύων ἤδη παραδοῦναι σφᾶς αὐτοὺς ἐπὶ τῷ τοὺς δεξιοὺς αὐτῶν ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐξορύξαι, ἢ πολιορκήσειν ἠπείλει καὶ τὰς πόλεις αὐτῶν ἀναστήσειν: τὴν δ' αἵρεσιν ἐπ' αὐτοῖς εἶναι, πότερόν	[6.68-72] After a month, the war with Nahash, king of the Ammonites, caused the beginning of the esteem of him [Saul] from all. For this one had imposed much harm on those of the Jews who had settled beyond the Jordan river, by crossing over against them with a great and warlike army. And he brought into slavery their cities, by strength and violence subduing them presently, but by cunning and ingenuity weakening them, turning them away from ever again being able to escape their enslavement to him; for he cut out the right eyes of those who either surrendered to him by treaty or who were captured by custom of war. He did this so that as the left eye was covered for them by the shield, they would be wholly useless. And when the king of the Ammonites had done this to those across the Jordan, he led his army against those called Gileadites, and having pitched his camp at the capital of his enemies, which was Jabesh, he sent to them envoys, commanding now to surrender themselves to him on the condition that their right eyes would be gouged out or else he threatened to besiege and to overthrow their cities. It was their choice, whether rather they wished to cut off a small piece of the body or to perish utterly.
καὶ λέγουσιν αὐτῷ οἱ ἄνδρες Ιαβις ἄνες ἡμῖν ἑπτὰ ἡμέρας καὶ ἀποστελοῦμεν ἀγγέλους εἰς πᾶν ὅριον Ισραηλ ἐὰν μὴ ᾖ ὁ σῴζων ἡμᾶς ἐξελευσόμεθα πρὸς ὑμᾶς	[11:3]And the men of Jabesh said to him: "Desist from us for seven days and we will send messengers to all the territory of Israel. If there is none who can save us, we will come out to you".		
καὶ ἔρχονται οἱ ἄγγελοι εἰς Γαβαα πρὸς Σαουλ καὶ λαλοῦσιν τοὺς λόγους εἰς τὰ ὦτα τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ ἦραν πᾶς ὁ λαὸς τὴν φωνὴν αὐτῶν καὶ ἔκλαυσαν	[11:4]And the messengers came into Gibeah to Saul, and they told the matter in the ears of the people, and all the people lifted up their voices and wept.		
καὶ ἰδοὺ Σαουλ ἤρχετο μετὰ τὸ πρωὶ ἐξ ἀγροῦ καὶ εἶπεν Σαουλ τί ὅτι κλαίει ὁ λαός καὶ διηγοῦνται αὐτῷ τὰ ῥήματα τῶν υἱῶν Ιαβις	[11:5]Now Saul was coming out of the field after the early morning, and Saul said: "What is it that the people are weeping?" So they recounted to him the words of the sons of Jabesh.		
καὶ ἐφήλατο πνεῦμα κυρίου ἐπὶ Σαουλ ὡς ἤκουσεν τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα καὶ ἐθυμώθη	[11:6]And the spirit of the Lord jumped upon Saul as he heard these things, and his anger was greatly incensed over them.		

[67] Translation own.

[68] Translation own. The thesis here and throughout uses the electronic form of Josephus' *Antiquties*, which is taken from *Biblical* [available at: http://www.biblical.ie/page.php?fl=josephus/Antiquities/AJGk06]. For the critical edition, see: Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*: *Volume VI*, Loeb Classical Library, trans. Ralph Marcus and Allen Wikgren (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970).

ἐπ᾽ αὐτοὺς ὀργὴ αὐτοῦ σφόδρα		ποτε βραχύ τι τοῦ σώματος ἀποτεμεῖν θέλουσιν ἢ παντάπασιν ἀπολωλέναι.	The Gileadites, terrified, did not dare to reply to either proposal, whether they would give themselves up or whether they would fight. But they asked to
καὶ ἔλαβεν δύο βόας καὶ ἐμέλισεν αὐτὰς καὶ ἀπέστειλεν εἰς πᾶν ὅριον Ισραηλ ἐν χειρὶ ἀγγέλων λέγων ὃς οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκπορευόμενος ὀπίσω Σαουλ καὶ ὀπίσω Σαμουηλ κατὰ τάδε ποιήσουσιν τοῖς βουσὶν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐπῆλθεν ἔκστασις κυρίου ἐπὶ τὸν λαὸν Ισραηλ καὶ ἐβόησαν ὡς ἀνὴρ εἷς	11:7Then he seized two oxen and divided them into parts and sent them to all the territory of Israel by the hand of messengers saying: "Whoever is not coming out after Saul and after Samuel, thus they will do to his oxen!" And the terror of the Lord came upon the people of Israel, and they cried out as one man.	[72] οἱ δὲ Γαλαδηνοὶ καταπλαγέντες πρὸς οὐδέτερον μὲν ἐτόλμησαν οὐδὲν εἰπεῖν οὔτ' εἰ παραδιδόασιν αὐτοὺς οὔτ' εἰ πολεμοῦσιν, ἀνοχὴν δ' ἡμερῶν ἑπτὰ λαβεῖν ἠξίωσαν, ἵνα πρεσβευσάμενοι πρὸς τοὺς ὁμοφύλους παρακαλέσωσι συμμαχεῖν αὐτοῖς καὶ εἰ μὲν ἔλθοι βοήθεια πολεμῶσιν, εἰ δ' ἄπορα εἴη τὰ παρ' ἐκείνων παραδώσειν αὐτοὺς ἔφασκον ἐπὶ τῷ παθεῖν ὅτι ἂν αὐτῷ δοκῇ.	ask for a seven days' respite so that they could send envoys to their countrymen, and to summon their help; and if assistance would come, they would fight. But if it were not forthcoming from them, they said they would deliver themselves up to suffer according to what would seem good to him.
καὶ ἐπισκέπτεται αὐτοὺς Αβιεζεκ ἐν Βαμα πᾶν ἄνδρα Ισραηλ ἑξακοσίας χιλιάδας καὶ ἄνδρας Ιουδα ἑβδομήκοντα χιλιάδας	11:8And he surveyed them at Bezek in Bamah, all the men of Israel, six hundred thousand, and the men of Judah, seventy thousand.[69]	[73] Ὁ δὲ Ναάσης καταφρονήσας τοῦ τῶν Γαλαδηνῶν πλήθους καὶ τῆς ἀποκρίσεως αὐτῶν δίδωσί τε αὐτοῖς τὴν ἀνοχὴν καὶ πέμπειν πρὸς οὓς ἂν θέλωσι συμμάχους ἐπιτρέπει. πέμπουσιν οὖν εὐθὺς κατὰ πόλιν τοῖς Ἰσραηλίταις οἳ ἤγγελλον τὰ παρὰ τοῦ Ναάσου καὶ τὴν ἀμηχανίαν ἐν ᾗ καθειστήκεσαν. [74] οἱ δ' εἰς δάκρυα καὶ λύπην ὑπὸ τῆς ἀκοῆς τῶν περὶ τοὺς Ἰαβισηνοὺς προήχθησαν καὶ πέρα τούτων οὐδὲν αὐτοῖς ἄλλο πράττειν συνεχώρει τὸ δέος: γενομένων δὲ τῶν ἀγγέλων καὶ ἐν τῇ Σαούλου τοῦ βασιλέως πόλει καὶ τοὺς κινδύνους ἐν οἷς εἶναι συνέβαινε τοὺς Ἰαβισηνοὺς φρασάντων, ὁ μὲν λαὸς ταὐτὰ τοῖς πρώτοις ἔπασχεν: ὠδύρετο γὰρ τὴν συμφορὰν τὴν τῶν συγγενῶν: [75] ὁ δὲ	
καὶ εἶπεν τοῖς ἀγγέλοις τοῖς ἐρχομένοις τάδε ἐρεῖτε τοῖς ἀνδράσιν Ιαβις αὔριον ὑμῖν ἡ σωτηρία διαθερμάναντος τοῦ ἡλίου καὶ ἦλθον οἱ ἄγγελοι εἰς τὴν πόλιν καὶ ἀπαγγέλλουσιν τοῖς ἀνδράσιν Ιαβις καὶ εὐφράνθησαν	11:9And they said to the messengers who had come: "Thus you are to say to the men of Jabesh; tomorrow by the heating of the sun, you will have deliverance". And when the messengers went into the city and related it to the men of Jabesh, they rejoiced.		6.73-76So Nahash, being contemptuous of the multitude of the Gileadites and their answer, both gave them the respite and permitted them to send to whomever they wanted for assistance. So they sent immediately to each city of the Israelites to report the menaces from Nahash, and the hardship they were in. These ones, upon hearing about the inhabitants of Jabesh, were brought into tears and grief, but their fear did not allow them to do anything else. But when the messengers were
καὶ εἶπαν οἱ ἄνδρες Ιαβις πρὸς Ναας τὸν Αμμανίτην αὔριον ἐξελευσόμεθα πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ ποιήσετε ἡμῖν τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐνώπιον ὑμῶν	11:10The men of Jabesh said to Nahash the Ammonite: "Tomorrow we will come out to you, and you may do to us what is good before you".[70]		
καὶ ἐγενήθη μετὰ τὴν αὔριον καὶ ἔθετο Σαουλ τὸν λαὸν εἰς τρεῖς ἀρχάς καὶ εἰσπορεύονται μέσον τῆς παρεμβολῆς ἐν φυλακῇ τῇ πρωινῇ καὶ ἔτυπτον τοὺς υἱοὺς Αμμων ἕως	11:11And on the next day, Saul put the people in three companies and they came into the middle of the camp during the morning watch, and they struck the sons of Ammon until the day became hot. And there were those surviving;		

[69] Where the LXX MS B reads Αβιεζεκ (Abiezek), this translation will read LXX MS A as ἐν Βεζεκ ("at Bezek"). The LXX denotes the meeting place as "Bezek in Bamah", while the MT keeps it as merely "Bezek". Whereas the MT speaks of "three hundred thousand" Israelites, the LXX has double the number, and Josephus makes it "seven hundred thousand". While the MT refers to "thirty thousand" from Judah, the LXX agrees with 4QSam[a] in specifying "seventy thousand".

[70] The act of defining the direction of the people's speech to Nahash is needed in the English for clarity, yet it is also kept in the Greek source (LXX) whereas it is omitted in the shorter text of the MT. The Greek words for "you" in 11:10 are plural.

διεθερμάνθη ἡ ἡμέρα καὶ ἐγενήθησαν οἱ ὑπολελειμμένοι διεσπάρησαν καὶ οὐχ ὑπελείφθησαν ἐν αὐτοῖς δύο κατὰ τὸ αὐτό	they were dispersed, so among them no two survived together.	Σαοῦλος ἀπὸ τῶν περὶ τὴν γεωργίαν παραγενόμενος ἔργων εἰς τὴν πόλιν ἐπιτυγχάνει κλαίουσι τοῖς αὐτοῦ πολίταις, καὶ πυθόμενος τὴν αἰτίαν τῆς συγχύσεως καὶ κατηφείας αὐτῶν μανθάνει τὰ παρὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων. [76] καὶ ἔνθεος γενόμενος ἀποπέμπει μὲν τοὺς Ἰαβισηνοὺς ὑποσχόμενος αὐτοῖς ἥξειν βοηθὸς τῇ τρίτῃ τῶν ἡμερῶν καὶ πρὶν ἥλιον ἀνασχεῖν κρατήσειν τῶν πολεμίων, ἵνα καὶ νενικηκότας ἤδη καὶ τῶν φόβων ἀπηλλαγμένους ὁ ἥλιος ἐπιτείλας ἴδῃ: ὑπομεῖναι δ' ἐκέλευσέ τινας αὐτῶν ἡγησομένους τῆς ὁδοῦ.	coming in the city of King Saul and declared the perils which the inhabitants of Jabesh happened to be in, the people here were in the same distress as those first, for they lamented the calamity of those kinsmen.
καὶ εἶπεν ὁ λαὸς πρὸς Σαμουηλ τίς ὁ εἴπας ὅτι Σαουλ οὐ βασιλεύσει ἡμῶν παράδος τοὺς ἄνδρας καὶ θανατώσομεν αὐτούς	11:12Then the people said to Samuel: "Who is the one that said that Saul will not reign over us? Hand over the men and we will put them to death".		But when Saul was returning from the works of farming into the city, he encountered his citizens weeping, and asking the cause for their distress and dejection he learned the report of the messengers. And then becoming inspired [by the spirit of the Lord], he sent away those from Jabesh, promising them to come to their assistance on the third day, and to defeat their enemies before the rising of the sun, so that the rising sun might see them both already victors and freed from their fears. But he bade some of them to remain with him so that they might guide him on his way.
καὶ εἶπεν Σαουλ οὐκ ἀποθανεῖται οὐδεὶς ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ταύτῃ ὅτι σήμερον κύριος ἐποίησεν σωτηρίαν ἐν Ισραηλ	11:13But Saul said: "No one will die this day, for today the Lord brought salvation about in Israel".[71]		
καὶ εἶπεν Σαμουηλ πρὸς τὸν λαὸν λέγων πορευθῶμεν εἰς Γαλγαλα καὶ ἐγκαινίσωμεν ἐκεῖ τὴν βασιλείαν	11:14Then Samuel said to the people saying: "Let us go to Gilgal and let us renew the kingdom there".	[77] Βουλόμενος δὲ φόβῳ ζημίας τὸν λαὸν ἐπὶ τὸν πρὸς Ἀμμανίτας ἐπιστρέψαι πόλεμον καὶ συνελθεῖν αὐτοὺς ὀξύτερον, ὑποτεμὼν τῶν αὐτοῦ βοῶν τὰ νεῦρα ταὐτὰ διαθήσειν ἠπείλησε τοὺς ἁπάντων, εἰ μὴ πρὸς τὸν Ἰόρδανον ὡπλισμένοι κατὰ τὴν ἐπιοῦσαν ἀπαντήσουσιν ἡμέραν καὶ ἀκολουθήσουσιν αὐτῷ καὶ Σαμουήλῳ τῷ προφήτῃ, ὅπου ποτ' ἂν αὐτοὺς ἀγάγωσι. [78] τῶν δὲ δι' εὐλάβειαν τῆς κατεπηγγελμένης ζημίας εἰς τὸν ὡρισμένον καιρὸν συνελθόντων ἐξαριθμεῖται ἐν Βαλᾶ τῇ πόλει τὸ πλῆθος: εὑρίσκει δὲ τὸν ἀριθμὸν χωρὶς τῆς Ἰούδα φυλῆς εἰς ἑβδομήκοντα μυριάδας συνειλεγμένους, τῆς δὲ φυλῆς ἐκείνης ἦσαν μυριάδες ἑπτά. [79] διαβὰς δὲ τὸν Ἰόρδανον καὶ σχοίνων δέκα δι' ὅλης τῆς νυκτὸς ἀνύσας ὁδὸν φθάνει μὲν ἥλιον ἀνίσχοντα, τριχῇ δὲ τὸ στράτευμα διελὼν	
καὶ ἐπορεύθη πᾶς ὁ λαὸς εἰς Γαλγαλα καὶ ἔχρισεν Σαμουηλ ἐκεῖ τὸν Σαουλ εἰς βασιλέα ἐνώπιον κυρίου ἐν Γαλγαλοις καὶ ἔθυσεν ἐκεῖ θυσίας καὶ εἰρηνικὰς ἐνώπιον κυρίου καὶ εὐφράνθη Σαμουηλ καὶ πᾶς Ισραηλ ὥστε λίαν	11:15And all the people went to Gilgal and Samuel anointed Saul there as king before the Lord, among the Gilgalites. There he slew sacrifices and peace offerings before the Lord, and Samuel and all Israel rejoiced greatly.[72]		6.77-82 Then wishing to convert the people to this war against the Ammonites, through fear of a penalty and that they might come together more quickly, cutting up the sinews of his oxen, he threatened to do the same to all who did not come armed to the Jordan on the next day, and follow him and Samuel, the prophet, wherever they might lead

[71] Whereas LXX MS A has "Saul," (as in the MT), the LXX MS B reads "Samuel", the reading preferred by McCarter (McCarter, *I Samuel*, 201).

[72] While the MT speaks of Saul rejoicing, the LXX says that Samuel rejoiced.

		ἐπιπίπτει πανταχόθεν αἰφνιδίως οὐ προσδοκῶσι τοῖς ἐχθροῖς, καὶ συμβαλὼν εἰς μάχην ἄλλους τε πολλοὺς ἀποκτείνει τῶν Ἀμμανιτῶν καὶ Ναάσην τὸν βασιλέα. [80] τοῦτο λαμπρὸν ἐπράχθη τῷ Σαούλῳ τὸ ἔργον καὶ πρὸς πάντας αὐτὸν διήγγειλε τοὺς Ἑβραίους ἐπαινούμενον καὶ θαυμαστῆς ἀπολαύοντα δόξης ἐπ' ἀνδρείᾳ: καὶ γὰρ εἴ τινες ἦσαν οἳ πρότερον αὐτοῦ κατεφρόνουν, τότε μετέστησαν ἐπὶ τὸ τιμᾶν καὶ πάντων ἄριστον νομίζειν: οὐ γὰρ ἤρκεσεν αὐτῷ τοὺς Ἰαβισηνοὺς σεσωκέναι μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῇ τῶν Ἀμμανιτῶν ἐπιστρατεύσας χώρᾳ πᾶσαν αὐτὴν καταστρέφεται καὶ πολλὴν λαβὼν λείαν λαμπρὸς εἰς τὴν οἰκείαν ὑπέστρεψεν. [81] ὁ δὲ λαὸς ὑφ' ἡδονῆς τῶν Σαούλῳ κατωρθωμένων ἔχαιρε μὲν ὅτι τοιοῦτον ἐχειροτόνησε βασιλέα, πρὸς δὲ τοὺς οὐδὲν ὄφελος αὐτὸν ἔσεσθαι τοῖς πράγμασι λέγοντας ἐβόων: "ποῦ νῦν εἰσὶν οὗτοι" καὶ "δότωσαν δίκην" καὶ πάνθ' ὅσα φιλεῖ λέγειν ὄχλος ἐπ' εὐπραγίαις ἠρμένος πρὸς τοὺς ἐξευτελίζοντας ἔναγχος τοὺς τούτων αἰτίους. [82] Σαοῦλος δὲ τούτων μὲν ἠσπάζετο τὴν εὔνοιαν καὶ τὴν περὶ αὐτὸν προθυμίαν, ὤμοσε δὲ μήτινα περιόψεσθαι τῶν ὁμοφύλων ἀναιρούμενον ἐπ' ἐκείνης τῆς ἡμέρας: ἄτοπον γὰρ εἶναι τὴν ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ δεδομένην νίκην αἵματι φῦραι καὶ φόνῳ τῶν πρὸς ἀλλήλους συγγενῶν ἑορτάζειν. [83] Σαμουήλου δὲ φήσαντος καὶ δευτέρᾳ δεῖν χειροτονίᾳ Σαούλῳ τὴν βασιλείαν ἐπικυρῶσαι συνίασι πάντες εἰς Γάλγαλα πόλιν: ἐκεῖ γὰρ	them. When they mustered, through fear of the threatened penalty, at the appointed time, the multitude were numbered at the city of Bala. He found the number of those who were gathered seven hundred thousand, apart from the tribe of Judah; of that tribe there were seventy thousand. Then he crossed the Jordan and, accomplishing an all-night journey of thirty furlongs, he arrived before the sun was risen. Dividing his army into three, he fell suddenly upon the enemies on every side when they did not expect it; and joining battle with them he slew many others of the Ammonites and King Nahash. This glorious action was done by Saul and it was related to all the Hebrews with great commendation, and he enjoyed wonderful renown for valour. And if there were some who before despised him, now they were brought around to honour him, and to deem him the best of all men. For it was not enough for him to have saved the inhabitants of Jabesh only, but he also made an invasion into the country of the Ammonites and he subdued it all, and having taken very much plunder, he returned in glory to his own country. So the people in delight at the things successfully accomplished by Saul rejoiced that they elected such a person as their king. And against those that declared that he would bring no advantage to their affairs, they cried: “Where now are these ones?” and “Let them render justice”, and all the things that a crowd, who are elevated by

		αὐτοὺς ἐκέλευσεν ἐλθεῖν. καὶ πάλιν ὁρῶντος τοῦ πλήθους ὁ προφήτης χρίει τὸν Σαοῦλον τῷ ἁγίῳ ἐλαίῳ καὶ δεύτερον ἀναγορεύει βασιλέα. καὶ οὕτως ἡ τῶν Ἑβραίων πολιτεία εἰς βασιλείαν μετέπεσεν. [84] ἐπὶ γὰρ Μωυσέος καὶ τοῦ μαθητοῦ αὐτοῦ [Ἰησοῦ], ὃς ἦν στρατηγὸς, ἀριστοκρατούμενοι διετέλουν: μετὰ δὲ τὴν ἐκείνου τελευτὴν ἔτεσι τοῖς πᾶσι δέκα καὶ πρὸς τούτοις ὀκτὼ τὸ πλῆθος αὐτῶν ἀναρχία κατέσχε. [85] μετὰ ταῦτα δ' εἰς τὴν προτέραν ἐπανῆλθον πολιτείαν τῷ κατὰ πόλεμον ἀρίστῳ δόξαντι γεγενῆσθαι καὶ κατ' ἀνδρείαν περὶ τῶν ὅλων δικάζειν ἐπιτρέποντες: καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τὸν χρόνον τοῦτον τῆς πολιτείας κριτῶν ἐκάλεσαν.	success, are fond of saying against those who lately had disparaged the causes of these things. Then Saul welcomed their favour and good will concerning himself, yet he swore that he would not see any of his countrymen put to death that day. For it was absurd to mix up this victory that God had given with bloodshed and murder of those of the same race as themselves. It was better to be seen to keep feast in mutual good will. 6.83-85 Then Samuel had declared it was necessary to confirm the kingdom to Saul by a second election. All came together at the city of Galgala, for there he ordered them to come. And again, before the masses, the prophet anointed Saul with the holy olive oil and he declared a king a second time. And thus the government of the Hebrews transformed into a monarchy. For under Moses and his disciple Joshua, who was a general, they remained living under an aristocracy. But after his death, for eighteen years in all, the multitude were in anarchy. After these things, they returned to their former government; they then permitted themselves to be judged concerning everything by the one who in battle and in bravery appeared to be the best, and through this they called this the time of the government of Judges.

4.3.1 - Discussion:

Following on from the private election (1 Sam 9:15-10:1) and then the public selection (1 Sam 10:17-27), Saul, as the newly-made clown-king, will now be given the opportunity to prove his ability to act as king and to save the people. The term 'save' (root ישע) is a key word in this episode. At the start of the first half, Samuel reminds the people that God saves them (1 Sam 10:19), while at the end the mockers say: "How will this one save us?" (1 Sam 10:27). Near the start of the second half, the people of Jabesh-Gilead say: "If there is none to save us, then we will come out to you" (1 Sam 11:3), but near the end Saul acknowledges: "today the Lord has brought about salvation in Israel" (1 Sam 11:13). It would seem all characters within the narrative would see Saul progress in his newly acquired role of king, even his dissenters! The clown-king is being given a chance by the narrative to be raised up, which ultimately anticipates his being brought low. The challenge set down by the worthless men (1 Sam 10:27) after Saul's selection as king at Mizpah practically invites the occasion for such an opportunity, to show that Saul is indeed capable of leading Israel, to enter the narrative. The carnival king needs to be given this moment of triumph, otherwise the proceedings of the carnival are no longer regenerative and are instead merely tragic. The moment for Saul to become an effective leader is provided immediately after the sardonic question is posed, with the narrative recounting the aggressive military action of Nahash the Ammonite against Jabesh-gilead (1 Sam 11:1). A more detailed account of Nahash's activities is preserved only in the 4QSam[a] fragment, and recounted by Josephus in his writings (*A.J.* 6.68-71), and is not retained by the MT or the LXX. Yet the narrative can stand without this additional material, and has a certain "literary currency" without it as the narrative segues well from the worthless fellows' challenge (1 Sam 10:27) right into the advent of the challenge itself.[73] The phrase "about a month later" (found in 4QSam[a] and LXX but not in MT) allows a narrative delay before Saul demonstrates his leadership qualities. Rather than meaning "after a month," it may instead mean "after the new moon festival" (cf. 1 Sam 20:5).

The immediate threat recounted is also significant for Saul and his heritage, even with the omission of the Qumran fragment. The narrative 'camera' is directed immediately

[73] Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 103.

to the besieging of Jabesh-gilead, and it is this town which is also mentioned in the concluding chapters of the Judges text in connection with the tribe of Benjamin. In the story of the concubine at Gibeah, the people of Jabesh-gilead are the only tribal group out of the Israelites to not go up against the Benjaminites, and thus are instrumental for preventing the destruction of the tribe of Benjamin and Israel's first king also (Judg 21:8-9).[74] Therefore the connection between the two groups is unmistakeable and perhaps meaningful to Saul. It was this refusal by the people of Jabesh-gilead to move against the tribe of Benjamin that led to the destruction of its own people (Judg 21:11-12). With the attack and possible mutilation of the people at Jabesh-gilead imminent at the hands of Nahash, the previous fraternity between Jabesh-gilead and the Benjaminites may inspire a greater degree of response from Saul, depending on how strong his sense of tribal kinship and knowledge of tribal history may be.

The narrator's account of the besieging of the city of Jabesh-gilead by Nahash may seem to emerge suddenly, with the movement from the selection of Saul to this occasion of aggressive military action. Yet this structure is a straightforward progression from the questionability of Saul presented in the previous verse (1 Sam 10:27) to the moment of his being proven as capable. It may be argued that Nahash is in need of some form of narrative introduction, it being his first appearance in the story. However, his function as a character as Saul's antagonist is relatively one dimensional; he is presented in the story for the purpose of Saul proving himself capable as a military leader so that the narrative may continue on a positive note. There is little else to his character or its shaping that requires further elucidation or investigation. Rather than an independent character, Nahash is a functional element of the plot, whose words or actions propel significant change. Nahash's role may be compared to that of the servant lad (1 Sam 9:5-10). The servant lad acts independently from his immediate role as servant, and does not merely acquiesce to Saul's suggestion that they return home. The servant lad acts contrary to how the reader might perceive his role initially; a silent, subservient helper. By way of contrast, Nahash is portrayed as the threatening antagonist of the narrative, to act as a foil to Saul's salvific figure, and does not move away or aside from this construction or the expectation of the reader. Also, the name of this antagonist literally means "snake", and those who bear such

[74] Ibid, 102.

titles hardly need a thorough examination of their character in order for the reader to "understand" them and their role in the story.[75]

The demand of this antipathetic figure is just as malignant as his immediate construction. The people of Jabesh-gilead state they will "come out" to Nahash (thereby removing the lengthy and resource-consuming action of besieging) if he allows them a reprieve to seek out one to save them (1 Sam 11:2-3). Nahash allows this reprieve under the condition that once the allotted time of seven days has passed and if none come forward, he will pluck out the right eye of each inhabitant (1 Sam 11:2b, 3b). The mutilation of captives was a familiar practice, and the gouging of the right eye would have impaired the ability to fight as the left was mostly covered up by the raised shield in battle.[76] The previous episode depicted Samuel as a seer (1 Sam 9:11), and his call highlighted his visionary capacities at a time when Eli's eyes had grown dim (1 Sam 3:2). Yet it is interesting to note the contrasting narratives about loss of eyesight at the beginning and ending of the Israelite monarchy. As Israel's first king, Saul successfully protects some Israelites from having their right eyes gouged out by a foreign enemy king. However, the last Israelite king, Zedekiah, has both his own eyes put out by a foreign enemy king, Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kgs 25:7). The importance of the ability to 'see' correctly is underpinned by God later in the narrative, when he admonishes Samuel for immediately assuming Eliab's suitability as king based purely on looking upon the man's outward appearance (1 Sam 16:7). Regardless, the mutilation of the body would be regarded as shameful or a disgrace: "and thus make it a disgrace upon all Israel" (1 Sam 11:2). Nahash's response to the people's request for a reprieve may be sarcastic or taking the proverbial, yet the people of Jabesh-gilead counter his rebuff earnestly by asking for a period of time to find a saviour (1 Sam 11:3). There is a certain degree of irony present here: in the Judges episode it is Jabesh-gilead who fail to answer a summons to arms, yet at this juncture they hope for an answer to their own call. Yet it is Nahash's cruel terms of respite that may be his undoing.

It is not just Jabesh-gilead that will be brought to shame but the whole nation of Israel: "On this condition I will make a covenant with you; that I gouge out all your right

[75] Ibid, 103. Consider the action of Nahash in his mutilation of his enemies and that of Adoni-Bezek, who had the thumbs and big toes cut off from the kings whom he had conquered, and who is defeated himself and treated in a like manner (Judg 1:6-7). In a similar way, Gideon's Midianite adversaries in Judg 7:25 bear the zoological names of Oreb ("crow") and Zeeb ("wolf").
[76] Alter, *The David Story*, 60. Cf. Josephus, *A.J.* 6.70.

eyes, and thus make it a disgrace upon all Israel" (1 Sam 11:2). The entire Israelite community is involved in this moment, and so an attack on one part of this communal 'body' necessitates an attack on the whole. This could be considered an extension of the grotesque body coming under attack by Nahash, in which the "object can transgress not only its quantitative but also its qualitative limits, [to] outgrow itself and be fused with other objects".[77] The community of Jabesh-gilead are part of a wider collective of Israel, and it is this mass of physical parts that has come under attack. The renewal of the community in its new leader, Saul, is at stake, and the loss of a portion of this amalgamated body would undermine not only his authority but call into question his fundamental ability to save the people from their enemies. Yet while this is a far-reaching threat against the collective body, it is also the moment in which the rifts between tribes and borders is healed. The reaction of Saul in seeking to save this city stands in opposition to the dominant concept of the ANE king as recounted by Samuel (1 Sam 8:10-18) in the monarch's concern for the people, yet acquiesces to the central desire of the people which is reflective of this ANE image of the king within the consciousness of the people, one that leads and protects the community. It is this positive facet of the king's role that is being promoted and utilised by God in his own construction of kingship, enveloping the people's desire within the divine action.

The gouging out of the eye here threatened by Nahash is the destruction of the individual body part, with the eye expressing self-sufficient human life. Yet, instead, the threat posed to this body part and the resulting country-wide response re-orientates the community of Jabesh-gilead back into these cosmic images of a body that seeks to move beyond itself and out into the world.[78] The individual community of Jabesh-gilead goes beyond its own confines and out into the world to seek salvation. Yet the rebuttal of Nahash is unpleasant, and a salvific action is necessitated. Even without the additional Qumran fragment which details the actions of Nahash and his army up until this point, this isolated demand is enough to solidify his characterisation as the antagonist and the villain of the piece who must be overcome. There is a certain folkloristic simplicity to the establishment of the characters or players in this portion of the story, structured as a "straightforward narrative of deliverance in which the crisis produces the hero much as in the stories of

[77] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 308.
[78] Dentith, *Bakhtinian Thought*, 226.

deliverance in the books of Judges".[79] Nahash is the 'bad guy', while Jabesh-gilead may be considered the damsel in distress who must be rescued, and so all that is needed is a hero!

The messengers from Jabesh-gilead come to Gibeah of Saul, where the news of what has happened is reported to the city of Gibeah. Yet the news is not brought directly to Saul, which seems odd considering he is the apparent king of Israel at this point. This pastoral setting in which Saul is witnessed sets up that Saul is not yet being positioned above the people, still remaining within the collective of the community. It is the people who are informed first, and they weep aloud at the news (1 Sam 11:3-4). Much like at the crescendo of the previous chapter (1 Sam 10:21), Saul is nowhere to be seen. Saul previously had hidden himself amongst the baggage at Mizpah, and at Gibeah he is "coming from the field behind the oxen" (1 Sam 11:5).[80] Such activity in an agricultural setting has resonances with other biblical heroes. Samuel later summons David to his anointing from the fields where he is minding sheep (1 Sam 16:11), and thereafter the divine breath or spirit rushes on him (1 Sam 16:13). Elijah also calls Elisha as a prophet while he is following the oxen (1 Kgs 19:19). The folkloristic simplicity of the hero and newly minted king of Israel ploughing a field is heart-warming. Samuel's grand warnings of the evils of that a king will do seem unrealised at this juncture. Saul has not taken the best of the fields or vineyards for his own (1 Sam 8:14), and is instead tending his own land, thus denouncing the perception of the king as living extravagantly and aside from the people. The text employs the spatial perspective of a sequential survey of characters before settling on the "man of the hour", Saul (1 Sam 11:1, 4-5).[81]

The narrative perspective 'pans' across from the citizens of Gibeah bewailing the fate of Jabesh-gilead to focus on Saul who is "the best hope for the messengers, despite his present occupation".[82] Saul inquires as to the people's despair, with a tone of near-exasperation; "What [has happened] to the people that they weep?" (1 Sam 11:5). In folk tales, a hero is often depicted as the one who rescues individuals or groups who are in distress or weeping. From the outset of this narrative sequence of establishing a kingship in Israel Saul has been its unwitting and predominantly unwilling participant: pushed from

[79] Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 47.
[80] Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 104.
[81] Yamasaki, *Perspective Criticism*, 31.
[82] Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 104.

his home to Ramah, made king by Samuel in secret, whipped into a prophetic frenzy, interrogated by his uncle, and (literally) dragged into being king. Even in the simple act of agriculture, the young man cannot find a reprieve from the pestering of his fellow people!

The news of Jabesh-gilead is reported finally to Saul, and immediately the 'breath' of God re-enters the narrative stage: "And the breath of God rushed upon Saul when he heard these words, and his anger was greatly kindled" (1 Sam 11: 6). The presence of this 'breath' of God has already affected Saul greatly, having brought him to a state of non-recognition by those who knew him (1 Sam 10:10-11). The divine breath exists as an "external phenomenon that has a contiguous or metonymic relation to the person".[83] Saul is again brought into a state quite different by this external divine force, from his usual 'low key' demeanour, with his fervent, emotional reaction to the plight of the people of Jabesh-gilead. The psychological perspective is depicted here, as the reader is given an inside view into Saul with the description of his emotional state (1 Sam 11:6).[84] There seems a contradiction between Saul's uncertainty and fear, and yet there occurs this outburst of fervent emotion. The expression of a more heroic nature occurring within Saul is typical of the previous Judges narrative, where Samson had been imbued with the divine breath or spirit and was able to defeat any foe (Judg 14:6, 19; 15:14). This self-contradiction, here between Saul's previous nature and his newly-acquired determination, "is the clown's most significant feature. Whatever predicate we use to describe him, the opposite can also be said, with equal right".[85] The force of the supernatural or unusual, as an element within the Menippean satire and carnival, is utilised to support the testing out of an ideological impression which is thus embodied. It is the "testing of an idea [rather than] the testing of a particular human character" that is the central activity.[86] It is not Saul as a *man* or a character that is being tested but rather the *ideology* which he embodies as the clown-king that is being tested out by the narrative. The figure of the clown-king "cannot be taken literally" as he stands, and so as he embodies this socio-political outlook as a "reflection of some other's mode of being – and even then not a direct reflection" which is being tested.[87]

[83] Carol A. Newsom, "In Search of Cultural Models for Divine Spirit and Human Bodies", *VT* 70 (2020), 104-123, here 107.
[84] Yamasaki, *Perspective Criticism*, 39.
[85] Zucker, "The Clown as the Lord of Disorder", 77.
[86] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 114.
[87] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 159.

The seizing of Saul by this 'breath' from God brings on a kind of "berserker spirit [and] ignites him with eagerness to do battle".[88] The presence of the cosmic terror has become less terrible to the Israelites, and more recognisable through its interaction with Saul. The previous interaction between God's 'breath' and Saul resulted in a frenzied display that left onlookers puzzled and Saul beating a retreat. By contrast here, the contact becomes collaborative and functional. The cosmic terror is working in and with his clown-king, his primary champion of the carnival, to bring about and maintain the unity of the Israelite people. Saul's body is not truly his own, being open and essentially a collective space wherein Saul acts for the people and God is able to act within the community. It is also provides a moment in which the figure of God may be posited as undermining the static and removed nature of other ANE deities. The anger displayed here may be reminiscent of the future paranoid madness that grips Saul when he is abandoned by this same spirit (1 Sam 16:14, 23; 18:10), but at this juncture it enables Saul to move beyond himself and to become a monarchic figurehead.

At the appearance of this divine 'breath', Saul is seized and he dismembers a "yoke of oxen" to be given to the messengers as a communication to the other tribes to come out alongside Saul (and Samuel) for battle (1 Sam 11:7). The violent 'care packages' Saul sends out give the other tribes a shocking ultimatum; come out or else![89] The action itself seems ironic, given the young man's previous concern for donkeys.[90] The people have little choice in this regard and must fight alongside their newly selected king, and Saul may thus be seen an instituting a kind of military conscription.[91] The dismemberment of the oxen recalls the violent imagery utilised in Judges; the concubine is dismembered as a call to arms against Benjamin (Judg 19:29-30), which Jabesh-gilead ignored at their own peril. The situation is thus reversed here; if the other tribes fail to come to the aid of Jabesh-gilead then they will be undone. The action here may be seen as less of Saul 'throwing his weight around', and perhaps more as Saul attempting to reunify the tribes by "setting right the ghastly civil war" depicted in the Judges narrative.[92] Saul intervenes to draw the people together, acting

[88] Alter, *The David Story*, 61.
[89] Nahash wished to cut a treaty with Jabesh-gilead, using a covenant ritual whereby anyone who broke the treaty would be cut into pieces like the animals used in the ratification ceremony (Jer 34:18-20). By dismembering the oxen, Saul graphically illustrates the threatened result of Nahash's takeover of the city. Here we see how Nahash's threat of violence leads to Saul's violent response.
[90] Dell, "Incongruity in the Story of Saul in 1 Samuel 9-15", 54.
[91] Alter, *The David Story*, 62.
[92] Ibid.

amongst the community rather than being set apart. It is not truly about the actions of one man but rather the collective safety and renewal of the whole community.

The restoration of tribal fraternity may have been a moving rationale behind the people's mobilisation, yet the receipt of hacked apart cow parts and threats of further dismemberment also has a certain rallying effect. This may be why the "dread of the LORD" comes upon the people (1 Sam 11:7), yet they still assemble as one unit together: "Saul's words result in a remarkable show of unity…unity among people as they march as one man".[93] The depiction of Saul dismembering the oxen with which he had been ploughing the field offers a symbolic destruction of another sort; that of Saul's destruction of his previous duties, with the death of one form of life (both literal and figurative) in favour of another. This action is comparable to Elisha's sacrificing of his oxen and burning the wooden yokes when he answers Elijah's prophetic call (1 Kgs 19:21). From this point onward in the narrative, Saul will not return home in this manner and will not engage in pastoral work again.[94] The 'breath' of God has fundamentally changed Saul into a 'man of action', violent as that action may be. The transformation of Saul at this juncture denotes the king as being a sort of dynamic vessel rather than just the human equivalent of a stately hood ornament.

The tearing asunder of the oxen also provides a symbolic reference to the carnivalesque action of feasting. The oxen are dismembered, providing meat to be distributed among the people, though here the animal parts are not to be eaten but rather to be sent out as a message to the tribes. The meat serves to act as a warning-cum-rallying cry to the other tribes, yet the division and sharing of food products among various factions of persons is unmistakeable. The meat is torn asunder by the hands of Saul just as it would be ripped apart in the gaping maw, and it is as a result of this symbolic destruction of the oxen that the people do come together as one unit. The ripped-apart oxen is thus ironically a triumphant and forceful symbol of the unity of the Israelite community, and thus the allusion to the feasting imagery here is the "potentiality of a new beginning instead of the abstract and bare ending".[95]

[93] Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 105.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 283.

Through the interaction with the 'breath' of God, Saul becomes a far more commanding and autonomous figure than previously depicted, showing both the dynamic nature and necessity of God's presence for the renewal of the community. As previously with Saul's prophetic display and guidance by the 'breath' of God, "the purpose of this unction with the spirit is to manifest Yahweh's intent to enthrone Saul".[96] There is no sense of Samuel or any other character having to 'hand-hold' Saul through this moment of action, as God or an essence of the Deity is leading the newly-made king. Saul shows a degree of respect toward Samuel by mentioning the prophet in his call to arms (1 Sam 11:7), yet "he acts at his own discretion" for the first time in the narrative thus far.[97] There is no inspiring interaction recounted other than that between God's spirit and Saul himself. Saul musters the people, from both Israel and Judah, and manages to unify the people without input from Samuel at all. Samuel is only mentioned in passing by Saul as being part of this engagement against Nahash and the Ammonites, stating the people are to fight with "Saul and Samuel" (1 Sam 11:7). The syntactic prominence in this statement is given to Saul as his name is given first within this particular phrase as well as Saul being mentioned a greater amount of times as compared to Samuel, and thus the reader is encouraged to view Saul as the "leader" of this rescue mission.[98] Samuel is moved into a subordinated role, much as the institution of judges has been subordinated in favour of kingship.

To even bother mentioning Samuel seems trivial, but may have been done to appease some who may still not have accepted Saul as king, and it seems more of a formality to mention him, perhaps acting as a sideward glance for those who are still unconvinced.[99] The importance here for the carnival is the successful activity of the clown-king to be debased in order to unify the people; he must be built up in order for him to be torn down later by the same people who have placed him on a lofty perch.[100] This action of building up to tear down is not outright negation of the action of the clown-king, but retains a "secondary and positive level of meaning'" to his coalescing actions.[101] The darker connotations of Saul's actions and the sadness which tinges his future exploits as the narrative progresses do not undermine the primary rejuvenating deeds of which Saul is part

[96] Ralph Hawkins, 'The First Glimpse of Saul and His Subsequent Transformation', *BBR* 22.3 (2012), 353-362, here 359.
[97] Miscall, *1 Samuel*, 66.
[98] Yamasaki, *Perspective Criticism*, 23-25.
[99] Alter, *The David Story*, 62.
[100] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 197.
[101] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 126.

due to his role as clown-king. Saul as this clownish figure should be considered as a step or portion of this parade cycle, who is important for the progression of this procession. Though the narrative may later take a turn into a "dark[er] carnival" the eventual and concluding situation is one in which the unification and renewal of the people occurs.[102] The figure of Saul as the clown-king is set to rebuke the ANE concept of a king in order to establish God's vision of how this could happen.

The seven-day reprieve must have come to a close for the people of Jabesh-gilead as they are instructed by the messengers sent by Saul to inform Nahash they will come out and allow him to do what seems right to him (1 Sam 11:9-10). The temporal setting is established for the reader with the mention of "tomorrow" (1 Sam 11:9-10) as a sequential marker for the rescue of Jabesh-gilead. This mention of a timeframe may not wholly set up a complete temporal framework but establishes the immediacy of the military action.[103] A similar time interval is established with Saul earlier in the narrative, most significantly following Saul's anointing by Samuel (1 Sam 10:7). If Nahash had any further comments, terms, or comebacks they are not reported in the narrative as on the next day Saul gathers and organises the Israelites and utterly destroys the Ammonites so that the survivors "were scattered so that no two of them remained together" (1 Sam 11:11). The narrated report of this military success by Saul is incongruous to the narrative time which would have been necessary for its completion. This 'fast-forwarding' of the story may be purposeful, as it is not exactly the salvific action and victory which is central but rather the unity of the people against the Ammonite threat as well as Saul proving his ability to be more than uninterested in the affairs of this narrative world.

The people then subsequently request that the worthless men be brought forward and killed for their dissenting words against Saul (1 Sam 11:12). The request is made to Samuel here yet (in the MT) it is Saul who speaks, informing the people that "not a man shall be put to death this day, for today the Lord has brought about salvation in Israel" (1 Sam 11:13). This magnanimity "strikes a positive note at the beginning of his [Saul's] reign".[104] The commanding action is thoroughly removed from Samuel by Saul, seeming

[102] Linda J. Holland-Toll, "Bakhtin's Carnival Reversed: *The Shining* as Dark Carnival", *Journal of Popular Culture* 33.2 (1999), 131-146, here 134. Holland-Toll discusses the carnival in light of Stephen King's *The Shining*, and poses the question of when the carnival is not a site for the "working out of a new relationship between individuals", as to whether the space remains carnivalesque or not.
[103] Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 145.
[104] Alter, *The David Story*, 63.

to almost cut across the prophet to respond to the people, and whose demeanour has changed from violent to merciful. This change of tone "squares with the general tenor of the narrative: Saul displays good leadership, but it is God's enabling spirit that ultimately procures the victory, and hence Saul shows wisdom in this acknowledgement".[105] This is the pinnacle of Saul's positive activity as the clown-king, undermining the self-congratulatory nature of ANE kings. For example: the Egyptian king is portrayed as being a superhuman figure who does not need any assistance in battle as "no enemy dares threaten him".[106]

The people return to another carnival marketplace of Gilgal in order to confirm Saul as king at the behest of Samuel, who has only one moment of spoken action within this whole narrative segment (1 Sam 11:14). The two default settings for Samuel when confronted with his authority being disturbed is to either dismiss the people en-masse (cf. 1 Sam 8:22) or to call a meeting (cf. 1 Sam 7:5; 9:22; 10:17). Here, the prophet calls a meeting (1 Sam 11:15). This may be Samuel bringing the people and the situation back onto familiar territory for him, yet the activity of the people as a whole is noticeable. It is at Gilgal that the institution of monarchy is given a certain ratification through ceremony, where it "is not yet depersonalised, nor is it formalised", remaining in an inchoate condition.[107] Once offerings have been made for this victory having come about, "Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly" (1 Sam 11:15). It is Saul and the people who rejoice at this event, yet in the MT (unlike the LXX0 Samuel is described as not partaking. God has been definitively included in the celebrations by Saul's earlier pronouncement (1 Sam 11:13); the cosmic terror is thus less terrible and becoming more included in the activity of the community. The celebration of the victory occurs in a carnivalesque gathering where animals are sacrificed joyfully, thus giving a happy outcome to Saul's earlier slaughter of his oxen.

The community is brought together in joy to solidify the choice of the clown-king, returning to the earlier position of a communal space (previously Mizpah). It is within this specialised carnivalesque arena that the city square becomes important as the carnival "belongs to the whole people, it is universal, everyone must participate in its familiar

[105] Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 107.
[106] Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, 8.
[107] Sara Kipfer and Jeremy M. Hutton. 'The Book of Samuel and Its Response to Monarchy – An Introduction', in *The Book of Samuel and Its Response to Monarchy,* eds. Sara Kipfer and Jeremy M. Hutton (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2021), 11-23, here 15.

contact", even Samuel as it is he who convenes the gathering.[108] It is within this scope that the restorative action for the community takes place. If the carnival witnessed within this narrative has failed to "move on to [become] genuinely restorative and celebrative, then it becomes a real question whether it still remains in the domain of comedy".[109] Saul, God, and the Israelite community are brought together, and thereby attain the ultimate goal of the carnival with the reintegration of these disparate figures into the social group which they properly belong to.[110] This conclusion of Saul's establishment as king may be considered as the advent of a second life for the people. The process of change which may eventually lead to the renewal of the community and the reorientation of God within this community has been strengthened through the survival of the collective body.[111]

4.4 - God: The Cosmic Terror and the Unpredictable Spirit:

The previous portrayal of God in the narrative scope with Saul's initial 'crowning' and anointing was that of the gay monster; the cosmic terror working through the unpredictable spirit within the community, an unknowable and frightening entity that acts for and within the community. This gay monster denotes an entity which was once terrifying, but through its incorporation with the carnival it receives a more comical or approachable veneer.[112] This figure, portrayed in the 'character' of God, encompasses the genuine fear and unfathomability associated with the cosmic terror that would normally threaten to stagnate the community, paired with an alternative vision of this entity as one that retains a certain human essence and seeks to immerse itself within the community. A further element of the Deity's unfathomability, touched upon in the previous chapter, is that of the unpredictable spirit of God (1 Sam 10:10). This spirit comes further to the fore in this section of the narrative, with God's voice and words acting as the greatest expression of the Deity's presence in this narrative and within the community. Unlike some parts of the story of Saul and David, the Deity is frequently mentioned in this episode.

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[108] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,* 128.

[109] Exum and Whedbee, "Isaac, Samson, and Saul", 121. Exum and Whedbee here denote Saul as being a tragic figure and therefore non-comedic. Yet the question for present purposes here is not whether he is truly comedic in the immediate sense of the word, but rather if he is a carnivalesque figure which he is. Also the subjectivity of humour and comedy plays a significant role in the divergent reactions regarding the comedic nature of biblical texts (Jackson, *Comedy and Feminist Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible*, 6).

[110] Ibid, 122.

[111] Vice, *Introducing Bakhtin,* 153.

[112] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 237.

To speak of God's 'presence' in this particular narrative segment might conjure images of a corporeal entity which is not the case. Rather it is God's words and speech, much like in the previous chapter, that constitutes the initial foray of the Deity amongst the people and into the world. God's words are represented within Samuel's speech at the beginning of the narrative piece following Saul's anointing by Samuel: "So says the LORD, God of Israel: 'I myself brought up Israel from Egypt, and I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all the kingdoms oppressing you. But today you yourselves have rejected your God, who himself saves you from all your troubles and distresses. You have said, 'No, but you are to place a king over us'. Now present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and your clans" (1 Sam 10:18-19). This is a moment of dialogism, using the represented language of one within another's words. This action is reflected in the subsuming by Samuel of God's rhetoric into the prophet's own speech, thereby retaining two forms of speech within the one utterance. It is at this moment that Samuel "takes over the speech or utterance of [God], [creating] at least two centres to consider: the original utterance and the new use of it".[113]

Samuel is echoing the words used earlier in the narrative, spoken between Deity and prophet regarding the people's request for a king (1 Sam 8:8). Samuel has taken this utterance of God and has directly appropriated the material to his own words, ending in a "complete merging of voices" by these two characters. It is difficult to assess where Samuel's words and intentions begin and God's end within this piece of speech.[114] The blending of these two elements of dialogue (often found in proleptic speeches) seems harmonious enough; God's repeated words here reflect Samuel's own disgruntlement with the installation of this new institution of kingship. Samuel has taken to heart this earlier declaration by the Deity, has clung to this, and replicates this in his own speech to provide a stronger foundation for his own admonishment. The replication done by Samuel here is not erroneous or deceptive; God did expound such words.

Yet it is God's subsequent *actions* that undermine these repeated words by Samuel. God's actions – the pressing of Samuel toward Saul (1 Sam 9:17), God giving Saul "another heart" (1 Sam 10:9), the interaction of God's spirit with Saul in a tangible and visual

[113] Green, *Mikhail Bakhtin and Biblical Scholarship*, 48. Within the narrative books, the representing of this speech is usually done by the narrator, but here Samuel retains the words of God within his own speech. For further discussion on the notion of speech characteristics and their dialogic use, see: Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 208-237.
[114] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 190.

manner in the young man's prophetic action (1 Sam 10:10-13) – would display an entity actively seeking the fulfilment of the kingship rather one still resentful of it. It is through actions that "individuals are disclosed…no less than through their words".[115] Samuel is replicating the speech of God's previous mind-set at the onset of this narrative drive, rather than that of the current situation. An old dog cannot be taught new tricks, and Samuel cannot get used to this change of office. Samuel clings to custom and the previous state of things, unable to imagine or accept anything different to what he has grown accustomed to, and remains "without one ray of humour and [is] persuaded that [God] too must be without one".[116] Samuel claims the words of God as his own, utilising them within his own speech, yet "every order claims to be from God, but it is never possible to uphold this claim in an absolute sense".[117]

While this misalignment of God's words versus that of God's actions undermines Samuel's renewed condemnation of the people, it highlights the inscrutable nature of the Deity that is not elucidated nor glimpsed at even by Samuel. Within this figure of God as the cosmic terror of this carnivalised space, "enigmatic characteristics found in complex human characters" may be posited.[118] God, as the cosmic terror, seeks presence and incorporation within the "body" of the people, and a reorientation of the dynamics of the community in its forms of governance is a practical way for this to come to fruition. It is evident that the words of the people have generated a change in perspective for the Deity, with this "human response [contributing] in a genuine way to the shaping of the future of both God and Israel – indeed, the world as well".[119]

God's voice is subsequently given its own space to be heard, divorced from Samuel's own oral platform. Within the greater volume of human knowledge or understanding about God, the Deity "primarily exist in speech about God" yet here God exists within his own dialogue and his own actions within the world.[120] This anthropomorphism of God's presence is given as a 'voice' that projects itself into the narrative. This construction of God's presence helps to provide information or to organise

[115] Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 77.
[116] George Santayana, "The Comic Mask and Carnival", in *Comedy: Meaning and Form*, ed. Robert W. Corrigan, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1981), 52-57, here 56.
[117] Zucker, "The Clown as the Lord of Disorder", 86.
[118] Gunn and Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible*, 85.
[119] Terence E. Fretheim, *The Suffering of God: An Old Testament Perspective* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2009), 49.
[120] Talstra, "What You See Is What You Get", 170.

the image of God's interaction with the people, utilising the basic pattern of the body or a disembodied voice in order to gain insight into God.[121] The unknown must be related to something recognisable, and in this instance a voice enters amongst the people, wherein the cosmic terror of God is imbued with human characteristics in order for him to become, if not knowable, than at least recognisable to the people. As Saul is selected by lot to be king, the people search for him yet he does not seem to have come to Mizpah. The people enquire of God as to whether Saul came at all: "They asked again of the LORD: 'Did the man yet come here?' And the LORD said: 'Look, he has hidden himself among the baggage" (1 Sam 10:22). The people's question itself is possibly rhetorical; of course the man is there, otherwise he would not have been chosen. This moment of God's words irrupting into the narrative space is also a comedic moment, God acting almost as a disgruntled coach on the edge of the pitch instructing his players as where to move next. There is a sort of pantomime-like quality to this exchange between the two, with the Deity bursting into the narrative space to interact with the people.

Here within the narrative, the boundary between the horizontally based community and the vertically moving God are removed, wherein "all distance…is suspended, and a special carnival category goes into effect: free and familiar contact between" both parties.[122] A contrast exists between the image of God's familiar contact with the Israelite community and the removed state of the ANE gods of neighbouring nations. Between Deity and people, the hierarchal structures have been suspended as the people reach out to God in a more familiar and rhetorical manner, and God responds in a similar, casual fashion. The two parties – community and Deity – exist on two different 'planes' of earth and above respectively. Yet if a true, free relationship is to occur, "for meaningful and substantive communication to take place, some interchange between these areas must be possible".[123] It is within this carnivalised space that a sense of this greater divine 'plan' may be glimpsed; the familiar and united contact between the community and God through the individual of the king, but a different form or image of king. Even here, where the act of hiding may be deemed as a failure on the part of Saul or as a negative, the comical bent to the scenario results in this free communication between the two parties. What is noticeable here is that Samuel is not needed as an intermediary as far as the narrative recollects, with the

[121] Smith, *How Human is God?* 6-7.
[122] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 123.
[123] Samuel E. Balentine, *Prayer in the Hebrew Bible: The Drama of Divine-Human Dialogue* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 39.

assembled people and God communicating well on their own, and utilising the person of the clown-king as a point of contact or a form towards which their familiar speech may be directed and in which it may even meet.

God's voice and words are supplemented by God's activity directly within the community and with the world in a tangible manner: "Saul also went to his house, at Gibeah. The valiant men, whose hearts God touched, went with him. But worthless men said: 'How will this one save us?' They despised him and did not bring him a tribute. But he held his peace" (1 Sam 10:26-27). There is a definite distinction being made between the valiant men whom God has affected as opposed to those worthless men whom God has not "touched".[124] The distinction is made between those who have accepted Saul as king and those who are yet to be convinced of his abilities or prowess as a leader. The depiction of God having affected those who follow or accept Saul as king may denote the Deity's acceptance of the institution of kingship, or even recognition by God of the need for Saul to have valiant men surrounding him, and undermines Samuel's warning (1 Sam 8:10-18) about the king taking the best men. The mocking done by the worthless men is not a carnivalised form of speech as there is no sense of camaraderie or positivity emanating from this pattern of speech. It is not the mocking of the ANE conception of the role, embodied in the man, but the role in its totality. Instead, their negative words serve as a narrative 'springboard' for Saul to prove himself in active, military engagement.

The unpredictable breath or spirit of God re-enters the narrative space, existing as an extension of this interactive desire of God, when following Saul's selection by the people at Mizpah, this divine spirit affects Saul. This image of the breath of spirit from God 'rushing' upon Saul occurs previously, and later, being a keyword in the stories of Samson and David as well as Saul (Judg 14:6, 19; 15:14; 1 Sam 10:10; 11:6; 16:13; 18:10). The report of the siege against the people of Jabesh-gilead by Nahash the Ammonite is brought to Saul, along with the details of the mutilation that will be done to them if a saviour fails to appear for the city. As the report is given to Saul, the unpredictable spirit affects Saul on a primal level: "And the breath of God rushed upon Saul when he heard these words, and his anger was greatly kindled. He took a yoke of oxen, and cut them in pieces and sent them

[124] Allusions can be made to Samuel as possibly being one of those worthless men as even though he has followed God's directive and helped establish the kingship for the people, his resentment toward the institution is evident. Yet Samuel later holds a ceremony to renew the kingship (1 Sam 11:14), and then his farewell speech is recounted which is full of warnings regarding the monarchy (1 Sam 12:12-15).

into all the territory of Israel by the hand of messengers, saying: 'Whoever does not go out to fight after Saul and Samuel, so shall it be done to his oxen!' Then the dread of the LORD fell upon the people, and they came out as one man" (1 Sam 11:6-7). This is the second time in the narrative thus far that such an entity from God or part of God has directly entered the narrative space and affected characters in a visible and obvious way (cf. Saul's prophetic activity - 1 Sam 10:10-13). Once again, it is Saul's body that is the space in which God participates in the world, as it is within the human body that "the material components of the universe disclose…their true nature and highest potentialities".[125] In a Bakhtinian perspective, the 'arena' of Saul's corporeal form acts as the base from which God may interact with the world in a tangible and 'real' manner, with this 'breath' from God substantially affecting Saul. Saul's induced anger at the news brought to him about Jabesh-gilead may mirror God's own rage at the situation, and it is within Saul's body that this emotional reaction is 'worked out'.

The 'working out' of this emotional reaction results in the violent rending of the oxen Saul had been ploughing the field with (1 Sam 11:7). Is this a commanding display or a violent, berserk response deprived of all inhibition? Perhaps neither. Like the tearing of garments upon hearing of a death, this display performed by Saul is the most basic and primal response to such negative news as can be imagined, a crude expression of emotion which is almost pure in its simplicity.[126] The cosmic terror is neither a 'good' nor 'bad' entity in this moment, and is instead possibly reduced to its simple theme within the body of Saul: "When abstracted from our own presence and interests, everything that can be found or imagined is reduced to a mere essence, an ideal theme picked out of the infinite, something harmless, marvellous, and pure, like a musical rhythm or geometrical design".[127] When the action of tearing asunder the oxen and their being sent throughout the territories of Israel in a threatening call to arms is looked at in isolation, it appears negative, violent, and counter-productive to the coalescing action of God. Yet, looking at these actions in their simplest and singular forms, as an expression of emotion and a call to support, perhaps there is "nothing tragic or sad, but rather something joyful, hearty, and merry" existing

[125] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 366.
[126] The tearing of clothes can signify "mourning and sorrow" (e.g. Job 1:20), as well as symbolising a "drastic change" in one's circumstances, with the shedding of one form for another (e.g. 1 Sam 15:27-28; 2 Sam 13:18-19) (cf. Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 52).
[127] Santayana, "The Comic Mask and Carnival", 55.

within these images as they have a rallying effect as the whole community comes together to aid another.[128]

The destructive and violent actions of Saul here also result in his appearing as a more commanding presence within the narrative, capable of becoming the salvific figure required (1 Sam 11:8-11). This eccentricity of activity is "a special category of the carnival sense of the world, organically connected with the category of familiar contact; it permits – in concretely sensuous form – the latent sides of human [and divine] nature to reveal and express themselves".[129] Wrath, anger, and despair are allowed to exist in this carnival space, and are shared by both parties, becoming a communal sense of grief rather than an isolated sense of despair. It becomes a fusing rather than a segregating of persons. The action of the 'breath' of God within Saul here has similar reactions as previously depicted; Saul is whipped into an ecstatic state, yet here the people are not confused by what is perceived and instead muster together to save the people of Jabesh-gilead, thereby 'healing' the breach caused by the civil war recounted in the Judges narrative (cf. Judg 19-21). The problematic and rupturing conclusion of the Judges narrative has been undone when the community is brought together in one collective body under God and his form of kingship.

The jubilation of the people and Saul at the rescuing of Jabesh-gilead can be shared by God, and indeed the Deity is included in this celebration not only by Saul's words (1 Sam 11:13), but also by the people within the celebration itself: "There they sacrificed peace offerings before the LORD, and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly" (1 Sam 11:13). This rejoicing is the result of the previous violent display, becoming the 'laughing' aspect of the death of the oxen as well as the destruction of the attacking Ammonites (1 Sam 11:11), turning into a carnivalesque display as "everything is reborn and renewed through death".[130] This narrative is capable of revelling in a "profoundly ambivalent laughter, a divine and human laughter that by turns is both mocking and joyous, subversive and celebrative, and finally a laughter that results in an exuberant and transformative comic vision".[131]

The rift between human communities is restored through such ambivalent laughter, but also the distance between Deity and people is lessened by this interaction. The cosmic

[128] Ibid.
[129] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,* 123.
[130] Ibid, 127.
[131] Whedbee, *The Bible and the Comic Vision*, 4-5.

terror, though encouraging or causing such a violent reaction to occur, interacts with the world in the body of the clown-king. This is not done for some selfish benefit of God alone but rather for the renewal and growth of the community as a whole, alongside the Deity. God may thus act as the cosmic terror as well as the unpredictable, organising force that perpetuates renewal within the community, depending on the need of the people. God stands in opposition to other ANE gods due to the desire to interact with the people within the world and the genuine embedded nature of his position within the world – rather than above – the community. The futility of Samuel's previous condemnation of the people's request is thus shown to be the prophet's inability to accept that the world has changed, wherein the "universe [has changed] its hue like the chameleon, not at random but in a fashion which moral optics can determine".[132] The oscillation of God from unknowable terror to a more recognisable entity acting for and with the community displays the Deity as being the cosmic terror, striving toward the simplistic goal of integration with the community.

The presence of such violence within the activity of God is frightening in its changeability and changing force, yet by its fundamental nature it performs the function of uniting these disparate bodies. God, as the cosmic terror is not devoid of a sense of humour, as seen previously with the pantomime-like interaction between himself and the people (1 Sam 10:22), even if Samuel is without such a sense. It is this human sensibility that enables God to enter the community, able to reorientate his engagement with the people of Israel and the people to respond in a similar, familiar fashion. Thus whatever trials the community or God may have to face, the carnivalesque nature of the narrative ascends from such darkness and into a celebration and a promise of new life, one in which both parties are involved and drawn together in a vital and restorative manner.[133] It is through the community that God may find himself. The previous vertiginous swings of fortune and the mercurial tendencies of the Deity are no longer "conducive to the stability and continuity of national life".[134] Yet the development of the monarchy may allow for growth of both the people and Deity within this nation in this new form of leadership. God needs the community just as the community of Israel needs God, and it is through the divine activity recounted in the narrative for and with this community that the Deity may find a "secure

[132] Santayana, "The Comic Mask and Carnival", 56.
[133] Whedbee, *The Bible and the Comic Vision*, 7.
[134] Rosenberg, "1 and 2 Samuel", 126.

identity" rather than remaining isolated and separate from this communal and rejuvenated body.[135]

[135] Gunn and Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible*, 87.

CHAPTER 5: SAUL'S DECLINE AND DAVID'S RISE (1 SAM 12 - 2 SAM 5):

5.1 - Introduction:

The Books of Samuel lead into the Books of Kings, so both can be read as one, long cohesive piece which deals with the notion of monarchy in Israel. 1 and 2 Samuel is part of a "longer perspective in the Old Testament which situates the nation of Israel as a society formed within the wider ANE scene".[1] The Books of Samuel can thus be taken as a story which, though "shaped by Yahweh's presence, is still concerned with political events involving historical characters".[2] The primary considerations of 1 and 2 Samuel, in terms of historical content, are "kingship and [the] Davidic covenant", with the literature acting as a "testimony to explain these issues" of monarchy and Davidic longevity.[3] The notion of kingship and its implication for the community of Israel is at the core of considerations for the Samuel literature, and cannot truly be reduced to being simply pro-monarchic or anti-monarchic.[4] The stories of Saul and David are interconnected, though the history of David's rise has its own "independent footing" from the story of Saul so that David's legitimacy as a successor to Saul as king is "shown to have been completely lawful".[5] The "power of the younger over the elder" is a central theme to this narrative, as well as being an aspect of the carnivalesque in the death of the old in favour of the new, to promote prosperity and growth.[6] Yet the stories of Saul and David are involved with a consideration greater than that of power; they are dealing with the fundamental nature of how God relates to his community and how the people relate to their Deity.

The figure of the clown-king has thus far been established in the person of Saul; the elected and selected monarch of both God and people. The entity of God in these chapters has been that of the cosmic terror; the unfathomable great 'other' that is unconquerable. Yet it is through the very institution of kingship and through the person of the king that this unfathomable Deity transcends this definite and separate otherness, becoming enmeshed in

[1] Mary E. Mills, *Joshua to Kings: History, Story, Theology* (Edinburgh: Bloomsbury, 2016), 3.
[2] Firth, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 20.
[3] Ibid, 21.
[4] Long, *The Reign and Rejection of King Saul*, 180.
[5] McCarter, *I Samuel*, 27 and 28. McCarter theorises that the story of David as recounted in 1 and 2 Samuel is less concerned with the "defence of the Davidic dynasty" and more concerned with justifying David's succession (McCarter, *I Samuel*, 29).
[6] Kipfer and Hutton, "The Book of Samuel and Its Response to Monarchy", 16.

the corporeal and tactile world of the community. The genesis of the Samuel carnival atmosphere has begun in these initial chapters (1 Sam 9-11), being an alternative literary space in which the issues surrounding kingship may be worked out. The conclusion for this investigation will be the carnivalesque procession of the ark, organised by the second royal figure of David (2 Sam 6). The intervening chapters describe the gradual decline of the clown-king, Saul, and the simultaneous rise of his successor, David. These chapters include two noteworthy carnivalesque episodes, which will be looked at in greater detail (1 Sam 19:18-24; 24:1-7), as the smaller hints of the carnivalesque will be noted throughout the intervening chapters of the Samuel narrative from 1 Samuel 12 to 2 Samuel 5.

5.2 - Saul Undermined by Samuel (1 Sam 12-15):

The chapters of 1 Samuel immediately following Saul's military success in 1 Samuel 11 recount the almost immediate downslide of this newly-minted king. From the point of Saul's election as king by the people in 1 Samuel 10, Saul has been 'put to the test' and proven himself well once, with the defeat of Nahash and the rescue of Jabesh-gilead in 1 Samuel 11. Yet he does not do well in two subsequent instances. First, Saul offers burnt sacrifices before battle against the Philistines and without Samuel present to perform the ceremony (1 Sam 13). Then he nearly has to put his son, Jonathan, to death for the breaking of a seemingly ridiculous ban on eating, put in place by Saul; an oath to not consume any food until Saul's enemies have been dispatched (1 Sam 14). Yet Saul's most egregious insult (according to the narrator) was his inability to follow God's directive that the Amalekites and their king, Agag, be purged from the face of the earth (1 Sam 15:1-15).[7] For his failure to follow this command, Samuel informs Saul that God has rejected him from being king, and has already chosen a royal successor, a "neighbour" of Saul's, who is described as "better" than Saul (1 Sam 15:23b, 28; cf. 1 Sam 13:14). The subsequent chapters portray the introduction of this better neighbour; David (1 Sam 16), and his rise to prominence (1 Sam 17; 18:1-16, 30). With David's rise so Saul falls from sanity, as Saul is aware of the favour that has been removed from himself and bestowed upon David

[7] It is noteworthy that Saul spares the life of the "worthless men" (1 Sam 11:13), of his son Jonathan (1 Sam 14:45), and of the Amalekite king, Agag (1 Sam 15:20). It would seem mercy is a facet of Saul's character.

instead (1 Sam 18:12, 28).[8] Saul's jealousy of David (1 Sam 18:9) quickly develops into outright hostility and attempted murder (1 Sam 18:29; 19:11-17).

Despite his underwhelming nature of his person, his decline cannot detract from "Saul's essential greatness" as a literary character as well as the progenitor of the carnival in the Samuel narrative.[9] Samuel supposedly removes himself from the forefront of authority to make way for Saul, yet the aging prophet gathers the people together to petulantly chastise them once more and, in the process, seeming to venerate himself (1 Sam 12:1-3, 17).[10] The prophet's reaction to his forcible retirement is unsurprising. Samuel then calls upon God to create a divine 'light show' to punctuate his speech (1 Sam 12:18), whereat the fickle people immediately repent that they had ever asked for a king in the first place (1 Sam 12:19). Samuel informs the people that if they remain loyal to God then the Deity will "not cast away his people" (1 Sam 12:22). Yet if the people fail to uphold their vow of fidelity to the Lord, then God will annihilate both people and king (1 Sam 12:25). Saul does not utter a word throughout this diatribe by Samuel, and does not get any say in whether he will be held culpable for the actions of the people. Yet holding the people accountable or "restraining" them (1 Sam 9:17) is exactly what God had intended for him to do.[11] This sense is not something explicitly explained to Saul by either the prophet or the Deity, yet he is still expected to keep the people in line. The difficulty is compounded further by Samuel's words on the fates of both people and monarch being tied if the people fail to hold to their word. Regardless of the situation, Saul seems to be grasping the more unfortunate end of the stick! However, despite Samuel's angered posturing, the 'old way' of charismatic leadership of judges is gone and the people must "attach their hope to the only remaining provision for their welfare" being Samuel's prayers for the community, and Saul as their king (though this seems to have been forgotten or neglected by the aging prophet).[12]

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[8] The effect of the removal of God's presence or favour from Saul, and the presence of this "evil spirit" (1 Sam 16:14; 18:10) in its place will be explored. Saul's own paranoia pushes the king to plot against David and seek his murder. This action thus leads the narrative to the events of 1 Sam 19:18-24, describing prophesying/raving effect of God's spirit.

[9] Good, *Irony in the Old Testament,* 56.

[10] Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 111.

[11] When God first informs Samuel of his choice he refers to Saul as "the one anointed as ruler over" the people (1 Sam 10:1). Yet 1 Sam 9:17 has just described Saul's task with the verb - עצר – which has the sense of "restrain" or a nuance of staying one's hand.

[12] McCarter, *I Samuel*, 217.

The narrative jumps forward an unspecified amount of time (1 Sam 13:1), recapitulating Saul's reign in a few terse words (some of which are missing). The actual numerical reference here seems to be in the tradition of recounting a chronology for kings as seen in 2 Samuel 2:10, 2 Samuel 5:4-5, or 1 Kings 14:21. Yet the figures of Saul's reign up to this point in the narrative were perhaps either lost or not to hand at the time of compilation.[13] The first of Saul's affronts to God (or more specifically to Samuel) occurs at this point. Saul musters Israel against the Philistines, where Jonathan defeats a small contingent of the foreign invaders and the Philistines respond in force by setting a large force against the Israelites (1 Sam 13:3-5). The Israelites see this massive force set against them and are dismayed, disbanding and hiding in caves (1 Sam 13:6-7). Saul is in a difficult position; there stands an immense force against him, his army is becoming restless and anxious, and his prophet has yet to appear to offer sacrifices to God to ensure success in battle. Saul waits the appointed seven days for Samuel to arrive to offer sacrifices to the Lord and yet the prophet does not appear (1 Sam 13:8), and so Saul, unable to wait any longer given the circumstances, sees fit to commence the ceremony himself (1 Sam 13:9).[14] Just as Saul finishes presenting the sacrificial offerings, Samuel arrives (1 Sam 13:9-10). It seems that whatever venture the clown-king undertakes is doomed.

Despite the reasonable nature of Saul's actions (at least to a modern reader's perception), Samuel is unimpressed and condemns the king's disobedient actions. The prophet informs Saul that because of this, his kingdom will not continue and instead will be given to another who is of a similar mind as God (1 Sam 13:11, 13-14). Here the dethroning of the clown-king begins to be seen. It is strange that "although seven days waiting period had been mentioned before…there is no direct indication here…that Samuel is speaking Yahweh's word".[15] Samuel tells Saul that this transfer of power will occur as Saul had not kept what God had commanded him, but unless there is a huge narrative gap, God never specifically instructed Saul in matters of sacrifice. In fact, the Lord had said for Saul to "do whatever your hand finds to do" (1 Sam 10:7) and Saul did not neglect the Lord nor instruct his people to forgo the necessary ceremonies. It would seem that either God was waiting for an opportunity to oust Saul or Samuel seized on the chance to undermine Saul's authority publicly. While Saul is to be held accountable for not holding to God's

[13] Ibid, 223. According to Bodner (*1 Samuel*, 119), "this omission oddly foreshadows the rejection of Saul".
[14] The waiting time of seven days echoes 1 Sam 11:3, but the outcome here differs from Saul's victory over Nahash.
[15] Good, *Irony in the Old Testament*, 67.

command, so too must Samuel be criticised for "delivering his instructions in a deliberately confusing manner".[16] Hence the idea is implanted in Saul's mind that God had turned aside from him, which the monarch eventually turned into a self-fulfilling prophecy because of his own insecurities, as well as causing the reader to question the fairness of God's actions.[17] Samuel departs, leaving Saul with a small contingent of men to face this massive invading army, and far lighter in terms of money as the Israelites are forced to go to Philistine blacksmiths to sharpen their weapons for an enormous fee (1 Sam 13:15-23).

The next episode shows a tragicomic scene, where events happen behind the back of the clown-king. As a cruel pantomime, the audience can see what Saul's son is doing, but Saul himself finds out too late. Jonathan moves with a companion to investigate the Philistine force encamped against them, without informing Saul (1 Sam 14:1-3). Jonathan concocts a plan; he and his companion will reveal themselves to the Philistine garrison and if they are left alone then they will not move against the uncircumcised ones, but if they are heckled by them then Jonathan will know that God wants them to attack (1 Sam 14:8-9). Naturally, the Philistines insult and heckle the Israelites and Jonathan attacks with his companion, killing the Philistines posted there (1 Sam 14:8-12). Witnessing the commotion of battle, the hapless clown-king has the Israelites numbered and realises his son and another are not present (1 Sam 14:17). The Israelites, seeing Jonathan's success, want to enter into battle and the Philistines are routed (1 Sam 14:20-23). Saul lays an oath upon his forces that none can eat until the Philistines are utterly destroyed (1 Sam 14:24), an oath which seems unreasonable given an army tends to march on its stomach but also an edict which Jonathan was unaware of, and he eats some honey (1 Sam 14:27). Saul's unsuitability for his role as king is steadily becoming more apparent.

The Israelites defeat the Philistines once more yet the people are starving, and devour meat with blood still in it (1 Sam 14:32), thereby breaking Israel's dietary laws (Lev 19:26; Deut 12:23). Unfortunately, Jonathan's consumption of a small amount of honey (1 Sam 14:27) has led "to an orgy of gluttonous consumption of meat with blood".[18] The

[16] Edelman, *King Saul in the Historiography of Judah*, 79.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Alter, *The David Story*, 82. Jonathan's eating of the honey following his killing of the multitude of Philistines (1 Sam 14:8-12) recalls Samson's eating of the honey from the carcass of the lion which he kills with his own hands (Judg 14:6, 8-9). Both of these seem to have a certain carnivalesque 'flavour' to them, as the image of eating and feasting is juxtaposed against the violence and death both characters had engaged in, giving the "very taste of the defeated world, which had fed and would feed" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 285).

tearing apart and devouring of the bloodied meat by the people appears as a carnivalesque feasting scene, wherein "the kitchen and the battle meet and cross each other in the image of the rent body" as the people consume the food and Saul is subsequently ridiculed for his foolish oath of fasting before a battle (1 Sam 14:25-26).[19] Saul attempts to fix this affront by having the people sacrifice oxen and calves to the Lord (1 Sam 14:34-35), and seeks to inquire of God whether they should continue pursuing the Philistines. God is silent on the subject, and Saul incorrectly determines this silence is due to one among them having eaten rather than due to his inability to restrain the people from eating the bloodied meat (1 Sam 14:36-38). Saul then begins to search "doggedly and somewhat self-righteously for the source of the problem".[20]

It comes to light that Jonathan had eaten and gone against Saul's edict, and it seems Jonathan is to be killed. It is ironic that the young architect of Israel's victory is considered by the clown-king Saul to be the creator of their bad luck, and so has to die. Yet, rather like the audience in a pantomime, the people resist this decision and Jonathan is saved (1 Sam 14:45), with Saul "following the policy that stands him in good stead with the people" rather than holding to his own convictions and restraining the people, as he had been assigned to do.[21] The Israelites and Philistines separate to fight another day, and the narrative says that the Philistines remained one of Saul's greatest adversaries throughout his career despite Saul's having delivered Israel from enemies on all sides (1 Sam 14:47), and having actively sought out 'any valiant man' and attached him to his forces (1 Sam 14:52).

Samuel makes a reappearance at this point, despite his having abandoned Saul previously. Perhaps the prophet was hoping the Philistines would remove Saul from proceedings, but alas he will have to continue with Saul for the moment. Samuel gives the king his directive of utterly destroying the Amalekites: "…kill both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass" (1 Sam 15:3). Saul acquiesces to this divine ordinance and easily smites the Amalekites (1 Sam 15:7). Yet King Agag is spared along with 'the best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good' (1 Sam 15:8-9). God speaks to Samuel, regretting his making Saul king, which angers Samuel and causes him to cry out to God (1 Sam 15:11). Even though God

[19] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 197.
[20] McCarter, *I Samuel*, 250-251.
[21] Good, *Irony in the Old Testament*, 68.

previously went along with the people's request (1 Sam 8:22), now he changes his mind. This divine change of mind exemplifies the perception of the Deity as an unfathomable cosmic terror.

The next morning, Samuel tracks down Saul and berates the king for his actions, stating that God has definitively rejected Saul as king over Israel (1 Sam 15:15, 17-23, 26). Saul seems oblivious to his wrong-doing, twice trying to recuse himself of blame (1 Sam 15:15, 20-21) before relenting and seeking how to find forgiveness from God (1 Sam 15:24-25). Samuel informs him that this is impossible and turns to leave, causing Saul to hold fast to the prophet and tearing his robe (1 Sam 15:27). Samuel takes this as an opportunity for a symbolic lesson (1 Sam 15:28-29), reaffirming that Saul has had his own kingship torn from him. The kingly robes have been ripped off their initial mannequin, ill-fitting as they may have been, leaving him like a disrobed clown and exposed to the world. Saul, fearing this very exposure, pleads with Samuel to remain and honour him before the elders (1 Sam 15:30). Samuel relents and has Agag brought to him, who cheerfully informs that prophet that the moment of his death has passed, probably under the incorrect illusion that Saul's sparing him would be upheld (1 Sam 15:32). The prophet is unmoved and remorselessly hews Agag into pieces, whereupon he departs and neither prophet nor king meet again until the day of the king's death (1 Sam 15:34-35).[22] It seems ironic that the portrait of Saul given in these chapters (1 Sam 13-15) is far removed from the one endorsed by Samuel (1 Sam 8; 12), existing as a further moment of undermining the concept of a king. Samuel's perception of kingship and the prevailing or popular idea of a king within the ANE both prove to be disagreeable with the one being constructed.

5.3 - Saul Outshone by David (1 Sam 16:1-19:17):

The narrative lens moves away from Saul to Samuel, who is distraught at Saul's failure as king (1 Sam 16:1). God sends Samuel out to discover a new king for Israel, and Samuel comes to Jesse in Bethlehem (1 Sam 16:4-5). From all of Jesse's sons, the most impressive is Eliab who is strangely reminiscent of Saul in his sheer physicality, and the prophet is immediately struck by Eliab's suitability (1 Sam 16:6). It would seem this son of Jesse has the look of a king. Yet he, along with the rest of Jesse's sons present at the sacrifice are

[22] Note here the pronoun in 1 Sam 15:35 ("his death") is in the third person masculine, so as to confuse the reader as to whose demise the two are reunited over. Perhaps there is a proleptic hint of the post-mortem encounter in 1 Sam 28:13-14.

summarily discounted by God (1 Sam 16:7-10). It is not until the relatively unimpressive figure of David enters the narrative scene that God seems satisfied, his reporting of said choice to Samuel being far more subdued than that of Saul's moment of selection (1 Sam 16:12; cf. 1 Sam 9:17).[23] Samuel's reaction to the shepherd boy is not recounted, and as God's approval is so immediate, Samuel anoints the boy "within the family circle [in] a clandestine act".[24]

David's unassuming physical entry into the Samuel story (presumably not as tall as Eliab) is contrasted against Saul's impressive physicality (cf. 1 Sam 9:1-3). All that is said of David's physical appearance is that of he was "ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome" (1 Sam 16:12 RSV), which is a comparatively more feminine description than that of the more masculine mentions of Saul's external appearance.[25] Their seeming deficiencies seem swapped; while Saul is physically impressive, he is mentally weak, yet David is physically insignificant but he will prove to have a much stronger will than his elder. Saul's depiction served to undermine the expected image of how a king should act, while David's unassuming physicality here undermines what a king should look like. Arguably the subversion of kingly expectations had been initiated by Saul and is continued by David, with the inner and the outer aspects of the conventional heroic figure being ridiculed. David is then anointed by Samuel, and the divine spirit moves upon David, allowing the Deity's uncontrollable power to enter the narrative. David's anointing here can be compared with that of Saul (1 Sam 10:1), as both are anointed by Samuel (though using oil from different vessels).[26] Yet whereas the divine breath or spirit had the effect of changing Saul into "another man" (1 Sam 10:6), joining the band of prophets, no such immediate effect on David is depicted as having happened.

The reader is also informed that the spirit of God thus departed from Saul and was replaced by an evil spirit that tormented the king (1 Sam 16:13-14). God as the cosmic terror can be seen here operating, but as a carnival musician David is recommended as a lyre player to soothe the king and is brought to court (1 Sam 16:19). This impromptu call

[23] To be sure, although he is the youngest, David is described as handsome with beautiful eyes. This description of David is near-feminine in nature, being far more focused on his aesthetic appearance rather than his physicality, and may be hinting at the divine favour that the shepherd-boy will enjoy in the future (Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 354).
[24] Alter, *The David Story*, 97.
[25] The mention of David's "beautiful eyes" is a criteria of human beauty which is shared by females in biblical literature. See: Avioz, "The Motif of Beauty in the Books of Samuel and Kings", 344.
[26] Edelman, *King Saul in the Historiography of Judah*, 112; Miscall, *1 Samuel*, 115.

from Saul must have come as a shock for David to say the least, considering the timing of his own anointing by Samuel. Yet Saul is so enamoured by David's skill that he retains him as his armour-bearer and player (1 Sam 16:21-23). Saul therefore becomes the author of his own destruction in a way, as "by bestowing divine favour on David, Saul furthers the divine plan" for David to succeed him.[27] It seems ironic that Saul welcomes to his court the one who will eventually overthrow him.

The narrative details the love that Saul had for David (1 Sam 16:21) yet when the Philistines muster themselves against the Israelites again (1 Sam 17:1-3), the clown-king seems not to remember him (1 Sam 17:55).[28] This chapter involves the contest between David and Goliath, the latter being a hyperbolic image of the idea of a warrior, a possible metaphorical amalgamation of the might of the Philistines (1 Sam 17:4-10). This amalgamated form of Goliath can be viewed as another version of the grotesque, wherein one part of the body "would grow to monstrous dimensions".[29] Here, the body of the Philistine is given exaggerated, near-supernatural, proportions and comes across almost as satirical. The purpose behind this hyperbolisation of form is to contrast Goliath against David, the beast versus the waif, so as to suggest the likelihood of David's defeat. The vision of Goliath the giant Philistine is "closely related to the grotesque conception of the body", being reminiscent of exaggerated parts of the body that also stand as being almost cosmic in nature (e.g. the 'man mountain' that is Goliath).[30]

This amalgamated, enormous form appears in the narrative as less of a man and more of a living armoured vehicle (1 Sam 17:5-7), which makes the shepherd boy's forthcoming challenge all the more absurd. David puts himself forward as a contestant to defeat Goliath (1 Sam 17:32), but the motives behind his challenge are questionable (1 Sam 17:26) and his intentions are even suspected by his brother, Eliab (1 Sam 17:28). Saul is unsure of David's success, as David is "but a youth" (1 Sam 17:33), a concern which becomes a point of disdain for Goliath when the pair encounter one another: "he disdained him; for he was but a youth, ruddy and good-looking" (1 Sam 17:42). The attributes of attractiveness and youth which had previously marked David for favour (1 Sam 16:12) are

[27] Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 175.
[28] While source critics explain this inconsistency as resulting from two different sources, the narrative effect is to deposit Saul as a buffoon who cannot remember even the name of the young man who defeated the Philistine roadblock of Goliath. Yet Saul's question to Abner could also be read as Saul giving a covert warning to Abner of this possible rival for the throne, which the general misses (Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 188-189).
[29] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 327.
[30] Ibid.

here presented "as an object of derision by Goliath".[31] Yet, despite Saul's (and later, Goliath's) misgivings regarding his appearance, the shepherd-boy seems a gifted orator, convincing Saul of his ability through God to defeat the Philistine (1 Sam 17:34-37). As the cosmic terror, God has previously given David power to conquer hostile lions and bears, tying back to the beastly depiction of Goliath. David is ultimately triumphant against Goliath, the contest between the two reported in a lengthy and detailed account of a verbal sparring (like boxers before a fight) before the brief actual action takes place (1 Sam 17:41-47).

The particular moment of Goliath's demise is given in a few terse moments of portrayal, wherein David slays the beast-like Philistine with a sling and then by using the champion's own sword (1 Sam 17:48-51). David's defeat of Goliath, who can be taken as a personification of the whole might of Israel's ANE enemies, is reminiscent of Saul's own moment of military glory against Nahash (1 Sam 11). Goliath himself stands as a 'middle-man' for the Philistines, and his heritage of Gath is linked to that of the Canaanites but also as a residence of the Anakites (Josh 11:22).[32] Goliath's armour and weaponry (1 Sam 17:5-7) is reminiscent of that which was common in the Aegean world (spear, helmet, greaves), and may in fact be the embodiment of the 'host of threats to Israelite faith and identity'.[33] The helmet described would not appear to be the more common feathered headdress of the Philistines but "something more substantial" and gives the image of a Greek or Roman Corinthian helmet or Chalcidian helmet, or possibly a Galea helmet which would have a feathered headdress or mane on top.[34] Each would have a longer metal bar which would cover the nose, but may have left the forehead or upper brow exposed. The body armour is a "cuirass" which would have resembled scale armour popular among Egyptian and Asiatic troops.[35] The greaves worn are reminiscent of Greek leg or shin guards which encompassed the entire calf and were padded, and in a similar fashion Goliath's gigantic spear was made for throwing (being equipped with a "thong and ring") and so would have resembled more the Greek javelin.[36]

[31] Avioz, "The Motif of Beauty in the Books of Samuel and Kings", 349.
[32] Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 177.
[33] Ibid, 178.
[34] McCarter, *I Samuel*, 292-293.
[35] Ibid, 292.
[36] Ibid, 293; Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 177-178.

If Goliath was wearing such armour, this moment of victory is hugely significant as David has symbolically defeated and conquered the amalgamation of enemies through his own humble means but principally through the Deity's presence with the young man. David's smaller stature is juxtaposed against that of the ginormous Goliath so that the shepherd boy may stand as "a virtual anti-hero, a foil to the Philistine champion".[37] In a carnivalesque reading, however, Goliath serves as a kind of clown leader, easily brought down by a 'child's' catapult. Tying these images together, it can be taken as the waif having defeated the hulk and the amalgamated entirety of Israel's enemies in one understated movement and the episode "has all the elemental appeal of a fairy tale" in its uncomplicated telling of the hero versus the villain.[38] This folkloristic story, centred on the victory of the 'underdog', leaves the reader "with the picture of a charismatic hero".[39]

After David's surprising and religiously passionate victory over Goliath, David is taken as a warrior into Saul's service (1 Sam 18:5), becoming beloved by all. Surprisingly Jonathan surrenders his royal clothing and weaponry, as though he were "voluntarily renouncing any claim on the throne" (1 Sam 18:1-5).[40] The rationale behind the love which Jonathan had for David is not explained (1 Sam 18:1, 3), and the connotation of Jonathan disrobing before David could be viewed as suggestive. Yet it could be a case of eisegesis to state that the affection between the pair is anything more than just political respect and probably personal fondness.[41] The success which David enjoys serves as a point of contention between shepherd boy and monarch, as Saul grows jealous and suspicious of David and his good fortune (1 Sam 18:7-9). Like a carnival crowd chanting, the chorus of women mock the clown-king for killing only thousands of enemies in comparison to the 'new kid on the block's' tens of thousands slain, even though the reader has only been informed of one Philistine being killed by David (1 Sam 18:7). It is from this point that Saul attempts to take David's life. Now the evil spirit which had been a resident with Saul since the spirit of God had departed becomes inflamed and causes the monarch to lash out at David publicly on two occasions (1 Sam 18:10-11; 19:9-10). For defending David against his father, Saul even attempts to kill Jonathan, insulting him and his mother publicly in a carnivalesque fashion (1 Sam 20:30-34).

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[37] Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 179.
[38] McCarter, *I Samuel*, 295.
[39] Mills, *Joshua to Kings*, 45.
[40] Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 193.
[41] McCarter, *I Samuel*, 305.

Ironically, Saul's children seem united in their desire to keep David safe from their father, as Michal, Saul's daughter who had been given to David as a snare (1 Sam 18:20-21), is said to have loved David. It can be safely assumed that this form of affection is different from that which Jonathan had for David, being of a romantic form.[42] Whether David returned the affections of the daughter is uncertain, but on Jonathan David did bestow his affections (2 Sam 1:23, 26). In Saul's second attempt on David's life, Saul sends messengers to kill David in his bed but Michal smuggles him out of the house (1 Sam 19:11-12). In a comical feature, David's form is replaced by the teraphim now topped by goat's hair, placed in his bed (1 Sam 19:13).[43] David is now without home or help, having escaped Saul's clandestine assassination attempt and seeks out Samuel for aid (1 Sam 19:18). At this point a highly carnivalesque event is reported in 1 Samuel 19:18-24, where the effect of God's "breath" on Saul results in the prophetic or raving frenzy that is portrayed.

5.4 - Saul's Prophetic Frenzy and God's Unpredictable Spirit (1 Sam 19:18-24):

Table 5.4: Hebrew Translation

Hebrew Text (MT) of 1 Sam 19:18-24	Translation of 1 Sam 19:18-24[44]
וְדָוִד בָּרַח וַיִּמָּלֵט וַיָּבֹא אֶל־שְׁמוּאֵל֙ הָרָמָתָה וַיַּגֶּד־לוֹ אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה־לוֹ שָׁאוּל וַיֵּלֶךְ הוּא וּשְׁמוּאֵ֔ל וַיֵּשְׁבוּ [בְּנוֹית כ] (בְּנָיוֹת: ק)	18 David fled and escaped, and came to Samuel at Ramah. He reported to him all that Saul had done to him. So he and Samuel departed, and they stayed in Naioth.[45]
וַיֻּגַּ֥ד לְשָׁאוּל֮ לֵאמֹר֒ הִנֵּ֣ה דָוִ֔ד [בְּנוֹית כ] (בְּנָיוֹת ק) בָּרָמָֽה׃	19 But it was reported to Saul, saying: "David is here at Naioth, in Ramah".
וַיִּשְׁלַ֤ח שָׁאוּל֙ מַלְאָכִ֔ים לָקַחַ֖ת אֶת־דָּוִ֑ד וַיַּ֗רְא אֶת־לַהֲקַ֤ת הַנְּבִיאִים֙ נִבְּאִ֔ים וּשְׁמוּאֵ֥ל עֹמֵ֖ד נִצָּ֣ב עֲלֵיהֶ֑ם וַתְּהִ֨י עַל־מַלְאֲכֵ֤י שָׁאוּל֙ רֽוּחַ־אֱלֹהִ֔ים וַיִּתְנַבְּא֖וּ גַּם־הֵֽמָּה׃	20 Then Saul sent messengers to seize David, and when he saw the company of prophets prophesying/raving, and Samuel standing in charge of them, then the breath of God came upon Saul's messengers and they also prophesied/raved.[46]
וַיַּגִּ֥דוּ לְשָׁאוּל֮ וַיִּשְׁלַ֣ח מַלְאָכִים֒ אֲחֵרִ֔ים וַיִּתְנַבְּא֖וּ גַּם־הֵֽמָּה וַיֹּ֣סֶף שָׁאוּל֮ וַיִּשְׁלַ֣ח מַלְאָכִים֒ שְׁלִשִׁ֔ים וַיִּתְנַבְּא֖וּ גַּם־הֵֽמָּה׃	21 When they reported it to Saul, he sent other messengers but they also prophesied/raved. And Saul sent messengers again a third time, but they also prophesied/raved.

[42] For a comparison of Michal and Jonathan with regard their relationship with David, see: Adele Berlin, "Characterization in Biblical Narrative: David's Wives", *JSOT* 23 (1982), 69-85. Later the irreversible breakdown of Michal's relationship with David (2 Sam 6:23) will be seen.

[43] Here Michal appears as a trickster. For further on this, see: Jackson, *Comedy and Feminist Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible*, 144-145.

[44] Translation own.

[45] Naioth is treated as a place name in the MT, with the LXX here adding "in/at Ramah" as though anticipating the information given by an anonymous third person in the subsequent verse (1 Sam 19:19, 22). The word could also retain the meaning of "pasturage". Naioth was probably a cluster of huts or an encampment in the vicinity of the town of Ramah, and can therefore also be translated as "in the camps" which McCarter favours. Therefore the Naioth referred to here is less a proper place name and more of a designation of a type of settlement. See: McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 327; Alter, *1 Samuel*, 209.

[46]. Where the MT says "he saw", it is better to follow the LXX with "they saw". Cf. McCarter, *I Samuel*, 327.

וַיֵּלֶךְ גַּם־הוּא הָרָמָתָה וַיָּבֹא עַד־בְּור הַגָּדֹול אֲשֶׁר בַּשֶּׂכוּ וַיִּשְׁאַל וַיֹּאמֶר אֵיפֹה שְׁמוּאֵל וְדָוִד וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה [בְּנוֹית כ] (בְּנָיוֹת ק) בָּרָמָה:	22 Then he also went himself to Ramah, and he came as far as the great well which was in Secu. He asked and said: "Where are Samuel and David?" And one said: "Here, at Naioth in Ramah".[47]
וַיֵּלֶךְ שָׁם אֶל־ [נְוֹית כ] (נָיוֹת ק) בָּרָמָה וַתְּהִי עָלָיו גַּם־הוּא רֽוּחַ אֱלֹהִים וַיֵּלֶךְ הָלוֹךְ וְיִתְנַבֵּא עַד־בֹּאֹו [בְּנוֹית כ] (בְּנָיוֹת ק) בָּרָמָה:	23 And he went there to Naioth in Ramah, and the breath of God came also upon him. And as he went, walking, he prophesied/raved until he came to Naioth in Ramah.
וַיִּפְשַׁט גַּם־הוּא בְּגָדָיו וַיִּתְנַבֵּא גַּם־הוּא לִפְנֵי שְׁמוּאֵל וַיִּפֹּל עָרֹם כָּל־הַיֹּום הַהוּא וְכָל־הַלָּיְלָה עַל־כֵּן יֹאמְרוּ הֲגַם שָׁאוּל בַּנְּבִיאִם: פ	24 And he too stripped off his clothes and he also prophesied/raved before Samuel, and lay down naked all that day and all the night. Therefore they say: Is Saul also among the prophets (ravers)?

5.2.1 Discussion:

In this scene, Saul is whipped up into an ecstatic prophetic display once more and it is narrated that Saul removes his clothes, when he reaches Naioth in Ramah: "The breath of God came also upon him, and as he went, walking, he prophesied/raved until he came to Naioth in Ramah. And he too stripped off his clothes and he also prophesied/raved before Saul, and lay down naked all that day and all the night. Therefore they say: 'Is Saul also among the prophets (ravers)?'" (1 Sam 19:23-24). The proverb re-emerges here as in 1 Sam 10:12, the reiteration of some sort of popular saying thus tying the two experiences together.[48] The saying "Is Saul also among the prophets?" can be considered a form of colloquial or popular speech, being used at the time of the formation of the material at hand. It serves to satirise the hereditary origin of the king selected, undermining the popular election of this figure; why was Saul chosen? The question hangs heavily in the narrative, unfinished and unanswered, as well as being positioned as a piece of popular speech. The narrative does not explain what it exactly means or how it was used in common speech, as a popular saying does not need to be explained to those who use it.[49]

There is also an irony in this particular saying. Whereas Saul was not considered canonically as a prophet despite this proverb about him (10:11-12; 19:24), David is

[47] At the beginning of this verse, the LXX has καὶ ἐθυμώθη ὀργῇ Σαουλ ("and Saul became angry") which is absent from the MT. Since there is a lack of a clear motivation for such a clause, it may be considered as an occurrence of the Greek expanding on the Hebrew material. See: McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 328. Also where the MT reads הַגָּדֹול ("the great"), the LXX presupposes הַגֹּרֶן ("of the threshing floor"). Cf. McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 327-28.

[48] McCarter, *I Samuel*, 183-184.

[49] Klein discusses the proverbial saying as being taken to be in some sense hostile towards Saul's prophetic activity, implying a negative response, with Saul's assumption of such as role as reflecting poorly on him, and could thus even be taken to be Davidic propaganda. Yet to openly 'attack' the person of the king would be unwise and hence the inclusion of the saying as a proverb rather than a direct statement. See: Klein, *1 Samuel*, 92-93; John Sturdy, 'The Original Meaning of "Is Saul Also among the Prophets?" (1 Samuel X 11, 12; XIX 24)'. *VT* 20 (1970), 206-213, here 211.

unconnected with such a raving prophetic band but is still regarded later as a prophet (2 Sam 23:2; 11Q5 27.11; Acts 2:30).[50] The carnivalesque question – "is Saul also among the prophets?" – is a satirical attack, not only on Saul's kingship but also on the 'institution' of prophets in Israel, including Samuel himself. In a comic vision, a similar satire on prophets is found in the Book of Jonah.[51] Other passages satirise prophets for harming their own bodies (1 Kgs 18:28) or wearing a hairy mantle (Zech 13:4). Yet despite his encounters with the sober prophet, Samuel, Saul hardly acts like him but is a caricature of a wild prophet.

The two occurrences of Saul prophesying or "raving" can be placed beside one another, but the reiteration of the event in 1 Samuel 19:23-24 adds the mention of Saul's nudity. This removal of clothing by Saul stands as a form of unmasking or decrowning of the carnival king, a moment of revelation of the true person behind the monarchic mask. This process of debasing the figure of the king opens up his character to further ridicule through being exposed. Saul is at the mercy of God (the unpredictable cosmic terror), and his being a king is rendered meaningless. The royal figure is shown for exactly what he is: just a man. This can be taken as a direct illustration of the grotesque body, open and uncovered to the world, as part of the carnival activity and something which is brought about by the interaction with the unpredictable spirit of God. The effect of the removal of God's presence or favour from Saul, and the presence of this 'evil spirit' (1 Sam 16:14; 18:10) in its place will be explored in greater depth below. In fact, it is Saul's own paranoia which pushes the king to plot against David and seek his murder.

Saul's paranoia thus leads the narrative to the events of 1 Samuel 19:18-24, reporting the prophesying/raving effect of God's spirit, which causes Saul to fall down naked. Shame is attached to nakedness in other biblical texts, with either the presence of the naked form being a cause of concern or something to hide away from sight, or with the tearing of clothes as a sign of desperate grief (cf. Gen 3:7; 9:20-25; Exod 20:26; 28:42; Lev 18:6-18; Is 20:4; 47:3; Mic 1:8, 11). In the Bakhtinian perspective the naked form which partakes in the carnival removes the boundaries between one's own form and that of the wider world, as well as being representative of the duality of the grotesque body which

[50] Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 209. The mention of Ramah as definite place name (1 Sam 19:18-19, 22-23) may be an attempt to recall Saul's first prophetic activity as well as the centre of Samuel's judicial power in the northern territories, thus taking the reader back to earlier moments of the story.
[51] See Timothy C. McNinch, "'Who Knows?' A Bakhtinian Reading of Carnivalesque Motifs in Jonah", *VT* 71 (2021), 1-17.

nakedness conjures up.[52] Nudity is something which reaches beyond its own closed off nature in order to interact with the world; protruding out into the world and seeking such interaction with it. The Bakhtinian concept of the grotesque body seeks to move away from the attempt to "complete each individual outside the link with the ultimate whole", as it moves outside itself and interacts with the mundane world outside, and fundamentally breaks the boundary between body and the world.[53]

Although the MT locates the place near the "great well", the LXX situates it near "the well of the threshing floor" (1 Sam 19:22). The threshing floor was often the scene of wild celebrations of harvest time (Hosea 9:1). It was at the Bethlehem threshing floor that Ruth lay down beside Boaz and uncovered his feet (Ruth 3:3-4). Interestingly, Uzzah is later struck dead at the threshing floor of Nacon (2 Sam 6:6-7), so a threshing floor can be a location for these carnivalesque moments of debasement or for interaction with the unpredictable spirit of God. Indeed for both Saul and David, a threshing floor is the site of debasement or lowering; for Saul it is just before his ecstatic display (1 Sam 19:18-24) and for David it is the death of Uzzah which calls a premature stop to his celebratory and self-congratulatory transfer of the ark (2 Sam 6:6-10).

Once again, as in the previous incident of Saul's "raving", the clown is here drawn into the carnival action by the unpredictable breath or spirit of God. The intervention of God's "breath" on Saul here reflects the earlier interaction between the two (1 Sam 10:10). The two instances within the narrative portray two very different outcomes of Saul's contact with the spirit of God; in the first it becomes one of the signs given to him by Samuel that God is with him (1 Sam 10:1), whereas here God's "breath" actively stops him from completing his task of killing David because God is now with David (1 Sam 16:18). The clown-king in this instance (1 Sam 19:23-24) is rendered helpless by the spirit which has come upon him. He is no longer in control of his actions and brought low from his previous lofty position toward the earth (1 Sam 19:24 – "lay down naked"). Saul's nakedness here vividly illustrates Samuel's earlier pronouncement: "the LORD has torn

[52] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 28-29. The Bakhtinian image of the grotesque body stands in complete contrast to the Renaissance concept of the body which was perfect, covered, and closed off from the world which does not allow for renewal or growth. The body which takes part in the carnival is that which embraces the duality of the grotesque image of the body, involving itself in displays of itself as well as other carnivalesque activities such as feasting.

[53] Ibid, 53. The Bible also includes the mention of nakedness being without shame, being depicted as a natural bodily form as well as a cause of celebration and comfort, rather than holding explicitly negative connotations (cf. Gen 2:25; 3:2; Prov 5:18-19; Song 4:1-16).

the kingdom of Israel from you" (1 Sam 15:28). The tearing of the garment previously (1 Sam 15:27) is recalled in the removal of Saul's clothes here. The stripping off of Saul's clothes exposes the human form to the world; the barrier of coverings is shed in this prophetic raving so that the picture of the grotesque body may be 'opened' or accessible to the world. Saul's exposure shows the figure of the king for what he truly is: just a man, a human person at the mercy of God. The living body of the clown-king is de-robed, thrown about, and humbled. This figure of Saul is robbed of that comforting distance from events and is violently dragged back into the parade, with God's spirit (a manifestation of the cosmic terror in the world) infusing the clown-king.

Within the Bakhtinian carnival, the clown-king must retain all the appearance of his being thoroughly beaten, debased, thrashed, and ultimately dead as though he has been "beaten to death".[54] The clown-king falls so that the 'new' king may arise in his place. This is reflective of the dominant hegemony of the ANE concept of kingship being removed – ridiculed, debased, and undermined – in favour of the one being constructed or put into place by God. The presence of the cosmic terror makes this debasement a necessity for the carnival parade. Within the narrative of 1 Samuel, the activity of the cosmic terror – God – also makes this activity of renewal an imperative. The narrator portrays Saul as not being given a choice, thereby reaffirming the fear which is associated with the essence of the cosmic terror while also depicting that desire of this entity to enter into the world. With both the initial depiction of Saul's prophetic activity and the 'raving' shown here, the fusion of God's unpredictable spirit and Saul's human form means that "the limits between the body and the world are erased".[55] The preference here for the use of "breath of God" (1 Sam 10:10; 19:23) in the translation is meant to show the bodily nature of God's interaction within the world as the cosmic terror (rather than the "spirit" of God). There is a tangible and bodily intrusion of the unpredictable spirit of God into the body of the clown-king, Saul.

The proverb is raised again – "Therefore they say: is Saul also among the prophets?" (1 Sam 19:24). This marketplace cry raises the question of not only *why* Saul may have been chosen but also of *what* the new form of the king in the Israelite community

[54] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 199. When 1 Sam 19:24 says that Saul "lay down naked all that day and all the night," the Hebrew says literally that he "fell down naked." Later the narrator depicts Saul in a similar posture after hearing of his doom from Samuel at Endor: "And Saul quickly fell his full length onto the ground" (1 Sam 28:20).
[55] Ibid, 310.

is meant to look like, wherein the reader is also invited to consider this new form of governance as well as the narrative figures in the text. At this point in the narrative, it is evident that the "world is open and free, everything is still in the future and will always be in the future".[56] Evidently, as before in 1 Samuel 10, the activity of the cosmic terror has profoundly changed the appearance of the king as the people recognise him. Yet Saul is not the king as the people would recognise him; he is the clown-king of the carnival parade as precipitated by God acting as the cosmic terror.

The prophetic ecstasy in which Saul becomes embroiled with here is almost debauched in appearance, as the closing remarks of his activity may suggest: "he lay down naked all that day and all the night" (1 Sam 19:24). There is a sense of near-hedonistic activity here, with the depiction of Saul, thrashing about in a prophetic frenzy, completely naked right through the night until the cosmic terror decides to relent.[57] In both instances of invasion by the 'breath' of God into Saul, he is irrevocably changed by the experience. Yet this marked difference in Saul is not something to be panic-stricken by; the clown-king emerges unhurt from the experience, if a little embarrassed or slightly worse for wear.[58] God's presence here is transformative and all-consuming yet not destructive, and reflective of the regenerative and dynamic nature of God's presence within the community. Through the interaction of Saul and the 'breath' of God, the body is depicted as "the last and best word of the cosmos…therefore there is nothing to fear".[59] The fundamental change of Saul, almost to the point of the loss of recognition of those around him, is necessary for the process of the carnival; the death of the old and the renewal of the community through the rebirth of the new.

Saul's form is transformed, even at the more basic level of the lack of recognition, wherein God's spirit becomes recognisable to some degree as an unpredictable and

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[56] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 166.

[57] It would not be wholly inappropriate to compare this scene in 1 Sam 19:23-24 with that of a 21st-century festival goer, amid the crowds of people in front of a stage having consumed something usually "set apart" for adults. The festivities overtake this hypothetical festival goer in much the same way as God's "breath" has affected Saul here. Both figures would then be exhausted once the effects of their respective ecstasy inducing enhancers have worn off.

[58] Admittedly, the same experience and conclusion cannot be said for Saul's ultimate fate (1 Sam 31:6), yet the death of Saul cannot be truly linked to the activity of God beyond his retraction of divine favour from Saul to David. Herein lies the issue at hand for most; God appears to have abandoned Saul (1 Sam 13:14; 15:23; 16:1, 14). Yet in a Bakhtinian perspective, Saul's ultimate fate is a product of the parade; the death of Saul will eventually lead to the emergence of David as king. The clown-king must be destroyed in order for the "new" king and regrowth to enter the community. Within the carnival system, "death is followed by regeneration" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 198).

[59] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 341.

converting force. The cosmic force of God enters into the world and into the tangible body of Saul, thereby allowing the Deity to traverse the boundary between corporeal and divine. Thus God's spirit removes the conventional boundaries of divine and mundane, creating an open and bodily space for these limits to be removed, and for the new to take root. At this point in the narrative, God moves away from the more simplistic and comparatively dull-minded concept as the elemental terror into a *cosmic* terror. It is this cosmic terror which affects the world around it and interacts with it (1 Sam 9:15-17; 10:9-12). The carnival figure of the clown-king in Saul is most noticeably affected by God, as the deity presses into the world (Bakhtin's horizontal plane of becoming), and thus becomes part of the body of the community through Saul's own human body. Through God's action, Saul is "permitted his narrative of power and transformation".[60]

At this stage of the narrative, the community begins to recognise the cosmic terror as affecting the world as the cosmos attempts to find its own space in the "leading force" of the body of Saul.[61] Here, the ANE concept of a king is undone and opened up for questioning and ridicule by the people, and it is consequently shown to be ineffective. The God being portrayed in this narrative is one "who chooses to engage humanity" by entering into the world, as compared to other deities that exist outside of such existence.[62] The venture of monarchy being undertaken can thus be understood as "the invisible working of Yahweh for the monarchy that provides the interest and dynamic of the narrative" of 1 Samuel by 'reinventing' the role of king in Saul through ridicule and destabilisation in order to formally establish this new form of kingship in Saul's successor, David.[63] God *is* the cosmic terror, Saul *is* the clown-king, and the carnival *has* thus begun in earnest with this initial interaction between both parties.

5.5 - The Paranoid King and the Successor on the Run (1 Sam 20-23):

After Saul's journey out to uncover David and his own subsequent carnivalesque uncovering (1 Sam 19:18-24), David escapes Saul again and travels back to Jonathan whereupon the king's son attempts to defuse the tensions between the pair. When this fails, David flees to Nob and informs the priest there, Ahimelech, that Saul has charged him with

[60] Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel,* IBC (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990), 71.
[61] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World,* 341.
[62] Balentine, *Prayer in the Hebrew Bible,* 261.
[63] Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel,* 70.

a secret assignment (which would seem to comically undermine the purpose of a secret assignment). Ahimelech feeds the young man and furnishes him with Goliath's sword (1 Sam 21:1-9). David initially travels to the Philistine king, Achish, in a desperate search for an ally. This seems an ironic move by David, considering his former successes in slaying multiple Philistines. David soon reaches the conclusion that coming to the ruler of those whom he had successfully killed en-masse is unwise (1 Sam 21:11-13), and thus pretends to be insane in order to escape (1 Sam 21:13-15).

David's display of madness is a moment of debasement of his figure yet stands more as an example of his cunning. It is this carnivalesque play of the madman that allows David to escape unharmed. Achish's question stands as the closing 'punchline', as he asks whether this drippling madman should enter his service (1 Sam 21:15). This answer is, subsequently, yes (1 Sam 29:2-3). This parodical prophecy of Achish stands in contrast to the more serious and eschatological forms of prophecy, with Achish's rhetorical question becoming a future reality.[64] In a carnivalesque parody, David's invented madness at the gates of Achish's city mirrors the genuine paranoid mania which Saul exhibits as he blames all those around him for David's continued freedom and calls Ahimelech to court (1 Sam 22:7-10).[65] Ahimelech's response as to why he aided David is not to the king's liking and so the priest is killed by Doeg, along with the entirety of the Nob township (1 Sam 22:16-19). There exists then in Saul's madness a tenor of the monstrous in his action of mass murder, exacerbated by the resentment which he has towards David. While David's feigned madness before Achish allows the young man the possibility of freedom, perhaps parodying the very real manic paranoia of Saul, the aging king's own mania is what will ultimately lead to his humiliation and death. The intense focus of Saul on catching David is impotent, being a "hatred with which he feeds his sense of having been treated unfairly, and his hope of someday forcing others to suffer in his place".[66] Saul then pursues David throughout the land (1 Sam 23-26), yet each time David evades the determined monarch. Jonathan encourages David to continue his struggle against Saul as the king's son is sure David will be king and that he will be beside David (1 Sam 23:17-18). The next scene in Saul's pantomime quest to catch David finds him 'caught short' in a carnivalesque episode.

[64] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 233.
[65] Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 230.
[66] Michael André Bernstein, *Bitter Carnival: Ressentiment and the Abject Hero* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 28.

5.6 - Saul Caught With His Pants Down (1 Sam 24):

Table 5.6: Hebrew Translation

Hebrew Text (MT) of 1 Sam 24:1-8	Translation of 1 Sam 24:1-8
וַיַּעַל דָּוִד מִשָּׁם וַיֵּשֶׁב בִּמְצָדוֹת עֵין־גֶּדִי:	1 And David went up from there and he stayed in the strongholds of En-gedi.[67]
וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר שָׁב שָׁאוּל מֵאַחֲרֵי פְּלִשְׁתִּים וַיַּגִּדוּ לוֹ לֵאמֹר הִנֵּה דָוִד בְּמִדְבַּר עֵין גֶּדִי: ס	2 When Saul returned from following the Philistines, it was reported to him, saying: 'Look, David is in the wilderness of En-gedi'.
וַיִּקַּח שָׁאוּל שְׁלֹשֶׁת אֲלָפִים אִישׁ בָּחוּר מִכָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֵּלֶךְ לְבַקֵּשׁ אֶת־דָּוִד וַאֲנָשָׁיו עַל־פְּנֵי צוּרֵי הַיְעֵלִים:	3 Then Saul took three thousand young men from all Israel, and he went to seek David and his men towards the Wild Goat Rocks.
וַיָּבֹא אֶל־גִּדְרוֹת הַצֹּאן עַל־הַדָּרֶךְ וְשָׁם מְעָרָה וַיָּבֹא שָׁאוּל לְהָסֵךְ אֶת־רַגְלָיו וְדָוִד וַאֲנָשָׁיו בְּיַרְכְּתֵי הַמְּעָרָה יֹשְׁבִים:	4 And he came to the sheepfolds beside the way, where there was a cave, and Saul went in to cover[68] his feet. But David and his men were sitting in the inner most parts of the cave.
וַיֹּאמְרוּ אַנְשֵׁי דָוִד אֵלָיו הִנֵּה הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר־אָמַר יְהוָה אֵלֶיךָ הִנֵּה אָנֹכִי נֹתֵן אֶת־ [אֹיִבְיךָ כ] (אֹיִבְךָ ק) בְּיָדֶךָ וְעָשִׂיתָ לּוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר יִטַב בְּעֵינֶיךָ וַיָּקָם דָּוִד וַיִּכְרֹת אֶת־כְּנַף־הַמְּעִיל אֲשֶׁר־לְשָׁאוּל בַּלָּט:	5 David's men said to him: "Here is the day that the LORD said to you: 'Look, I am giving your enemy into your hand, and you will do to him what seems good in your eyes'". Then David got up and covertly cut off the edge of the robe belonging to Saul.[69]
וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי־כֵן וַיַּךְ לֵב־דָּוִד אֹתוֹ עַל אֲשֶׁר כָּרַת אֶת־כְּנַף אֲשֶׁר לְשָׁאוּל: ס	6 But afterwards David's heart struck him because he had cut off the edge belonging to Saul.[70]
וַיֹּאמֶר לַאֲנָשָׁיו חָלִילָה לִּי מֵיהוָה אִם־אֶעֱשֶׂה אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה לַאדֹנִי לִמְשִׁיחַ יְהוָה לִשְׁלֹחַ יָדִי בּוֹ כִּי־מְשִׁיחַ יְהוָה הוּא:	7 And he said to his men: "The LORD forbid me that I should do this thing, to my master, the LORD's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, for he is the LORD's anointed".

[67] Note that 1 Sam 24:1 acts as a conclusion to 1 Sam 23, and so the RSV has what is here counted as 1 Sam 24:2 as the beginning of the chapter proper.

[68] The verb used here to describe Saul's relieving himself by defecation (as in Judg 3:24) has the root סָכַךְ ("to cover"), yet it has a similar sound to the hiphil of נָסַךְ, which means "to pour out". The actual verb used ("to cover") could be euphemistic for uncovering oneself. This similar sounding verb ("to pour out") could be playing with the sound of the verb being used, thus poking fun at Saul in his moment of vulnerability. The hiphil form of נָסַךְ is also linked to idea of pouring out libation or wine onto a pillar (cf. Gen 35:14), and thus could be suggestive of the male genitalia and urine as a downward thrust to the lower stratum See: McCarter, *I Samuel*, 383. This image of Saul relieving himself is reminiscent of Eglon and his unfortunate visit to the lavatory (Judg 3:24).

[69] This translation reads the singular ("your enemy") with the MT *qere* and the LXX, but the MT *ketiv* has the plural ("your enemies"). There is no recollection or description in the narrative of any such promise being made to David, and so there is a "certain theological presumptuousness" on the part of David's men here (Alter, *The David Story*, 147). Also the cutting of Saul's robe by David seems odd in its current placement, as it may have been better served as an example of David's innocence rather than a moment of his own condemnation (McCarter, *I Samuel*, 384; Klein, *I Samuel*, 238).

[70] McCarter denotes the piece of cloth that was removed by David as being "the skirt that Saul had" (McCarter, *I Samuel*, 381).

וַיְשַׁסַּע דָּוִד אֶת־אֲנָשָׁיו בַּדְּבָרִים וְלֹא נְתָנָם לָקוּם אֶל־שָׁאוּל וְשָׁאוּל קָם מֵהַמְּעָרָה וַיֵּלֶךְ בַּדָּרֶךְ: ס	8 So David held back his men with the words, and he did not allow them to rise up against Saul. And Saul arose from the cave and went on his way.[71]

5.6.1 - Discussion:

This scene can be perceived as David recognising and emphasising that the person of the king as God's anointed is "sacrosanct, inviolable", which places David in a more sincere light.[72] Yet the person of the king here has been exposed, and the surrounding actions of Saul highlight the carnivalesque features in this episode. The continued attempts by Saul to hunt down David move from dramatic to farcical. The "three thousand young men" can be understood as three units, each with a thousand or so soldiers.[73] This seems an inordinate amount of men to bring to hunt down one man. This is reflective of either David's reputation as being a capable warrior or of the paranoia which had overcome Saul at this point. There is also a carnivalesque sense of exaggeration in this number.

As Saul follows David through the wilderness of En-gedi, the very human need of relieving himself comes up (1 Sam 24:3), just as the Moabite king Eglon felt the same need (Judg 3:24), revealing itself as one of the more serendipitous moments of the Samuel narratives.[74] It would appear that even divinely selected kings on a paranoia-fuelled rampage through the Israelite wilderness need to go to the bathroom! This moment of genuine human vulnerability lends itself well to the comedic lens of the carnivalesque. It is those moments of human need and the occasion for 'lowering' oneself to the level of the mundane that open the more lofty figures up to the possibility of ridicule. The sacrosanct figure of the king is exposed, shown to be defenceless and genuinely human. Here, a social and personal boundary has been breached for Saul but also for those watching him in the cave, who are privy to the royal person of the king in a truly human moment of vulnerability. It is within this intimate moment that such acts are "performed on the confines of the body and the outer world".[75] This moment of Saul's relieving himself is a

[71] The MT reads וַיְשַׁסַּע, which means "and he tore to pieces". This iteration of the verb seems too strong, although the violent, near-devouring imagery which this conjures would work well in the carnival scheme of the body being rent apart. A colloquialism could be assumed here, yet the exact sense of the verb is not fully communicated (McCarter, *II Samuel*, 381). Alter (*The David Story*, 147) suggests that David "split off" his men from Saul, while Bodner understands that David "tears into" his audience (*1 Samuel*, 253).

[72] Miscall, *1 Samuel*, 145.

[73] McCarter, *I Samuel*, 383.

[74] Bodner, "Problems of Deuteronomist's Poetics: David, Saul, and the Allegory of the Cave". Unpublished paper presented at 2007 SBL meeting in San Diego, 4. Available at: http://home.nwciowa.edu/wacome/bodner.pdf. 1-16 [accessed: 11th August 2021]. See also: Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 335.

[75] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 317.

true moment of debasement for the clown-king figure. The body of the king is here exposed, in its need to relieve itself as well as its vulnerability to attack (as it is only by David's 'good will' that Saul is able to leave the cave alive). In order for something to be degraded, in a Bakhtinian perspective, then it needs to be concerned "with the lower stratum of the body", which includes the act of defecating.[76] Therefore, the act itself is not merely negative but allows for a regenerative force through the option for new life which accompanies death in the carnival scheme.

It is in these intimate acts that death and life are closely linked, on the boundary between old and new, while still offering this moment of true debasement.[77] This image also carries with it a certain salacious undertone. The actual phrase for defecating used at this point – וַיָּבֹא שָׁאוּל לְהָסֵךְ אֶת־רַגְלָיו ("and Saul went in to cover his feet" – 1 Sam 24:3) – is reminiscent of an alternative phrase which denotes sexual activity:וּבֹאת וְגִלִּית מַרְגְּלֹתָיו ("And go and reveal his feet" - Ruth 3:4). There is something at play here, wherein the imagery of relieving oneself through bodily expulsion and another through sexual release are juxtaposed if not identical in terms of language. Just as Jonathan has previously stripped himself of his robe in front of David (1 Sam 18:4), so now Saul unwittingly bares himself in front of David in this intimate moment. Moreover, the word used here - בְּיַרְכְּתֵי – means in the "inner-most parts" or "backside" of the cave. A further meaning for the related noun - יָרֵךְ - is hip/hip joint, which could also hint towards the lower stratum of the body (thighs or genitals, particularly when paired with a pronominal suffix). In addition, the word for "cave" (מְעָרָה) sounds similar to the word for "nakedness" (מַעַר - Neh 3:5). This again reinforces that downward movement and focus on the reproductive organs, highlighting the presence of the open human body and the duality of life/death which marks the carnival.

As Saul drops his robe, David is cajoled by his men to kill Saul there in the cave in his exceptionally vulnerable position, but instead he cuts a piece of Saul's robe off (1 Sam 24:4). This action by David is reminiscent of Saul's tearing of Samuel's robe which was then meant to symbolically represent the tearing of the kingdom from Saul (1 Sam 15:27-28).[78] Here too the cutting of Saul's robe could be taken as representative of David's cutting the kingship from Saul's grasp, as well as even suggestive of David having emasculated

[76] Ibid, 21.
[77] Ibid, 317. Life and death are literally closely linked; it is David who is within reaching distance of the vulnerable king, but his hand is stilled only because of the virtuousness of his convictions (1 Sam 24:6).
[78] Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 251.

the aging king by cutting off a fragment from an intimate area on the king's body.[79] Overcome with guilt for such an action after Saul leaves the cave, David reveals himself to Saul by calling out to the king and pleading with him to see him as innocent of any affront, and indeed blameless before God as he spared the monarch's life (1 Sam 24:8-15). The guilt which David feels for his action seems strange, given his acclaim of his own mercy for merely cutting at the king's robe. Yet "it is possible that a hint of self-interest might also be here, since David himself is *also* the LORD's anointed".[80]

David then asks Saul: "After who do you pursue? After a dead dog! After a flea!" (1 Sam 24:14). There is a comic element in this comparison. Alter notes that "a dead dog was proverbial in ancient Israel as a contemptible, worthless thing, but David gives the idiom one better by saying he is scarcely more important than a single flea on a dead dog's carcass".[81] Saul seems won over by David's impassioned plea and the two depart from one another, yet David is still wary of Saul and returns to his own stronghold (1 Sam 24:16-27). The offer of a 'new life' is ignored by Saul, which could have been offered to Saul by David in the younger's mercy while the elder was so uniquely vulnerable. Yet both parties return to their own 'corners', perpetuating the distance between them. This scene where David spares Saul at the cave has some similarity to the episode where David spares Saul encamped with his army at night (1 Sam 26).[82] In both cases, the clown-king is debased and mocked as vulnerable by his future successor. But whereas the second episode is an attack on Saul's prestige, the first scene is a pantomime mockery in true carnivalesque style.

5.7 - Nabal, Abigail, and David's 'Protection Racket' (1 Sam 25):

The reader is next informed of Samuel's death while David is still living in the wilderness, and seems to be running some sort of protection racket in Carmel (1 Sam 25:1-8). Nabal, the target of David's current racket, rebuffs the attempted scam and insults David (1 Sam 25:9-11). Perhaps Nabal's abrupt rebuff of David's message and request for reward is not surprising, given the fact that Nabal's name literally means "fool" or "churl".[83] As a stage

[79] Alter, *The David Story*, 148.
[80] Bodner, "Problems of Deuteronomist's Poetics", 7.
[81] Alter, *The David Story*, 148.
[82] Klein, *1 Samuel*, 236-237.
[83] McCarter translates the name as "fool" (McCarter, *I Samuel*, 396) while Berlin denotes his name as being "churl" (Adele Berlin, "Characterization in Biblical Narrative: David's Wives", *JSOT* 23 [1982], 69-85, here 77).

villain, Nabal serves as the antagonist to David's protagonist character zone, with Nabal being "vilified, in contrast to David whose behaviour is impeccable" as far as the reader is able to perceive.[84] This is a characterisation as much as it is a condemnation against this man, which is upheld by his wife, Abigail, later in the narrative (1 Sam 25:25). Nabal is set up to be the "obstinate, boorish, drunk" in contrast to David's apparent chivalry and good nature (1 Sam 25:6-8, 32-34).[85]

David assembles his men to attack Nabal, but his hand is stayed by Abigail, Nabal's wife (1 Sam 25:13-35). When news of David's imminent attack on Nabal comes to one his slaves (1 Sam 25:14), it is to Abigail that the slave takes the news and not to Nabal. This shows that "it is clear that Abigail is in charge of the household" rather than Nabal which casts a further negative light against his character, showing him as either inept or unreliable.[86] Nabal here is the caricature of a powerful man who is not even in charge of his household. Nabal's station is also contrasted with that of David's as, after his refusal to share provisions with the David, Nabal holds a feast. More specifically, he is said to hold a feast "like the feast of a king" (1 Sam 25:36). This is revelatory of Nabal's inability to share as well as his possible delusions of grandeur.[87] It is also ironic that he sets a feast for a proverbial king (himself), while neglecting and denying food to Israel's future king. The carnivalesque motif of feasting here satirises the pretensions of some Israelite kings. Similarly, Jeremiah satirises the pretensions of one of the sons of King Josiah: "Do you think you are a king because you compete in cedar? Did not your father eat and drink – and do justice and righteousness?" (Jer 22:15).

It is during this king-like feast that Abigail tells Nabal of her interception of David, as Nabal is seemingly urinating against the wall of his home.[88] The close tie of urine and libation is a common carnivalesque image, since in the duality of the feasting and the expulsion of the by-products of this feasting, the "limits between the devouring and the devoured body are erased".[89] So too are the notions of life and death in close proximity to

[84] Diane L. Jacobson, "And Then There Were the Women in His Life: David and His Women", *Word & World* 23 (2003), 403-412, here 406.
[85] John Dekker, "Characterization in the Hebrew Bible: Nabal as a Test Case", *BBR* 26.3 (2016), 311-324, here 319.
[86] David J. Zucker and Moshe Reiss, "David's Wives: Love, Power, and Lust", *BTB* 46 (2016), 70-78, here 74.
[87] Dekker, "Characterization in the Hebrew Bible", 319.
[88] Ibid. The MT says literally that Abigail told her husband "when the wine was going out of Nabal" (1 Sam 25:37).
[89] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 223.

one another here; Abigail's intervention has saved Nabal yet the news of the same causes Nabal to fall into a coma-like state (1 Sam 25:37). Nabal's merriment in his ignorance is ruined by Abigail's news, and in a similar fashion so too is Saul's merriment ruined previously (and subsequently) by his own realisation of the inevitability of David's rise to the throne (1 Sam 24:20; 26:25). Saul's "self-awareness, instead of providing the relief of a certain distance from one's predicament, only intensifies it, and [becomes] the very core of the problem" rather than becoming the antidote.[90]

One would imagine this truth would be liberating for Saul as it should be for Nabal; an offer of relief and a moment of introspection. Instead, seeming good fortune is undermined for both, which is ironic in the face of David's apparent continual good fortune. It is this good fortune of David's which re-emerges again, as Nabal is struck dead by God (1 Sam 25:37-38). This is yet another moment of the unfathomability of God as the cosmic terror and parallels the unexplained killing of Uzzah (2 Sam 6:7).[91] David now takes possession of Abigail as his own wife. Yet, in a carnivalesque style, the romantic bubble in which "the 'fair maiden' Abigail [is] freed from the 'wicked ogre' [Nabal] and marries 'prince charming' [David]" is burst as David takes Abigail as his wife along with a number of other women as David appears to be amassing his own harem (1 Sam 25:39-44).[92]

5.8 - Saul's Continued Decline and Death (1 Sam 26-31):

As David's power base is growing, Saul and David have their final in-person confrontation. Saul pursues David again into hill country of Ziph, and it would seem that God has provided David with another opportunity to strike down Saul, yet David refrains and instead takes a symbolic token of his mercy towards Saul (1 Sam 26:8-12). Saul loses his spear to David, a possible symbolic representation of his masculinity and power. The sleep which falls upon Saul and his men is another moment of true human vulnerability which the king shows in the presence of David; the lofty position of the king is undermined as he is forced to 'listen' to his own body and rest. The royal pedestal on which Saul may have been placed is symbolically undermined further as David stands above Saul, on the hill as he calls out

[90] Bernstein, *Bitter Carnival*, 30.

[91] Here in 1 Sam 25, Nabal is killed suddenly by God and David (and the reader) may take it as retribution for the insult Nabal had given to David. If this is the case, this detail will make Uzzah's death by God in 2 Sam 6 and David's subsequent confusion more understandable, because David had been under the impression that God was on his side.

[92] Berlin, "Characterization in Biblical Narrative", 77.

to Abner, the commander of Saul's forces (1 Sam 26:17). David, as before, calls out to Saul and pleads his innocence, debasing himself as one not important enough for a king to bother with (with the comic image of the flea) and calls upon God to protect him (1 Sam 26:17-20, 24). The hope exists for David that Saul's blessing and departure will serve as an end to the crusade against him as each departs (1 Sam 26:25).

The concluding chapters of the 1 Samuel narrative witness the end of interaction between David and Saul, as the story moves between two perspectives; one belonging to Saul in his final days and the other belonging to David as he becomes a mercenary for the Philistines (1 Sam 27). In one of these concluding chapters, prophet and king are reunited as Saul seeks an audience with God who has been completely silent in his dealings with the king. This event occurs as word spreads that David has (ironically) aligned himself with the Philistines who have gathered themselves against the Israelites once more (1 Sam 28:1-6). As no conventional methods of conversation between divine and mundane sources can be found, Saul turns to magic to aid him and seeks out a medium at Endor (1 Sam 28:7). Saul instructs the woman to divine Samuel, who is not best pleased by the disruption of his eternal rest, emerging as another occasion where Saul must humble himself in Samuel's presence. Whereas Saul has abandoned his kingly attire, "Samuel refuses to relinquish the robe of his authority", and proceeds to berate the aging king even in death.[93] The deceased prophet informs the king that God is set against him, and that Saul will die in the battle against the Philistines along with all his sons, whereupon Saul and all his sons will join Samuel in death (1 Sam 28:8-19). The pulling of Samuel from the grave back into existence before Saul could be considered as the pulling of life out of the earth, the image of a pregnant earth giving forth life, as well as the interaction of both life and death in a cyclical form which becomes the Janus-faced form of the carnival. The image of "the dead body…buried in the earth, rising for another life" is a widespread carnivalesque theme.[94]

Saul does not receive the news of his imminent demise in the same fashion as Agag had previously met his own fate (1 Sam 15:32), and the king collapses to the ground in fear (1 Sam 28:20). It would seem Saul has finally understood the implications of the dismissal handed out by Samuel (1 Sam 15:35) during the Philistine battles which the king had refused to acknowledge. God has rejected Saul as king and Saul's continued ignorance of

[93] Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 298.
[94] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 327.

this has placed him at odds with God. As a result, Saul's continuing to "reign has been a husk only".[95] This falling to the ground in fear of the prophet's words recalls his previous falling naked to the ground with the prophets/ravers when overwhelmed by God's spirit (1 Sam 19:24). The realisation of his own demise leaves Saul not unlike a child, lying on the ground, almost mid-tantrum. Perhaps it is the unenviable prospect of spending "an eternal length of time with Samuel" which so fills Saul with dread.[96] Even the offer of food from the witch is not enough to budge the king until his men plead with him to sit and eat, which he does.

The extraordinary event of the séance with Samuel is juxtaposed against the rather mundane act of eating which takes place, with the witch perhaps thinking that "the best way to bring people back to physical and emotional reality is to get some food into their system".[97] The meal seems to do the trick as Saul then departs without another word having been spoken by the king, either in thanks or in terror of his impending demise (1 Sam 28:21-25). This imagery of the feast is significant within the framework of the carnival space. The interaction of the open and unfinished body and the world is clearly shown in the act of eating and drinking, since the "encounter of man with the world…takes place inside the open [and] chewing mouth".[98] Once again those carnivalesque two-fold images of life and death are seen here; Saul's looming fate at the hands of the Philistines is contrasted with the feast-like scene involving the medium which encourages the king back to his feet and on his way. It is perhaps this 'comfort food' which enabled Saul to continue on.

The narrative camera moves back to David, who is distanced from the ranks of Achish's men for the impending battle, thereby removing any possible accusation of David's having killed any of his countrymen in battle (1 Sam 29). In fact, the account is at pains to show that David not only was not involved in any battle against Saul but was concerned with the dispatching of enemies of his own. While David and his men were encamped with the Philistines, the Amalekites ransacked David's camp and took their families as captives (1 Sam 30:1-6). David and his men attack the Amalekites and recover their families, taking any spoils of the Amalekites back with them (1 Sam 30:16-20). David

[95] Green, *King Saul's Asking*, 109.
[96] Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 301.
[97] Edelman, *King Saul in the Historiography of Judah*, 249.
[98] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 281.

wins popularity by ensuring there is equal share of the spoils amongst his men, even those who did not go with him (1 Sam 30:23-25), as well as the elders of Judah (1 Sam 30:26-31). It is ironic that David and his men are allowed to keep what was taken from the Amalekites, whereas Saul was previously condemned for doing so (1 Sam 15:20-23).

While David seems to be solidifying good will amongst the elders of Judah, Saul and his men confront the forces of the Philistines (1 Sam 31:1). When Saul is fighting he is injured gravely, and the reader is told of the deaths of Jonathan as well as Saul's other sons (1 Sam 31:2-3). Saul, fearing being abused by his enemy, instructs his armour-bearer to kill him, which the youth is unwilling to do, and so Saul takes his own life (1 Sam 31:4). As to how Saul's suicide was to be taken by the text's original readers is unclear, as the Bible has no "actual legislation" against suicide.[99] Perhaps this act of Saul taking his own life allows Israel's first king a tragic moment of initiative which had thus been lacking in him. The Philistines capture Saul's body, cutting off his head and stripping his armour, and putting his body on display as a sort of victory trophy on the walls of the city of Beth-shan (1 Sam 31:8-10). Here we see the ultimate humiliation of the reluctant clown-king. Yet the great moment of Saul's first military victory (1 Sam 11:10-11) is recalled at this point, as the people of Jabesh-gilead travel to recover the bodies of Saul and his sons, which are buried and mourned (1 Sam 31:11-13).

Saul's death here signals the closing of one 'chapter' and the beginning of another; the death of one king in favour of another. In a Bakhtinian perspective, this is renewal par excellence as the "ambivalence of being" is revived in the traditional carnivalesque image of death.[100] Saul's suicide, while being religiously taboo, nonetheless exists as an ambivalent death wish "which also sounds like a wish for renewal and rebirth: die, and live again".[101] The removal of the figure of Saul from the narrative landscape thus allows for more of a 'stage' for David. In the Bakhtinian carnival schema, Saul's death became a necessary transition in the carnival scheme as Saul was never going to willingly allow David to succeed which is exactly what needed to happen for the successful continuation of the parade system.

[99] Edelman, *King Saul in the Historiography of Judah*, 286. Comparable acts of suicide appear in Judg 16:30; 2 Sam 17:23; and 1 Kgs 16:18, though the moral and cultic implications of such an act are not clear.
[100] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 249.
[101] Ibid.

While the narrative of 1 Samuel ends on a seeming tragic note, the fact of the return of Saul's body back into the community is a moment of celebration, the smaller victory of the common man in the face of death. With the decapitation and degradation of the body of Saul as Israel's first king, the advent of David as Israel's new king can come to fruition. Within this grizzly image of the body rent asunder, Saul's death becomes the space in which new life for the community can be created: "the beginning and end of life are closely linked and interwoven".[102] It is through Saul's death that the community is granted new life as "the human race is not merely renewed with each new generation [but rather] it rises to a new level of development".[103] Thus the typically tragic ending of Saul becomes elevated in its degradation, seen less as a failure of one king, replaced by another, but rather as the passing of one figure to be subsumed back into the communal body, while another fills this void in the parade. The old makes way for the new by Saul's death, highlighting that "monarchy is therefore not something fixed once and for all, but is rather in process, continually changing and progressing" through the figure of the king.[104]

5.9 - The Rise of David and the Conclusion of the Carnival (2 Sam 1-5):

The opening chapters of 2 Samuel stand as an apology for David and his fledgling kingship following the death of Saul. There remain no viable heirs to the Saulide throne and so the narrative must solidify David's claim to the throne as well as his being blameless for Saul's demise. In Ziklag, David is told by an Amalekite that Saul is dead. The Amalekite informs David that he was the one who slew Saul, having been called forth by the king despite it contradicting entirely the account given in 1 Samuel 31 (2 Sam 1:6-10).[105] David is grief-stricken over the news and, in high-flown poetry, laments the passing of Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam 1:19-27), after having the Amalekite killed for his murder of Saul in a stunning display of David's ignorance of the phrase 'don't kill the messenger' (2 Sam 1:15-16). The narratives of 2 Samuel 2-5 further strengthen David's position, as he is made king of Judah and resists attempts to stop him assuming this new title from Ishbaal, the penultimate of

[102] Ibid, 317.
[103] Ibid, 324.
[104] Kipfer and Hutton, "The Book of Samuel and Its Response to Monarchy", 18.
[105] On the contradictions between the narrator's and the Amalekite's report of Saul's death, see: Alter, *The David Story*, 195-196; A.A. Anderson, *2 Samuel* (WBC 11. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1989), 5; Craig Morrison, *2 Samuel*, Berit Olam (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2013), 26. Morrison regards the Amalekite messenger as embellishing his story to David, possibly for some sort of reward.

Saul's surviving sons (2 Sam 2-3).[106] Abner, Ishbaal's general, defects from Ishbaal after an altercation concerning concubines and changes allegiances to David (2 Sam 3:9-12).

David accepts Abner under the condition that Michal is returned to him as his wife, which Abner accomplishes with Michal's former husband, Paltiel, tearfully following Abner until the latter tells him to depart (2 Sam 3:15-16). There is a carnivalesque pathos in Paltiel's display of affection for his wife, now reclaimed by David, in an act that casts a more sinister light upon the heroic figure of David. Abner furthers David's claim by persuading all the elders of Israel and Benjamin, the former site of Saul's heritage, to join with David (2 Sam 3:17-19). However, Joab, David's own general, has Abner killed as revenge for Abner's killing of Joab's brother, Asahel, in battle (2 Sam 2:23). This is an act that David condemns without punishing Joab for it, and instead he insists the blame will fall upon Joab's house in time (2 Sam 3:28-30). The narrator of this segment makes it explicitly clear, to the point of it being distracting, that David is blameless for any wrongdoing against Abner: "And all the people took notice of it, and it pleased them; as everything that the king did pleased all the people. So all the people and all Israel understood that day that it had not been the king's will to slay Abner the son of Ner" (2 Sam 3:36-37 RSV).

Following Abner's death, Ishbaal is next assassinated by his captains Baanah and Rechab, who cut off his head and bring it to David (2 Sam 4:5-8). The news does not please David and he has these two men killed in turn (2 Sam 4:12). While the news may not have thrilled David, Ishbaal's death means there is no longer any viable threat to David's solidification of his own power as king, and so all the tribes of Israel come to Hebron to confirm David as monarch (2 Sam 5:3). The next step for David is to acquire a city of his own, which he does by besieging Jerusalem and trying to oust the resident Jebusites from the city which was being defended by the lame and blind, who sided with the Jebusites (2 Sam 5:6). The supposed use of the blind and the lame to defend the city gives a carnivalesque comical aspect, being the inversion of the expected strong men and military forces.[107]

[106] The remaining heir of Saul, Mephibosheth (Jonathan's son), is crippled (2 Sam 4:4) and hence not viable as a king. It seems ironic that Saul's last surviving heir is a cripple, given the focus which had been placed on his own impressive physical stature.
[107] Anderson, *2 Samuel*, 83.

David is subsequently victorious in his siege against Jerusalem, as he has been wont to be throughout the narrative thus far, and defeats the Jebusites and claims the city (2 Sam 5:7). David is now in an exceedingly strong position, which is capped off by the narrative telling the reader that God was indeed with David (2 Sam 5:10), as if this could be doubted at this stage. The Philistines, hearing of the growing power of David, go up against him in order to undermine this new Israelite threat (2 Sam 5:17). David decisively defeats the Philistines, capturing their idols (2 Sam 5:20-21). Apparently the Philistines are a determined bunch and decide to attack David again, but they are resoundingly defeated again (2 Sam 5:22-25). It is at this point that David has now manoeuvred himself into a position of unambiguous power, ratified by victory over his enemies (foreign and domestic), people, and God. The new carnival king has evidently arisen, to replace the old deceased monarch.

5.10 - Concluding Remarks:

The consolidatory event of Saul's first military excursion against Nahash and the Ammonites (1 Sam 11) seems to have been one of the last triumphant moments for the clown-king. The subsequent episodes recount Saul's ineptitude as a leader (1 Sam 13; 14) and his failure to follow God's commands through his own lack of fortitude, ending with his loss of his kingdom (1 Sam 15:26-28). Yet from a Bakhtinian perspective, the downfall of Saul is a necessity for the carnival project, with the growth of the new (i.e. David) requiring the death of the old (i.e. Saul) so that it may prosper. The bumbling nature of Saul's decline is predominantly self-inflicted, arising from a lack of 'gumption' on Saul's part, which is something even Samuel is aware of (1 Sam 15:17). While this is tragic in one sense, it plays well into the "mock crowning" and degradation that is characteristic of the clown-king figure, being a "primary carnivalisitic act".[108] The moment of Saul's death then becomes "transformative for him" rather than being a finalising and tragic fate for Israel's first king.[109] Saul is able to govern the manner in which he dies, even if the context is not

[108] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 124.

[109] Green, *How Are The Mighty Fallen?* 467. Saul's descendants, officials, and 'associates' "continue to emerge throughout 2 Samuel: Abner (chs. 2-4; military leader), Ishbaal (chs. 2-4; son), Rizpah (chs. 3; 21; concubine), Michal (chs. 3; 6; daughter), Baanah and Rechab (chs. 4; Benjaminites), Ziba (chs 9; 16; 19; servant), Mephibosheth (chs 4; 9; 16; 19; 21; grandson and son of Jonathan), Shimei (chs 16; 19; Benjaminite), Sheba (chs 20; Benjaminite), and seven other male descendants of Saul (ch. 21)" (Robert Rezetko, 'David over Saul in MT 2 Samuel 6:1-5: An Exercise in Textual and Literary Criticism', in *For and Against David: Story and History in the Books of Samuel*, eds. A Graeme Auld and Erik Eynikel, BETL 232 [Leuven: Peeters, 2010], 255-272, here 256).

of his own making. Saul's suicide then draws to a close the 'distance' between his own will and that of God's, as Saul "has accepted his fate".[110]

Though the death of a central figure which the reader has come to 'know' in some sense would carry with it a sense of sadness, the narrative, with its carnivalesque sensibilities, allows for a post-mortem moment of triumph in the recollection of his grand military success of 1 Samuel 11. Saul's body, and those of his sons, are rescued and buried by those that he had bravely aided before (1 Sam 31:11-13). The death and humiliation imposed on Saul's deceased form (1 Sam 31:9-10) is the tearing asunder of the old form, accomplished in Saul's death, which allows for the new to prosper. The former clownish figure of Israel's first king, representing the hegemony surrounding the notion of how and what a king should be, is removed and replaced. This transformation of forms, from Saul to David, is uniquely "located in the nether world, in death" as the very act of living has inherent the inevitability of death (and vice-versa).[111] Yet Saul is not left to languish in death, being remembered and redeemed by his earlier valour, and is brought back into the collective body of the community (an act later applauded by David – 2 Sam 2:4-7). Saul's death becomes the zone in which a new form of life and birth may take place; in the "fruitful earth and the womb" which is "always conceiving".[112] So in this way, Saul "dies well".[113]

The narrative 'field' is thus cleared for new growth to propagate. David emerges as one for whom the royal robes may have been intended, which now stand empty.[114] The younger man definitively has a drive which had been lacking in Saul (cf. 1 Sam 17:26, 29, 31-32; 18:5), appearing even as "someone who lusted…for power and control".[115] Though David has his moments of degradation – feigned madness (1 Sam 21:13) and being publicly insulted (1 Sam 24:14; 25:10-11) – the enigmatic construction of his character stops such debasement from becoming wholly pathetic as they had been with Saul. This may be due to the sense of agency attached to David's actions that was lacking on the part of Saul; David seems to be in some way an author of his own activity (whether good or bad) and so he becomes more nuanced. In Bakhtin's parlance, David is of a "fully realised and

[110] Edelman, *King Saul in the Historiography of Judah*, 283. Saul seems to accept his fate verbally when in contact with David on two occasions (1 Sam 24:20; 26:25), yet it is at his death that Saul appears to surrender his body to the notion that he can no longer succeed.
[111] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 161.
[112] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 21.
[113] Green, *King Saul's Asking*, 117.
[114] Green, *How Are The Mighty Fallen?* 178.
[115] McKenzie, *King David*, 4.

thoroughly consistent dialogic position, one that affirms the independence, internal freedom, unfinalisability, and indeterminacy of the hero".[116] A similar sense of agency was lacking in Saul, as he was led, cajoled, and manoeuvred by seen and unseen forces into the position in which he found himself. As well as this, any action which Saul undertakes by his own volition is as a consequence of someone else's initiative, and ends in failure. For example, his making of the oath after Jonathan had defeated the Philistine forces (1 Sam 14:24).[117] It is interesting to note that one of the few times in the narrative in which Saul takes the initiative is in seeking out a medium to speak to Samuel, who informs the aging king of his demise (1 Sam 28:7, 15-20). It would seem Saul is adept at seeking out his own death.

David's actions of piety (1 Sam 17:26b, 37, 45-47) or moments of ambiguous motivation (1 Sam 17:55-58; 18:27; 25:5-8) should be accepted with the ambiguity they retain, as the acts of the clown similarly "cannot be understood in a direct and unmediated way because…they are not what they seem".[118]David is popularly clothed with "the expression 'a man after God's own heart', giving him the pious benefit of the doubt" in moments where he is less than pious and so is granted a certain degree of forgiveness by the reader.[119] Thus this 'newcomer' to the position of leadership is already established in a better place than his predecessor. The interplay of crownings and decrownings – through the decline of Saul and the rise of David – represents the central motive of the carnival, being the prosperity and growth in the new form, through the "election of short-lived kings".[120] This growth and prosperity is something telegraphed by David's military and political successes, culminating in the capture of Jerusalem (2 Sam 5:6-16) whereupon his successes become a public site of the renewal of the community.

Within the ebb and flow of human leadership there is the Deity who inspires "the pathos of shifts and changes".[121] The narrative space from 1 Samuel 18 to 2 Samuel 5 is preoccupied primarily with the prolonged game of 'cat and mouse' between Saul and David. Yet God's designation of cosmic terror, when taken from Saul's perspective, is all the more formidable in his reticence. Perhaps silence is the best policy, considering Saul's

[116] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 63.
[117] Other passages showing Saul's vulnerability include: 1 Sam 9; 10:23; 11:6; 13:11-14; 14:45; 15:20-22; 16:14-16; 19:23-24.
[118] Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 159.
[119] Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 7.
[120] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 124.
[121] Ibid.

refusal to accept his dismissal as king. The effect of this reticence is rather sinister, increasing the mania attached to Saul's position before his death, in comparison to the relative cacophony of interaction between God and David (1 Sam 23:2, 10-12; 30:8).[122] It is God's conversation partner and new 'chosen one' who fills the power void following Saul's death, and who will usher in the moment of renewal so needed by the community and so desired by God.

The death of Saul carries within its tragedy a celebration of "the very process of replaceability", being a "constructive death" where the new may be able to prosper.[123] While in Saul the question of ability was raised, it seems in David it may have been answered. The figure of the clown-king in this carnival space personifies of the struggle against the stifling and stagnant normality of "life-slots", and it is in this struggle that the clown-king "takes on an extraordinary significance".[124] As the question of who may be able to stand before God is posed (1 Sam 6:20), the answer may be that "no one can, though someone must".[125] The question is first posed in the initial ark narratives (1 Sam 4-6), following God's killing of a mass of people at Beth-she'mesh (1 Sam 6:19) for infringing on the 'personal space' of the ark. It is noteworthy that in the subsequent narrative regarding the ark, that an attendant is struck down for a similar infraction (2 Sam 6:6-7), and David ponders a similar question regarding suitability of caretaking the Deity (2 Sam 6:9). As the narrative shifts to the relocation of the ark in Jerusalem, the reader (and possible God, too) hopes that this 'someone' is indeed David, as he has "completed the consolidation of his rule over all the land".[126] It is in this 'land' (both actual land conquered and the metaphorical landscape of the narrative) that the zenith of the carnival will take place. There is a sense of good and growth in David's activity, and so his rule "cannot help growing because growth is inherent in its very nature".[127]

[122] Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 209. Sternberg describes the effect of reticence as being "macabre", playing alongside a narratorial silence on "evaluative and informational" planes.
[123] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 125.
[124] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 163.
[125] James S. Ackerman, "Who Can Stand Before YHWH, This Holy God? A Reading of 1 Samuel 1-15", *Prooftexts* 11.1 (1991), 1-24, here 21.
[126] Alter, *The David Story*, 224.
[127] Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 168.

CHAPTER 6: THE ZENITH OF THE NEW CLOWN-KING (2 SAM. 6)

6.1 - David's Takeover from Saul:

From 1 Samuel 9-31, the narrative landscape has been dominated by the figure of Saul, whether as the unwilling protagonist or as the antagonist by his own volition. The mantle and robes of the clown-king have been retained by Saul, even if they may have been ill-fitting. Yet they have been subsequently transferred to the person of David as the narrative has progressed and Saul has left the 'stage' of the story, as David has become king. The jump from 1 Samuel 11 to this point of 2 Samuel 6 is significant, yet the role of the clown-king remains the same. This is a figure which stands as the atypical form of the conventional image of what and how a king should be, undermining this authoritative ideological stance regarding the monarchic figure as well as the glory attached to their person.

The clown was "the herald of another, non-feudal, nonofficial truth" within the carnival structure, and this figure becomes the clown-king through the use of degradation and 'tearing down' of this more official visage.[1] This has been recounted and witnessed in the person of Saul, and has been 'teased' in the person of David when he feigned madness (1 Sam 21:10-15). Yet the driving force behind the narrative has been the struggle for power for David, first with Saul and then Saul's descendants. David has shown his proficiency as a military leader in his conquering of Jerusalem (2 Sam 5), as well as his shrewdness and political savvy (cf. 1 Sam 16:18; 18:5, 14-16, 30; 21:2, 8; 30:6; 2 Sam 1:1-16; 2:6).[2] As a literary figure, David stands as an archetypical form of the heroic 'underdog': the 'little guy' from humble beginnings who has the will to persevere. Yet David as a character is definitively 'rounded', and simply cannot be reduced to a singular description. Compared to Saul's more 'bumbling' figure, David appears as a far more capable leader despite the text not deviating away from the humanity inherent in his character (cf. the scandal with Bathsheba and Uriah's murder in 2 Sam 11). It may be that sheer duality of the man, who still retains those very human aspects of folly, which makes

[1] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 93.

[2] For commentators that discuss the multi-faceted nature of David's character (both in a positive and negative sense) see: Brueggemann, *David's Truth*; Garsiel, *The First Book of Samuel;* Green, *David's Capacity for Compassion;* Gunn, *The Story of King David;* Halpern, *David's Secret Demons;* McKenzie, *King David;* Anthony Phillips, *David: A Story of Passion and Tragedy* (London: SPCK, 2008).

David such a popular and intriguing individual as "it is common for people to recast David in their own image of perfection".[3] David emerges as a "dominant engine for Israel's imagination", and one which cannot be "reduced to a single claim" of being wholly good or wholly bad.[4] The dual nature of David – with its positive, negative, and ambiguous aspects – is a fundamental part of his character, folded into the more prosaic elements of his being a competent leader who has fit into the 'mold' of king far better than his predecessor.

Thus, the figure of David as a capable military leader who is politically astute has been established, reinforcing the ideal of David being better than Saul (cf. 1 Sam 15:28). Yet despite certain clownish or unexpected kingly behaviours being glimpsed within the character zone of David, there have been no real moments of this carnivalesque figure shining through as had been seen with Saul previously. The initial outward depiction of David (1 Sam 16:11-12) is of a handsome young man, yet not the physically intimidating and conventionally heroic form portrayed by Saul (1 Sam 9:2; 10:23-24). David's physicality is counter to this standard and conventional image of a king as a viscerally formidable form, one which immediately sparks the recognition of Saul as a hero, being the archetype of the traditional epic hero.[5] Meanwhile, David's initial description is almost as the feminine counterpart; he is lovely, slight, with beautiful eyes and the reverse of what had been thus established as the necessary physical markers for male leadership (cf. 1 Sam 9:2; 10:23-24; 16:6-7). Yet, just as the two differ considerably in relation to their physical appearances, so too do they differ fundamentally with regards their internal countenance. Saul undermines this expectation through his nervousness and lack of conviction (1 Sam 9:5-10; 10:16, 22-23; 14:44-45; 15:7-15). David upholds the expectation of, if not a king, then at least the hero who is active and is involved in the construction of his own narrative path by defeating his enemies (cf. 17:26-51; 18:5-6). It is at this juncture of 2 Samuel 6, following the consolidation of David's power in Jerusalem, that his mantle as king is all but cemented. This moment of aggrandisement of David's monarchic person leaves the proverbial door open for the carnival to reach its zenith, as with a rising movement the carnival necessitates a downward swing with the "transfer [of] top to bottom, and bottom

[3] McKenzie, *King David*, 189.
[4] Brueggemann, *David's Truth*, 111.
[5] Cole Salao, *8 Types of Heroes in Fiction*, available at: https://www.tckpublishing.com/types-of-heroes/ [accessed: 21st February 2022].

to top".[6] David's transfer of the ark to Jerusalem forms the peak of the carnival scene in the story of this monarch.

6.2 - The First Attempt of Transferring the Ark (2 Sam 6:1-11):

Table 6.2: Hebrew and Greek Translations

Hebrew Text (MT) of 2 Sam 6:1-11	MT Translation of 2 Sam 6:1-11[7]	Greek Text (LXX) of 2 Sam 6:1-11	LXX Translation of 2 Sam 6:1-11
וַיֹּסֶף עוֹד דָּוִד אֶת־כָּל־בָּחוּר בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁלֹשִׁים אָלֶף׃	1 David again gathered all the young men in Israel, [being] thirty thousand.[8]	καὶ συνήγαγεν ἔτι Δαυιδ πάντα νεανίαν ἐξ Ισραηλ ὡς ἑβδομήκοντα χιλιάδας	1 David again gathered together every young man from Israel, about seventy thousand.
וַיָּקָם ו וַיֵּלֶךְ דָּוִד וְכָל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ מִבַּעֲלֵי יְהוּדָה לְהַעֲלוֹת מִשָּׁם אֶת אֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר־נִקְרָא שֵׁם שֵׁם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת יֹשֵׁב הַכְּרֻבִים עָלָיו׃	2 David rose and went with all the people who were with him, from Baale-judah in order to bring up from there ark of God, over which the name is invoked, the name of the LORD of hosts, the one enthroned upon the cherubim.[9]	καὶ ἀνέστη καὶ ἐπορεύθη Δαυιδ καὶ πᾶς ὁ λαὸς ὁ μετ᾽ αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀρχόντων Ιουδα ἐν ἀναβάσει τοῦ ἀναγαγεῖν ἐκεῖθεν τὴνκιβωτὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐφ᾽ ἣν ἐπεκλήθη τὸ ὄνομακυρίου τῶν δυνάμεων καθημένου ἐπὶ τῶν Χερουβιν ἐπ᾽ αὐτῆς	2 And David got up and went with all the people who were with him, from the rulers of Judah, in an ascent in order to bring up from there the ark of God, upon which was invoked the name of the LORD of hosts, who is seated upon the cherubim.
וַיַּרְכִּבוּ אֶת־אֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים אֶל־עֲגָלָה חֲדָשָׁה וַיִּשָּׂאֻהוּ מִבֵּית אֲבִינָדָב אֲשֶׁר בַּגִּבְעָה וְעֻזָּא וְאַחְיוֹ בְּנֵי אֲבִינָדָב נֹהֲגִים אֶת־הָעֲגָלָה חֲדָשָׁה׃	3 And they had the ark of God ride on a new cart, and they lifted it up from the house of Abinadab which was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were driving the new cart.	καὶ ἐπεβίβασεν τὴν κιβωτὸν κυρίου ἐφ᾽ ἅμαξαν καινὴν καὶ ἦρεν αὐτὴν ἐξ οἴκου Αμιναδαβ τοῦ ἐν τῷ βουνῷ καὶ Οζα καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτοῦ υἱοὶ Αμιναδαβ ἦγον τὴν ἅμαξαν	3 And they seated the ark of the Lord upon a new cart, and they carried it out of the house of Aminadab on the hill. Uzzah, and his kin, the sons of Abinadab, were leading the cart,[10]
וַיִּשָּׂאֻהוּ מִבֵּית אֲבִינָדָב אֲשֶׁר בַּגִּבְעָה עִם אֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים וְאַחְיוֹ הֹלֵךְ לִפְנֵי הָאָרוֹן׃	4 When they lifted it up from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill, [he was] with the ark of God. And Ahio was walking before the ark.	σὺν τῇ κιβωτῷ καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτοῦ ἐπορεύοντο ἔμπροσθεν τῆς κιβωτοῦ	4 …with the ark; and his kin were going in front of the ark.[11]
וְדָוִד ו וְכָל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל מְשַׂחֲקִים לִפְנֵי יְהוָה בְּכָל עֲצֵי בְרוֹשִׁים וּבְכִנֹּרוֹת וּבִנְבָלִים	5 And David, and all the house of Israel, were playing before the LORD with all wooden instruments of juniper; harps, stringed	καὶ Δαυιδ καὶ οἱ υἱοὶ Ισραηλ παίζοντες ἐνώπιον κυρίου ἐν ὀργάνοις ἡρμοσμένοις ἐν ἰσχύι καὶ ἐν ᾠδαῖς καὶ ἐν κινύραις καὶ ἐν νάβλαις καὶ	5 And David and the sons of Israel were playing before the LORD with might, with tuned instruments and in songs,

[6] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 370.

[7] Translation own. Hebrew text available from BibleHub, and LXX text taken from Blue Letter Bible. The present study of the narrative of the Books of Samuel ignores the parallel text in 1 Chr 13:1-4; 15:25-29; 16:1-3, which is beyond the scope of the present investigation.

[8] MT here has "thirty" whereas the LXX has "seventy" (as in 1 Sam 11:8).

[9] Here the MT has "Baale-judah", probably a place-name, whereas the LXX has "rulers of Judah" (τῶν ἀρχόντων Ιουδα). A longer reading appears in 4QSam[a]: "to Baalah, that is, Kiriath-jearim, which belongs to Judah" (McCarter, *II Samuel*, 162). The MT repeats the word "name" (שֵׁם) twice in this passage, possibly as a type of emphasis with regards the ark. McCarter theorises that this repetition could actually be the locative "there" (שָׁם) (McCarter, *II Samuel*, 163).

[10] The proper name "Ahio", which is represented in the MT, is translated here in the LXX as "his brothers" and could be understood as a misreading. In the second mention, the LXX lacks the adjective "new" describing the cart (Anderson, *2 Samuel*, 98).

[11] The LXX here omits the longer reading, which is retained in the MT text.

וּבְתֻפִּים וּבִמְנַעֲנָעִים וּבְצֶלְצָלִים:	instruments, tambourines, sistrums, and cymbals.[12]	ἐν τυμπάνοις καὶ ἐν κυμβάλοις καὶ ἐν αὐλοῖς	with lyres, stringed instruments, drums, cymbals, and flutes.[13]
וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד־גֹּרֶן נָכֹון וַיִּשְׁלַח עֻזָּא אֶל־אֲרֹון הָאֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאחֶז בֹּו כִּי שָׂמְטוּ הַבָּקָר:	6 When they came as far as the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and he grabbed it for the oxen let it slip.	καὶ παραγίνονται ἕως ἅλω Νωδαβ καὶ ἐξέτεινεν Οζα τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὴν κιβωτὸν τοῦ θεοῦ κατασχεῖν αὐτὴν καὶ ἐκράτησεν αὐτήν ὅτι περιέσπασεν αὐτὴν ὁ μόσχος τοῦ κατασχεῖν αὐτήν	6 And as they came to the threshing floor of Nodab, Uzzah stretched out his hand onto the ark of God to hold it back; he seized it because the calf caused it to become loose, to hold it back.[14]
וַיִּחַר־אַף יְהוָה בְּעֻזָּה וַיַּכֵּהוּ שָׁם הָאֱלֹהִים עַל־הַשַּׁל וַיָּמָת שָׁם עִם אֲרֹון הָאֱלֹהִים:	7 And the anger of the LORD was inflamed against Uzzah, and God struck him down there because of his error. And he died there beside the ark of God.[15]	καὶ ἐθυμώθη κύριος τῷ Οζα καὶ ἔπαισεν αὐτὸν ἐκεῖ ὁ θεός καὶ ἀπέθανεν ἐκεῖ παρὰ τὴν κιβωτὸν τοῦ κυρίου ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ	7 And the LORD was angry with Uzzah, and God struck him there; and he died there beside the ark of the LORD before God.[16]
וַיִּחַר לְדָוִד עַל אֲשֶׁר פָּרַץ יְהוָה פֶּרֶץ בְּעֻזָּה וַיִּקְרָא לַמָּקֹום הַהוּא פֶּרֶץ עֻזָּה עַד הַיֹּום הַזֶּה:	8 David was inflamed over the fact that the LORD broke out with an outbreak against Uzzah. And that place is called Perez-uzzah until today.	καὶ ἠθύμησεν Δαυιδ ὑπὲρ οὗ διέκοψεν κύριος διακοπὴν ἐν τῷ Οζα καὶ ἐκλήθη ὁ τόπος ἐκεῖνος διακοπὴ Οζα ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ταύτης	8 And David was disheartened because the LORD made a breach against Uzzah; and that place was called Uzzah's Breach until this day.[17]
וַיִּרָא דָוִד אֶת־יְהוָה בַּיֹּום הַהוּא וַיֹּאמֶר אֵיךְ יָבֹוא אֵלַי אֲרֹון יְהוָה:	9 And David feared the LORD on that day, and he said: "How will the ark of the LORD come to me?"	καὶ ἐφοβήθη Δαυιδ τὸν κύριον ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ λέγων πῶς εἰσελεύσεται πρός με ἡ κιβωτὸς κυρίου	9 And David feared the LORD on that day, saying: "How will the ark of the LORD come in to me?"
וְלֹא־אָבָה דָוִד לְהָסִיר אֵלָיו אֶת־אֲרֹון יְהוָה עַל־עִיר דָּוִד וַיַּטֵּהוּ דָוִד בֵּית עֹבֵד־אֱדֹום הַגִּתִּי:	10 And David was not willing to move the ark of the LORD for himself to the city of David, and David took it aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite.	καὶ οὐκ ἐβούλετο Δαυιδ τοῦ ἐκκλῖναι πρὸς αὐτὸν τὴν κιβωτὸν διαθήκης κυρίου εἰς τὴν πόλιν Δαυιδ καὶ ἀπέκλινεν αὐτὴν Δαυιδ εἰς οἶκον Αβεδδαρα τοῦ Γεθθαίου	10 But David was not willing to turn away for himself the ark of the covenant of the LORD into the city of David, and David turned it aside into

[12] Where the MT reads בְּכָל עֲצֵי בְרֹושִׁים ("with all wooden instruments of juniper"), McCarter proposes וּבְשִׁירִים בִּכְלֵי עֹז ("with instruments of might and songs"). See: McCarter, *II Samuel,* 164 (cf. 1 Chr 13:8).

[13] The MT's description of the instruments used in this first procession is rendered as "instruments of juniper" whereas the LXX sees fit to denote the instruments as "tuned", and "in might" (ἐν ἰσχύι). The depiction of the initial procession in the LXX seems to be more war-like whereas the MT is presented more as a celebration.

[14] The MT has "Nacon" whereas the LXX here has "Nodab". 4QSam[a] has "Nodan" which may have become corrupted in the movement to the Greek, thus "Nodab". The corruption can thus lead this word to be translated as (1) a proper place name (2) as a "certain" or "permanent" threshing floor (see: McCarter, *II Samuel,* 164). This verse in the LXX also has the addition, against the MT, of "to hold it back" with regards Uzzah's grasping of the ark on the cart.

[15] The MT phrase עַל־הַשַּׁל is understood in the LXX MS Alexandrinus as "because of his rashness" (ἐπὶ τῇ προπετείᾳ). Comparison with 4QSam[a] and 1 Chr 13:10 suggests it is a remnantof a larger phrase, "because he put out his hand to the ark", according to McCarter (*II Samuel,* 165).

[16] The LXX has the addition of "before God" here. This may be reflective of 2 Sam 6:4 as the ark is symbolically identified with God's presence. All versions except that of the MT have Uzzah dying "in front of God", so it seems the MT has combined and compressed its own iteration to make Uzzah perishing "near the ark" (Auld, *I & II Samuel: A Commentary,* 411).

[17] David's reaction in the MT ("was inflamed") differs from that presented in the LXX, which is supplied as a more palatable emotional response (McCarter, *II Samuel,* 165).

			the house of Abed-dara the Gittite.[18]
וַיֵּשֶׁב אֲרוֹן יְהוָה בֵּית עֹבֵד אֱדֹם הַגִּתִּי שְׁלֹשָׁה חֳדָשִׁים וַיְבָרֶךְ יְהוָה אֶת־עֹבֵד אֱדֹם וְאֶת־כָּל־בֵּיתוֹ׃	11 The ark of the LORD stayed at the house of Obed-edom the Gittite for three months. And the LORD blessed Obed-edom and all his household.	καὶ ἐκάθισεν ἡ κιβωτὸς τοῦ κυρίου εἰς οἶκον Αβεδδαρα τοῦ Γεθθαίου μῆνας τρεῖς καὶ εὐλόγησεν κύριος ὅλον τὸν οἶκον Αβεδδαρα καὶ πάντα τὰ αὐτοῦ	11 And the ark of the LORD was set in the house of Abed-dara the Gittite for three months. And the LORD blessed all the house of Abed-dara and everything belonging to him.

6.2.2 - Discussion:

The focus of this chapter is the "ark of God" (2 Sam 6:2), beside which Samuel had once ministered when it was at Shiloh (1 Sam 3:3). The ark was a potent religious symbol, brought into battle against the Philistines, captured, and then restored (1 Sam 4-6), being left at Kiriath-jearim (1 Sam 7:1-2). The genesis of 2 Samuel 6 is David's carnivalesque gathering together of the men of Israel in order to move the ark of God into David's seat of power, Jerusalem, removing the ark from its "cold storage in Kiriath-jearim [and] decid[ing] to bring the ark to the heart of united Israel, to Jerusalem".[19] Previously David's power and position as king had been definitively ratified by the people and God (2 Sam 5), signalled through his victories over his enemies (from within and without). Now, the mustering of the chosen men (2 Sam 6:1) is done before reaching the site of the ark in Baale-judah so it can be assumed that the gathering took place in or around Jerusalem, and hence it is probable that the company was made up of those loyal to David. The troupe then travel to the site of Baale-judah (2 Sam 6:2), where the ark was being held and is presumably the same place as it was left at the start of 1 Samuel 7. Previously, it had been called Kiriath-jearim (1 Sam 6:20-21; 7:2) yet the name change to Baale-judah as is found here (2 Sam 6:2) can perhaps be considered as a synonym.[20]

The parade-like aroma that permeates David and his mustered men is evident here. While the event portrayed in 2 Samuel 6 is recounted as a one-time event, "in other evidence, the promenade of a god in public view is often associated with annual rites".[21] Fleming notes various ANE celebrations, but particularly the *zukru* festival from north-western Syria in honour of the god, Dagan, in which seven hundred lambs and fifty calves

[18] Where the MT reads "the ark of the LORD", the LXX has a larger reading: "the ark of the covenant of the LORD". While the MT has "Obed-edom", the LXX here has "Abed-dara".
[19] Borgman, *David, Saul, and God,* 105.
[20] Alter, *The David Story,* 225.
[21] Daniel E. Fleming, "David and the Ark: A Jerusalem Festival Reflected in Royal Narrative", in *Literature as Politics, Politics as Literature: Essays on the Ancient Near East in Honor of Peter Machinist,* ed. David S. Vanderhooft and Abraham Winitzer (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 75-95, here 75.

are sacrificed during this lavish celebration.[22] These associated ANE festivals also may not be wholly agricultural but are "focused instead on the city as the abode of the god" being celebrated.[23] The movement of this great horde to the ark, combined with the hyperbolic description of God's presence with the ark (2 Sam 6:2), serve to establish the carnivalesque atmosphere of the supernatural within the very real and mundane action of religious cultic centre relocation.

On a political level, this could be described as David's attempt to consolidate his power base further. Jerusalem would then not only be the centre of his political power, with it being referred to as "the city of David" (2 Sam 6:10, 12, 16) multiple times in this narrative alone, but also be the nucleus of Yahwistic devotion and thus David's position of power would be divinely "backed" if the relocation went well. The act of legitimising Jerusalem as a cultic centre would thus serve to authenticate David's rule, bolstering his political power under the guise of religious fidelity.[24] The description of David's gathering of the people and the cultic elements that follow "surely is informed by known ritual practice" which is being utilised to affirm his own power base.[25]

The mustering of the men and their procession is reflective of a victorious military march, like David's previous gathering of the men of Israel together before conflicts in which he was ultimately triumphant (cf. 2 Sam 5:6, 17-25). This event of a parade to claim the ark is seemingly set within the narrative of David claiming the ark of God – being "a sacred object…upon which the Israelites believed their god to be present".[26] The whole scene in some way resembles like a parent collecting a child after school. By contrast with David's double consultation of God when previously facing military attacks (2 Sam 5:19, 23), the seeming casualness of David's intention of ark collection and mustering of a parade of thirty thousand men is surprising and almost comical. In terms of the narrative perspective, it seems to be a 'hard-cut' to David putting his plan into action without any consultation of God or the people or any description of his deciding on this action (2 Sam 6:1), yet the rationale behind David's decision itself makes perfect sense from a strategic standpoint. This military-parade-cum-religious-procession thus retains a very real and

[22] Ibid, 85-86.
[23] Ibid, 88.
[24] Anderson, *2 Samuel,* WBC 11 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1989), 100.
[25] Fleming, "David and the Ark", 90.
[26] McCarter, *II Samuel, 173.*

concrete rationale while the action depicted itself strays into the more unrealistic dimension of the magical as the narrative progresses.

This action of David moving out with his gathering to take the ark of God into David's own city could be easily taken as an expression of divine acceptance, and a carnivalesque moment of the cosmic terror being brought into the image of the collective body of the community in the mustered people with David.[27] It would initially seem positive, that the whole carnival enterprise that began with Samuel's anointing of Saul is coming to fruition. Yet there exists a lack of agency from one figure in particular: God. At no point had God been mentioned as having sanctioned this removal, or even having been consulted as to whether this was warranted. Considering the allusions to a military parade with David's mustering and the subsequent extravagant pageantry (2 Sam 6:5), one would assume that a relatively simple inquiry to God would have been fitting as frequently done before (cf. Judg 20:18; 1 Sam 10:22; 23:2; 30:8; 2 Sam 2:1; 5:19, 23; 1 Kgs 22:6-9; 1 Chr 14:10). Yet this did not occur, and God is shuffled from his steady home in Baale-judah off to David's new abode in Jerusalem. The place setting of Jerusalem "brings [the reader] to a more familiar and essential cultic location".[28]

The reader may be reminded of Saul's own forcible relocation from place to place in 1 Samuel 9:1-10:16. In fact, the lack of agency in both accounts is remarkable and this is possibly one of the first times that Saul and God can be said to share some sort of character construction. The lack of agency surrounding the first clown-king figure of Saul was useful for the propagation of the carnival atmosphere at the beginning of the kingship narrative, since this passivity of the heroic protagonist undermined the previously accepted image of how a king was expected to act. However, the same idleness of self will not be replicated with God.

The ark is taken from Baale-judah, "with tuned instruments and in songs, with lyres, stringed instruments, drums, cymbals, and flutes" (2 Sam 6:5 LXX), with Abinadab's sons, Uzzah and Ahio, accompanying them. The movement of the ark from Baale-judah is reminiscent of the movement of the ark into battle against the Philistines (1 Sam 4:4), because in both instances the ark is used as some sort of symbol or mobile mascot to be shifted from place to place when a morale boost is needed. The huge pageantry of this

[27] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 341.
[28] Fleming, "David and the Ark", 78.

relocation is definitively carnivalesque in nature and would seem to be a positive start to David's consolidation of power to one single base. Indeed the scene of David and those who accompanied him playing or dancing with all their might before the ark with music and songs (2 Sam 6:5) gives the impression of a victory march, with the "participation of the king in the procession [suiting] a monarchic setting".[29] Yet this is a celebration for David and the focus of the exaltation in these actions is him; this is *his* parade, *his* men celebrating *his* victory, relocating *his* Deity's ark to *his* city.[30] The hubris of David here is evident and costly, and David runs the risk of becoming a new clown-king that will be brought down in a similar fashion to his predecessor.

It is not long before disaster strikes. As the horde of celebrants reaches the threshing floor of Nacon, one of the oxen pulling the ark stumbled and Uzzah "put out his hand" (2 Sam 6:6) to steady the ark. God did not appreciate Uzzah's help, and "struck him down there" for it (2 Sam 6:7). The phrase here – וַיִּחַר אַף יְהוָה – is commonly translated as "the anger of the LORD was kindled". The narrator's intention here is show God's anger at Uzzah's action. It is the idea of God's nose flaring in anger, conjuring up far more animalistic imagery than merely stating that God became angry with Uzzah. The same terminology will be used the succeeding verse, describing David's own frustration with God's action.

The killing of Uzzah is sudden, the immediacy of the act being just as shocking as the act itself. The ark is the physical manifestation of God on earth and thus is imbued with a huge degree of power, so Uzzah's touching said ark can be likened to one coming into "contact with a high-voltage electric core".[31] Naturally, this would never end well for Uzzah. The rationale behind Uzzah's action is reasonable yet even though a rationale behind God's action is given (2 Sam 6:7) it appears to be completely irrational, from a human perspective. The fault for Uzzah's death is presumably to be placed with Uzzah himself, with the Masoretic Text denoting Uzzah's action as erroneous despite the reasonable nature of Uzzah's unthinking response to the ark's near fall, and so the question arises as to whether it was Uzzah's simple act of touching the ark that was at fault or whether it was because he "sought to control it".[32] The "new cart" (2 Sam 6:3) used to

[29] Ibid, 91.
[30] The narrative repeats David's name numerous times in a relatively short section of verses (eight times, from 2 Sam 6:1-11). This highlights the importance of David for the scope of this carnival enterprise.
[31] Alter, *The David Story*, 226.
[32] Auld, *I & II Samuel*, 412.

transport the ark recalls the cart which the Philistines deploy to send the ark back to Israel (1 Sam 6:10), as well as the Israelites' own movement of the ark earlier in the narrative (1 Sam 4:4). In the previous instances, the result of forcible relocation and disregard shown to the ark ends in death and despair (1 Sam 4:10-11; 6:19-20). It seems asinine to assume that the movement of the ark would end well, when these parallels are noticed.

Yet it could be argued that the theology inherent in Uzzah's death is that "there is an enigmatic reason for punishment but there is no reason for violence at all, known or unknown".[33] Consider David's sin with Bathsheba and his murder of Uriah (2 Sam 11) which is thus punished with the death of the child of their union (2 Sam 12:14-16). There is a rationale to this action of killing; David subsequently learns his lesson on coveting his neighbours' wives and repents (2 Sam 12:22-25). A lesson is learned, God's punishment is deserved, and the curtain closes on a 'happy' scene of restoration. Yet the same cannot be said here as this "divine violence is violence that has no relationship to law (e.g. retribution) and has no purpose".[34] Rather than supposing that Uzzah's death was meant as some parental lesson to an unruly child, it could be taken rather as a reactive action by God himself, being "a symptom of God's limitation and vulnerability" within the ark.[35] Uzzah's unexpected knee-jerk reaction of reaching out to the ark was rational but a surprise; a reaction to a mistake in which he used his body to interact with the ark. God's responsive reflex to this was also alarming, arising out of Uzzah's action, and stands as God utilising his power after his own form had been interacted with. The violence associated with God's killing of Uzzah showcases the divine vulnerability within the ark, and does not carry with it any specific, logical reasoning. God's "outbursts are not partisan" and can be directed against "an attendant of the ark" as well as foreign invaders (cf. 1 Sam 4-6).[36] Instead the death of Uzzah showcases "a sovereign God [that] is not working through the ark but rather [is] fully present *in* the ark".[37]

The stretching out of Uzzah's hand could be seen as a movement of the body extending out or extending beyond its own limits toward another entity. In response to Uzzah's movement, this is a carnivalesque moment of the cosmic terror becoming a more

[33] Gilmour, "Divine Violence and Divine Presence", 6.
[34] Gilmour, "Divine Violence and Divine Presence", 8.
[35] Ibid, 1.
[36] Auld, *I & II Samuel,* 413. Earlier God slew some men from Beth-shemesh because they looked inside the ark (1 Sam 6:19 MT).
[37] Gilmour, "Divine Violence and Divine Presence", 11. Emphasis own.

recognisable and concrete space for the community. In Bakhtinian terms, the unknowable "cosmic elements are transformed into the gay form of the body" in this moment of reaching out.[38] Here God has "lost his neutrality and 'fallen into' the world", becoming a participant within the world just as Uzzah had been.[39] Yet this cosmic terror is a Deity, the sovereign God of Israel, and should therefore not be something that can be grappled with like an unruly horse. The solidarity which such an extension might otherwise carry is not present here. Perhaps the violence which God enacted against Uzzah was not as a reaction to anything Uzzah had done; that was pure accident. In a wider perspective, the violence portrayed here becomes a *punishment* not for Uzzah but rather for David, as it is seemingly David who is at fault. The issue of the extraction of the ark is not even the act itself; it is the way in which David had performed the removal. From the outset, the focus of the whole enterprise had been David, and this would seem to be the issue here as well. Arguably, it is David's exaltation over or at the expense of God and his divine person that is the punishable offence.

David's reaction to Uzzah's death and God's 'breaking out' against him is immediate and strong; "David was inflamed over the fact that the LORD broke out with an outbreak against Uzzah" (2 Sam 6:8). The parade comes to an immediate halt and one can almost hear the 'record scratch' as the music stops. David's anger is replaced by fear as he asks how the ark could come into his care (2 Sam 6:9), being "frustrated in his purposes and now wondering whether he will ever manage to bring this symbol and earthly focus of God's power to his newly conquered capital".[40] It is strange that (in the MT) God's reaction to Uzzah and David's reaction to God should mirror one another, which further emphasises the issue at the core of the relocation of the ark, since David has been debased by God here in the death of Uzzah, upsetting the parade, and forcing a hiatus to its transport. Just as David had placed his honour above or at least alongside God's, God now 'flips' the proverbial script and forces David into a downward swing toward humility. As God "struck [Uzzah] down" (2 Sam 6:7), so too was David pushed into the proverbial mud, his attempts to consolidate his power in a display of self-glorification being divinely undermined in a moment of accidental action-reaction between two parade participants. David is unwilling to take the ark into Jerusalem at this point, possibly fearing further outbreaks of divine

[38] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 336.
[39] Slavoj Žižek, *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections* (London: Profile Books, 2008), 151.
[40] Alter, *The David Story*, 226.

violence along the way home (2 Sam 6:10). The ark is brought to Obed-edom and remains with him for three months (2 Sam 6:11).

Yet, as with all things surrounding the carnival, this seeming disaster for David and the ark comes with the opposite reversal: "And the LORD blessed Obed-edom and all his household" (2 Sam 6:11). As with Saul, degradation does not come with the expectation of ultimate humiliation with no recourse for good. Yet degradation within the carnival environment "does not imply merely hurling [something] into the void of nonexistence, into absolute destruction, but to hurl it down to the reproductive lower stratum, the zone in which conception and new birth take place".[41] The reversal of death to life, despair to blessing, is a hallmark of carnivalesque duality. This duality portrays the "Janus face of human experience"; birth and death, joy and fear, the good and the bad.[42] While Uzzah's death brings to a close the initial parade scene, it should be highlighted again that this form of celebration was singular in nature and not seemingly designed for anyone else other than David as the ruler of Israel. This form of closed-off self-glorification does not allow for the jubilant growth of the whole, and is not a carnival proper but rather a display of vanity as befitting a king. But David is no ordinary king, and the carnival narrative of Samuel needs to come full circle. The blessing of Obed-edom's household represents a moment in which "death is followed by regeneration", and in this way Uzzah's killing could be perceived as a forfeit.[43] If it were not for Uzzah's death, the parade would ultimately have continued but under the wrong pretence, and would have removed the moment for true celebration and renewal for the community.[44] Now this has been regained and David has been humbled before God, thereby carrying the opportunity for a "new youth, and a new spring".[45]

6.3 - The Second Attempt of Transferring the Ark (2 Sam 6:12-16):

Table 6.3: Hebrew and Greek Translations

Hebrew Text (MT) of 2 Sam 6:12-16	MT Translation of 2 Sam 6:12-16	Greek Text (LXX) of 2 Sam 6:12-16	LXX Translation of 2 Sam 6:12-16
וַיֻּגַּד לַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד לֵאמֹר בֵּרַךְ יְהוָה אֶת־בֵּית עֹבֵד אֱדֹם וְאֶת־	12 And it was reported to King David, saying: "The LORD has blessed the house	καὶ ἀπηγγέλη τῷ βασιλεῖ Δαυιδ λέγοντες ηὐλόγησεν κύριος τὸν οἶκον Αβεδδαρα	12 And it was told to King David, saying: "The LORD blessed the house of Abed-

[41] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World,* 21.
[42] Danow, *The Spirit of Carnival,* 10.
[43] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 198.
[44] It is interesting to note that both Saul and Uzzah act in a practical way in a difficult situation but are penalised for it, and both figures can be seen as scapegoats for the carnival enterprise as well (cf. 1 Sam 13 for Saul).
[45] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 198.

כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ בַּעֲבוּר אֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים וַיֵּלֶךְ דָּוִד וַיַּעַל אֶת־ אֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים מִבֵּית עֹבֵד אֱדֹם עִיר דָּוִד בְּשִׂמְחָה:	of Obed-edom and all that is his, on account of the ark of God". So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to the city of David, with jubilation.[46]	καὶ πάντα τὰ αὐτοῦ ἕνεκεν τῆς κιβωτοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἐπορεύθη Δαυιδ καὶ ἀνήγαγεν τὴν κιβωτὸν τοῦ κυρίου ἐκ τοῦ οἴκου Αβεδδαρα εἰς τὴν πόλιν Δαυιδ ἐν εὐφροσύνῃ	dara and everything belonging to him, because of the ark of God". So David went and brought up the ark of the LORD out of the house of Abed-dara into the city of David, with cheerfulness.
וַיְהִי כִּי צָעֲדוּ נֹשְׂאֵי אֲרוֹן־יְהוָה שִׁשָּׁה צְעָדִים וַיִּזְבַּח שׁוֹר וּמְרִיא:	13 And it happened that when the ones carrying the ark of the LORD took six steps, he sacrificed a bull and a fatling.	καὶ ἦσαν μετ᾽ αὐτῶν αἴροντες τὴν κιβωτὸν ἑπτὰ χοροὶ καὶ θῦμα μόσχος καὶ ἄρνα	13 And with them were seven bands carrying the ark and a sacrifice: a calf and a lamb.[47]
וְדָוִד מְכַרְכֵּר בְּכָל־עֹז לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְדָוִד חָגוּר אֵפוֹד בָּד:	14 And David was gyrating before the LORD with all his strength, with David girded in a linen ephod.	καὶ Δαυιδ ἀνεκρούετο ἐν ὀργάνοις ἡρμοσμένοις ἐνώπιον κυρίου καὶ ὁ Δαυιδ ἐνδεδυκὼς στολὴν ἔξαλλον	14 And David was playing on tuned instruments before the LORD, with David clothed in a distinguished robe.[48]
וְדָוִד וְכָל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל מַעֲלִים אֶת־אֲרוֹן יְהוָה בִּתְרוּעָה וּבְקוֹל שׁוֹפָר:	15 And David and all the house of Israel were bringing up the ark of the LORD, with joyful shouts and the sound of trumpets.	καὶ Δαυιδ καὶ πᾶς ὁ οἶκος Ισραηλ ἀνήγαγον τὴν κιβωτὸν κυρίου μετὰ κραυγῆς καὶ μετὰ φωνῆς σάλπιγγος	15 So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD, along with shouting and the sound of the trumpet.
וְהָיָה אֲרוֹן יְהוָה בָּא עִיר דָּוִד וּמִיכַל בַּת־שָׁאוּל נִשְׁקָפָה ו בְּעַד הַחַלּוֹן וַתֵּרֶא אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד מְפַזֵּז וּמְכַרְכֵּר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וַתִּבֶז לוֹ בִּלִבָּהּ:	16 And it happened as the ark of the LORD was coming to the city of David that Michal, daughter of Saul, looked down from the window. She saw King David leaping and gyrating before the LORD, and she despised him in her heart.	καὶ ἐγένετο τῆς κιβωτοῦ παραγινομένης ἕως πόλεως Δαυιδ καὶ Μελχολ ἡ θυγάτηρ Σαουλ διέκυπτεν διὰ τῆς θυρίδος καὶ εἶδεν τὸν βασιλέα Δαυιδ ὀρχούμενον καὶ ἀνακρουόμενον ἐνώπιον κυρίου καὶ ἐξουδένωσεν αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτῆς	16 As the ark was arriving at the city of David, Melchol daughter of Saul was peeping through the window. She saw King David dancing and playing music before the LORD, and she treated him in her heart with contempt.[49]

6.3.2 - Discussion:

The surprising nature of the carnival continues as David is informed of the good fortune visited on Obed-edom's household due to the presence of the ark (2 Sam 6:12). It would have been easy for the reader to place a full stop at the moment of David's despair following Uzzah's death. Yet God – whether in incorporeal or tangible form – proves to be an agent of change within the narrative. Having spent three months with Obed-edom (2 Sam 6:11)

[46] The general idea here is that of merriment or celebration with which David had brought the ark to Jerusalem. The MT uses the verb שׂמח which is the sense of celebration, or being happy, or making merry (there is also a certain sexual connotation associated when used with the preposition ב).

[47] This divergence of the LXX here is difficult to understand. The MT renders the act of sacrificing as a verb whereas the LXX equates it as part of the act itself.

[48] See previous footnote (on 2 Sam 6:5) regarding the differentiation of the LXX and the MT with regards the instruments versus David dancing with all his might. McCarter here states that the LXX iteration is to be preferred (McCarter, *II Samuel*, 166). Note also the LXX description of David's attire ("a distinguished robe") versus that of the MT ("a linen ephod"), which is a priestly garment.

[49] The LXX continues to retain the image of David playing or "strumming" as he dances before the LORD, in comparison to the MT which has him dancing and leaping before the ark. Note also the difference of Michal's name here in comparison to the MT (which will be taken as the preferred spelling).

with the ark bringing good fortune to the man (though the extent or exact nature of these blessings is not explicitly told to the reader), David sees fit to attempt to relocate the ark to Jerusalem again. The precise form of the blessings which Obed-edom experienced would not appear to be of importance to the narrator, so much as the fact he received good fortune at all. Aside from the vague report of blessings dropping upon Obed-edom's household like rain on a tin roof, the narrative does not elaborate on how Obed-edom was fortunate as the news itself is of greater narrative worth for the plot and for David. One would imagine that following the divine violence surrounding the seemingly innocuous act of ark stabilisation (2 Sam 6:6-7), David would think twice about trying again to move the ark from a location where all involved seemed to be perfectly content with its presence. It may seem that doing one thing again in the same way is tantamount to insanity. Yet there are definite changes to proceedings at this juncture; these are in David himself and *how* the ark is treated.

David greets the news of God's apparent change of sentiment over relocation with jubilation (2 Sam 6:12). The change of rationale behind the movement of the ark is noteworthy. The parade which follows is not structured like a military triumph, which denotes the exaltation of the king, but rather the king leads the masses in exuberantly celebrating the drawing of the Deity into the city, and thus the celebration centres on the Deity. The dancing, music, and revelry of those assembled is designed to "attract the Deity's attention and thus prepare the way for his gracious response", and thus reorientates the parade to have the Deity as the central feature of the celebrations.[50] The retrieval of the ark itself moves from the previous show of self-aggrandisement in which David brings all the people gathered together to fetch the ark (2 Sam 6:2), to the present description of David going seemingly alone to fetch the ark (2 Sam 6:12), though the reader later hears that "David and all the house of Israel" were bringing up the ark (2 Sam 6:15).

It is a moment of David lowering himself, removing himself from the pedestal of monarchy and placing himself amongst the general congregation before God. David's role of king is central to these carnival proceedings "as he joins the people in behaviour not proper to a monarch, dancing fervently with the crowds and setting aside any distinction by royal garb".[51] To be sure, he does wear a priestly garment, the ephod (2 Sam 6:14; cf. Exod 29:5). The festivities which David is leading brings about a "topsy-turvy" reality,

[50] David P. Wright, "Music and Dance in 2 Samuel 6", *JBL* 121 (2002), 201-225, here 223.
[51] Fleming, "David and the Ark", 76.

wherein the "change of clothing is significant for clothing is one of the most intimate aspects of one's personality".[52] The removal of clothing is connected to the idea of role reversal, in the passing of one person for another within a specific moment in time, which is accompanied by a sense of freedom which David is freely partaking of as he was "leaping and gyrating before the LORD" (2 Sam 6:16). In this respect, the change of clothing here (from king to priest, or carnival reveller) "makes for pleasure" within the suspension of the 'ordinary' form of the person.[53] David has abandoned the 'trappings' of monarchy – clothing, personal distance, and social rank – in favour of becoming another person among the crowd. Within this setting of carnival revelry, "the man stops being man; the woman stops being woman [and] there can be, therefore, no family" other than the community that has been created in such a setting.[54] The king ceases to be the king, the servants' maids cease to be lowly citizens, and all are welcome with the suspension of the conventional social setting and its 'regular' clothing.

This second instance of the parade is "not a simple continuation of the procession terminated by the divine irruption [as] David makes several reforms in order to guarantee its successful outcome".[55] The ark itself, once having been taken from the house of Obed-edom, is not carried on a cart but is rather carried by a contingent similar to one David had previously amassed (2 Sam 6:13). The ark could be considered to be something like a palanquin (cf. Exod 25:10-21; 37:1-9), which is carried by two to four people by hand, using poles. The description of the building of the ark given in Exodus (Exod 25:14-15) gives this impression that the ark was intended to be carried by "the deity's human subjects".[56] The new cart which had been previously used was not fundamentally wrong, as the vehicle of transference was required to be new as "no ordinary cart was acceptable".[57] Yet the presence of the pole on the ark (Exod 25:14-15) would seem to hint that being carried by hand was the preferable mode of transport.[58]

[52] Monford Harris, "Purim: The Celebration of Dis-Order", *Judaism* 26 (1977), 161-170, here 164.
[53] Ibid, 164-165.
[54] Harris, "Purim", 165.
[55] Wright, "Music and Dance in 2 Samuel 6", 201.
[56] McCarter, *II Samuel*, 168.
[57] Craig E. Morrison, *2 Samuel*, Berit Olam (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2013), 84.
[58] McCarter, *II Samuel*, 169. Note that whereas before the biblical narrative tells of priests carrying the ark (Josh 3:3; 2 Sam 15:29), there is no mention of priests here, and David takes on the priestly role, including performing the blessing (2 Sam 6:18).

The act of touching here is not the same as with Uzzah; holding the ark on its poles is a ritually acceptable way of interacting with God. The mode of carrying the ark by hand also lends a carnivalesque gloss to this event, as the reaching out and grasping of the ark in this manner removes that fear of harm or death which had been present before and so allows the community to engage with the Deity through bodily experience. This act of touching the ark relies on the grotesque form of the open body; a body which "could not be considered for [itself but] represented a material bodily whole and therefore transgressed the limits of their isolation".[59] Neither David, nor the ark or God, nor those individuals carrying the ark belong to their singular forms as this parade continues but rather they become one large, celebratory mass. The appearance and organisation of the congregation "here over against the first procession conveys the impression that David and the people are now more deeply committed to transferring the ark to Jerusalem [and reveals] a greater emotional involvement in the ceremony and, implicitly, a greater reverence for the deity".[60] David moves away from his more aloof position as king to move as one of the people in reclaiming the ark. So too does God move from his remoteness (implicitly) by having the people touch the ark as the material representation of the Deity in and with the world. The people (including David) and God move together as one form, one body, in this jubilant parade.

The pageant proceeds, with an ox and a fatling being sacrificed at every six paces (2 Sam 6:13b).[61] These repeated actions of sacrificing animals to the deity may have been a feature of the installation of ancient gods to new positions or locations.[62] Such an act of sacrificing may be a form of literary hyperbole or narrative exaggeration for effect to emphasise the gratitude which David must have felt at the Deity's change of heart. Thus, the emphasis of the parade has moved away from David and toward God, with David no longer taking the ark and moving it as though it were a piece of furniture being brought to a new apartment. So too does "exaggeration [characterise] both grotesque realism and folk festival forms", which carry with them a sense of satiric indecency of excess.[63] The presence of the ark was a *privilege* due to the relative closeness of the relationship between

[59] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 23.
[60] Wright, "Music and Dance in 2 Samuel 6", 215.
[61] However, Alter is suspicious of the repeated actions of sacrificing portrayed in the narrative, and perceives the action to have been singular. See: Alter, *The David Story*, 227; Hertzberg, *I & II Samuel*, 279.
[62] McCarter, *II Samuel*, 171.
[63] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 63.

God and David, rather than a *right* due to David merely because he was the king.[64] It could be this was "the negligence that provoked God to exact the death penalty from Uzzah and thereby suspend the ark's transfer".[65]

The amount and size of the sacrifices made are of less consequence to the narrator in comparison to the storyline of the transfer of the ark to Jerusalem, and so the reader need not dwell too long on the practicalities of it. The act of sacrificing the animals lends well to the carnivalesque concept of the feast; the cutting asunder, ripping apart, and the implied act of devouring the meat. Food and feasting in the grotesque imagery of the carnival centred on the completion of work and labour, wherein feasting and eating "concluded work and struggle and was their crown of glory".[66] As the people carry the ark, one can imagine the strain and effort. Intermingled with this strain and struggle is the joyful experience of the parade itself, as seen with the exuberant dancing and music being played (2 Sam 6:15), but also the connotations associated with the rending of the animals. It furthers the carnivalesque duality, with the change from despair contrasted heavily at this point in the narrative with abundance (2 Sam 6:11-13). The sacrifices presented here are a form of feasting which evoke "moments of death and revival, or change and renewal [which] always led to a festive perception of the world".[67]

The gladness of the occasion is not lost on David, as he dances before the LORD "with all his strength" (2 Sam 6:14). This ritual procession has "the king at [the] centre, dancing 'before Yahweh' along with 'all the house of Israel'".[68] The success of the parade thus far (as no participants have dropped dead yet) would signal eventual divine approval for the relocation itself, while also legitimising David's centre of power in Jerusalem. Small wonder the king celebrates with such abandon![69] The king's movement in the parade "indicates that he engages in extravagant revelry and dance [as] he turns around, quickly moving and/or jumping and prancing about".[70] It is in these moments of celebration that David degrades himself in the true carnivalesque sense of the word. It is not a negative

[64] The previous episodes have repeatedly emphasised the need to listen to divine guidance. Cf. 1 Sam 15:28; 16:12; 17:34-37, 45-47; 18:5, 28-29; 23:2; 24:18; 25:37-39; 30:8, 23.
[65] Morrison, *2 Samuel,* 88.
[66] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World,* 281.
[67] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World,* 9.
[68] Fleming, "David and the Ark", 91.
[69] Anderson (*I & II Samuel,* 105) proposes that David's dancing here is to be taken as an "expression of joy rather than as a prelude to the sacred marriage" which could be alluded to (or satirised) with the forthcoming entry of Michal to the narrative space.
[70] Wright, "Music and Dance in 2 Samuel 6", 221.

ruination of his person but rather a "coming down to earth, the contact with the earth as an element that swallows up and gives birth at the same time".[71] Sometimes in the jubilance of celebration "a spirit of riot and frolic comes over a man; he leaps, he dances, he tumbles head over heels, he grins, shouts, or leers".[72] David here metaphorically brings himself low, a downward swing toward the earth wherein renewal can take place. The king's celebrations here, especially with trumpets sounding, "seek to engage the deity's attention [and] are thus similar to other ritual performances that seek to bring a god on the ritual scene and keep him or her intent and engrossed in the ceremony".[73] Key to David's degradation here is the exposure of the self.

As David dances, the narrative states he is wearing a linen ephod or garment (2 Sam 6:14), a type of "Israelite underwear".[74] The ephod itself is thought to be a priestly garment, which would normally be reserved for the priestly members of a congregation (cf. 1 Sam 2:18). The seeming scant nature of David's clothing would appear to be unsuitable for the occasion at hand. Yet "cultic error, rather than allowing for hiding or shielding oneself from the deity [instead] requires laying oneself completely open to inspection and making oneself more vulnerable to his wrath, perhaps to make oneself more worthy of his blessing".[75] It seems odd that within the Books of Samuel the only other mentions of an ephod or state of undress are that of the child Samuel wearing one (cf. 1 Sam 2:18) and at Saul's frenzied display while pursuing David (cf. 1 Sam 19:24), respectively.

The wearing of the ephod by David has a dual purpose within the narrative; the first is to give to David a priestly guise, while the second is to render the king in a state of undress. As the ephod would have been associated with the priestly caste, David's wearing of said garment here "signals David's office as priest-king" wherein a human representative could be symbolically brought into contact with the unseen God.[76] Here again the lines marking off David as king are blurred; his role within the carnival space is malleable and diverse. David's role as king denotes his ability to convene the people together in order for the transfer to take place, while his priestly garment marks him out as one who can stand as an intermediary between God and people, his 'borrowed' priestly robes almost standing

[71] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World,* 21.
[72] Santayana, "The Comic Mask and Carnival", 52.
[73] Wright, "Music and Dance in 2 Samuel 6", 215.
[74] Cartledge, *1 & 2 Samuel,* 438. Cartledge denotes this form of garment as being a "short loincloth reaching from the hips to the thighs".
[75] Wright, "Music and Dance in 2 Samuel 6", 216.
[76] Morrison, *2 Samuel,* 88.

as a form of cultic 'fancy dress'. The second function of David's state of undress is for the purpose of exhibition. The ephod itself would have given sufficient cover to the wearer. Yet due to David's wild dancing, the king exposes himself to those participating in the parade.[77]

This exposing of the king before God and people is significant for the carnival atmosphere as it marks "the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions".[78] The closed-off form of the king, often regarded as separate from the general public and even God, is now open to the world to view and even ridicule, without any sense of shame, matching the true sense of the carnival as a space in which there is equality among all those involved.[79] There exists an association here between glory and the return of the victorious warrior; "when the divine warrior returns in glory, the natural world dances and 'writhes' like a woman in birth pangs".[80] It is here that the conventional image of the king as aloof and set above the rest of the community is undermined and turned on its head because there is a certain sexual nature to the dancing and celebrations themselves. The king is as open to ridicule as any other person and in fact he actively participates in it. Whether David is the king, the priest, or a clown, this scene of David dancing to the point of exposing himself reveals the "peculiar logic of the 'inside out'" of the carnival.[81] David dances as the unencumbered clown, open to ridicule and degradation, and free to transfer the "high ceremonial gesture or ritual to the material sphere" where all may participate.[82] Whether David is clad in a priestly vestment, a child's garment, or stripped off to dance amongst the people is not made especially clear, but what is clear is that David is in some way "scantily clad and that at least one spectator, Michal, finds this offensive".[83] The triumphant parade, accompanied by horns and shouts, contrasts sharply with the image of Michal gazing scornfully down at David as he celebrates (2 Sam 6:16).

There is quite an intensity to Michal's feeling as she watches David: "and she treated him in her heart with contempt" (2 Sam 6:16 LXX). Michal does not just disapprove of David's dancing, she *despises* the man himself. The narrative states two things here; that

[77] Anderson, 1 & *2 Samuel*, 105;
[78] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 10.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Rosenstock, "David's Play", 66.
[81] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 11.
[82] Ibid, 20.
[83] McCarter, *II Samuel*, 117.

Michal watched David dancing and that she despised him. The text does not fill that gap of logic to explain how these two things are connected, at least not at this juncture, so the reader may question what had offended Michal and whether it be just David himself. This may be due to the impromptu reuniting of the pair as Michal had been taken from a man who seemed to genuinely care for her to another who saw her as a token to be won back (2 Sam 3:13-16). The injustice of David's fetching of Michal notwithstanding, the disapproval which Michal displays is of interest for the carnival. Michal's despising of David here sets the two apart, but with either figure occupying a particular ideological stance. The exact nature of these ideologies will be explored in greater depth later in the episode, but already here the two figures are characterised as definitively opposed at this juncture.

As the ark finally reaches Jerusalem, here called "the city of David" (2 Sam 6:16), the tonal change from exuberant celebration to Michal's disapproving glance is as harsh as Uzzah's death beside the ark (2 Sam 6:7).[84] Both achieve the same reaction; bringing the parade to a halt within the scope of the narrative for the reader. Uzzah's death calls a hiatus to proceedings, forcing David back to the proverbial drawing board, while Michal's glare forces the reader into a moment of reassessing the parade itself. Is what is occurring shameful in some way? Granted; the sight of David's exposing himself to the general public is not an image befitting a regular king, yet David is no regular monarch. By Michal's reckoning, "glory…ought to be manifest in a king; but Michal does not find this – or no longer finds this – manifested in David's behaviour".[85] Michal's gaze and scorn acts as a roadblock, attempting to prevent the cathartic renewal associated with the carnival and its ambivalent laughter. David here is the 'middle man' between the community and God in this scheme, and therefore cannot and will not be afforded the luxury of aloofness. His body must remain public and open, just as the people must be, in order for the proper rejuvenation of the community to occur, in which the degrading laughter of the carnival is "directed at all and everyone, including the carnival's participants".[86]

Michal's physical position segregates her further. She watches proceedings from a window, away and above the parade itself.[87] She is stationed at a physical distance from

[84] Morrison, *2 Samuel*, 89. The narrative emphasises the "simultaneity of the events: the glorious entrance of the ark and Michal's scornful glance".
[85] Auld, *I & II Samuel*, 414.
[86] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 11.
[87] Note the motif of windows which appears here in relation to scenes involving Michal and David (cf. his escape through a window in 1 Sam 19:11-17). The emotions involved are radically different, changing from

proceedings and those engaging in the carnival, which symbolises an ideological distance as she watches the parade scornfully. While she metaphorically 'looks down her nose' at what is occurring, her watching alone marks her as uninvolved with proceedings. The focus of her scene here is *sight*, the *eyes*, in contrast to David and the focus of the lower stratum, as portrayed in his revealing dances. The eyes here function to move Michal away from the carnival and David, placing her in a detached position. This is a significant issue for the carnival as (in a Bakhtinian perspective) there can be no spectators. Carnival is not a spectacle to be witnessed as an unresponsive and uninterested observer. It is to be lived in and requires the participation of all people as "its very idea embraces all people".[88] Michal has removed herself from this and so has terminally affected her ability to be renewed along with the community.

Even Michal's designation at this point in the narrative serves to push the two further apart. She is not called David's wife but "the daughter of Saul" (2 Sam 6:16), and David is referred to as "King David" (2 Sam 6:17) rather than by just his proper name or as his being her husband. There is not present that close association which such a title might evoke. David has positioned himself amongst the people, alongside God, and engaging in the "free, familiar contact [as an] essential element" which the carnival creates and encourages.[89] This terse introduction of Michal at her window serves to establish her as being diametrically opposed to David in terms of how they view their personages and their involvement in and amongst the people. David has opened himself to become part of the grotesque whole, while Michal has dissociated herself from this rejuvenating experience of the carnival. David's dancing, though it leads to him exposing himself and is not the display befitting the conventional image of a king, allows for the transfer of "speech to the abdomen [which] discloses the fundamental and essential traits of the grotesque".[90] The narrator keeps silent as to how Michal will display her disdain for David, as the narrative continues with David in his dual role of priest-king.

Michal being in love with David previously to watching him "from a distance 'through the window', in seething contempt" (Alter, *The David Story*, 228).

[88] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 7.

[89] Ibid, 10.

[90] Ibid, 309.

6.4 - The Zenith of the Carnival and Michal's Confrontation (2 Sam 6:17-23):

Table 6.4: Hebrew and Greek Translations

Hebrew Text (MT) of 2 Sam 6:17-23	MT Translation of 2 Sam 6:17-23	Greek Text (LXX) of 2 Sam 6:17-23	LXX Translation of 2 Sam 6:17-23
וַיָּבִאוּ אֶת־אֲרוֹן יְהוָה וַיַּצִּגוּ אֹתוֹ בְּמְקוֹמוֹ בְּתוֹךְ הָאֹהֶל אֲשֶׁר נָטָה־לוֹ דָּוִד וַיַּעַל דָּוִד עֹלוֹת לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וּשְׁלָמִים:	17 And they brought in the ark of the LORD and they set it in its place within the tent that David pitched for it, and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.	καὶ φέρουσιν τὴν κιβωτὸν τοῦ κυρίου καὶ ἀνέθηκαν αὐτὴν εἰς τὸν τόπον αὐτῆς εἰς μέσον τῆς σκηνῆς ἧς ἔπηξεν αὐτῇ Δαυιδ καὶ ἀνήνεγκεν Δαυιδ ὁλοκαυτώματα ἐνώπιον κυρίου καὶ εἰρηνικάς	17 And they carried the ark of the LORD and set it up in its place in the midst of the tent which David pitched for it; and David presented sacrifices and peace offerings before the LORD.[91]
וַיְכַל דָּוִד מֵהַעֲלֹת הָעוֹלָה וְהַשְּׁלָמִים וַיְבָרֶךְ אֶת־הָעָם בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת:	18 As David finished offering up the burnt offering and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts.	καὶ συνετέλεσεν Δαυιδ συναναφέρων τὰς ὁλοκαυτώσεις καὶ τὰς εἰρηνικὰς καὶ εὐλόγησεν τὸν λαὸν ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου τῶν δυνάμεων	18 As David finished presenting the sacrifices and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts.
וַיְחַלֵּק לְכָל־הָעָם לְכָל־הֲמוֹן יִשְׂרָאֵל ׀ לְמֵאִישׁ וְעַד־אִשָּׁה לְאִישׁ חַלַּת לֶחֶם אַחַת וְאֶשְׁפָּר אֶחָד וַאֲשִׁישָׁה אֶחָת וַיֵּלֶךְ כָּל־הָעָם אִישׁ לְבֵיתוֹ:	19 He distributed to all the people, to the whole multitude of Israel, every man and woman: to each one loaf of bread, and one date cake, and one raisin cake. And all the people went each to his own house.[92]	καὶ διεμέρισεν παντὶ τῷ λαῷ εἰς πᾶσαν τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ Ισραηλ ἀπὸ Δαν ἕως Βηρσαβεε ἀπὸ ἀνδρὸς ἕως γυναικὸς ἑκάστῳ κολλυρίδα ἄρτου καὶ ἐσχαρίτην καὶ λάγανον ἀπὸ τηγάνου καὶ ἀπῆλθεν πᾶς ὁ λαὸς ἕκαστος εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ	19 And he distributed to all the people, to all the host of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, both men and women: to each a portion of bread, a griddle piece, and a cake from the frying pan. And all the people went away, each to his own house.[93]
וַיָּשָׁב דָּוִד לְבָרֵךְ אֶת־בֵּיתוֹ וַתֵּצֵא מִיכַל בַּת־שָׁאוּל ׀ לִקְרַאת דָּוִד וַתֹּאמֶר מַה־נִּכְבַּד הַיּוֹם מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר נִגְלָה הַיּוֹם לְעֵינֵי אַמְהֹת עֲבָדָיו כְּהִגָּלוֹת נִגְלוֹת אַחַד הָרֵקִים:	20 When David returned to bless his household, Michal daughter of Saul came out to meet David. She said: "How the king of Israel distinguished himself today, when he uncovered himself today before the eyes of his servants' wenches, as one of the vulgar fellows continually uncovers himself".[94]	καὶ ἐπέστρεψεν Δαυιδ εὐλογῆσαι τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐξῆλθεν Μελχολ ἡ θυγάτηρ Σαουλ εἰς ἀπάντησιν Δαυιδ καὶ εὐλόγησεν αὐτὸν καὶ εἶπεν τί δεδόξασται σήμερον ὁ βασιλεὺς Ισραηλ ὃς ἀπεκαλύφθη σήμερον ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς παιδισκῶν τῶν δούλων ἑαυτοῦ καθὼς ἀποκαλύπτεται	20 And David returned to bless his house. But Melchol daughter of Saul came out to meet David and she blessed him, and she said: "How the king of Israel glorified himself today, uncovering himself today before the eyes of the maids of his own servants as one of the dancers

[91] The MT and LXX are similar in their retention of "in its place" as an expansion, in comparison to 4QSam[a] and Josephus who both omit this. The longer reading may have been sourced from 1 Kgs 8:6 (McCarter, *II Samuel*, 167).

[92] The second food given by David –אֶשְׁפָּר – is translated by the LXX as a type of griddle/baked cake. Yet it was understood by the rabbis to be a choice portion of meat. Cf. McCarter, *II Samuel*, 173. Note also that the use of אַחַת and אֶחָד can be used as an equivalent of the indefinite article (Anderson, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 98).

[93] The LXX here has the addition of "from Dan to Beersheba" which is missing from the MT. Note also the difference of foods between the MT and LXX, which may be due to the method of cooking the food being used in the LXX over the description of the item itself. For example; the MT has "one date cake" (אֶשְׁפָּר אֶחָד) whereas the LXX has "a griddle piece" (ἐσχαρίτην).

[94] The LXX uses ὀρχουμένων or "dancers" (= הָרוֹקְדִים) rather than הָרֵקִים or "worthless men" or "vulgar fellows". McCarter prefers the LXX translation but the MT will be given priority here. Note that both the

		ἀποκαλυφθεὶς εἷς τῶν ὀρχουμένων	uncovers himself when he is uncovered!"
וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֶל־מִיכַל לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר־בִּי מֵאָבִיךְ וּמִכָּל־בֵּיתּוֹ לְצַוֹּת אֹתִי נָגִיד עַל־עַם יְהוָה עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְשִׂחַקְתִּי לִפְנֵי יְהוָה:	21 But David said to Michal: "It was before the LORD, who chose me over your father and over all his house to appoint me as ruler over the people of the LORD, Israel. And I will play before the LORD"	καὶ εἶπεν Δαυιδ πρὸς Μελχολ ἐνώπιον κυρίου ὀρχήσομαι εὐλογητὸς κύριος ὃς ἐξελέξατό με ὑπὲρ τὸν πατέρα σου καὶ ὑπὲρ πάντα τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ τοῦ καταστῆσαί με εἰς ἡγούμενον ἐπὶ τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν Ισραηλ καὶ παίξομαι καὶ ὀρχήσομαι ἐνώπιον κυρίου	21 But David said to Melchol: "Before the LORD I will dance. Blessed be the LORD, who has selected me above your father and above all of his house, to appoint me as leader over his people, Israel. So I will play and I will dance before the LORD".[95]
וּנְקַלֹּתִי עוֹד מִזֹּאת וְהָיִיתִי שָׁפָל בְּעֵינָי וְעִם־הָאֲמָהוֹת אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתְּ עִמָּם אִכָּבֵדָה:	22 "…and I will be dishonoured still more than this and will become lowly in my eyes. But by the maidservants of whom you spoke, by them I will be honoured".	καὶ ἀποκαλυφθήσομαι ἔτι οὕτως καὶ ἔσομαι ἀχρεῖος ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς σου καὶ μετὰ τῶν παιδισκῶν ὧν εἶπάς με δοξασθῆναι	22 "And I will still uncover myself thus, and I will be worthless in your eyes, but among the maidservants, of whom you have spoken, I am to be glorified!"[96]
וּלְמִיכַל בַּת־שָׁאוּל לֹא־הָיָה לָהּ יֶלֶד עַד יוֹם מוֹתָהּ: פ	23 And Michal daughter of Saul had no child until the day of her death.	καὶ τῇ Μελχολ θυγατρὶ Σαουλ οὐκ ἐγένετο παιδίον ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας τοῦ ἀποθανεῖν αὐτή	23 And Melchol, daughter of Saul, had no child until the day of her dying.

6.4.1 - Discussion:

For a moment, the narrative moves aside from the scornful witness of Michal, and back to the transfer of the ark. It may be expected that Michal and David would confront one another at this point, but the narrative moves to "David's cultic ministrations and royal benefactions to the people" and leaves Michal to stew at her window.[97] David, here, "assumes the role of an intermediary between YHWH, the ultimate commander of Israel, and the people".[98] The ark is brought to a tent which David had set up for it, and "set in its place" (2 Sam 6:17). The idea that the ark had a designated place may allude to the idea that this type of parade-transfer was an already existing celebration or involved a previously

LXX and MT iterations of Michal's exclamation elicits a sense of a state of undress or degradation (by her standards, at least).

[95] The longer LXX reading is to be preferred here, as the beginning of the MT iteration of the same passage is flawed and seems to have suffered from haplography (McCarter, *II Samuel*, 185).

[96] Either the LXX or the MT reads well, yet the LXX could be repeating the sentiments (2 Sam 6:20). Note the difference between the MT, which has "in my eyes" (בְּעֵינָי), and the LXX which has "in your eyes" (ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς σου). The LXX at this point is preferable from a coherence standpoint, yet the MT retains a sense of David's degradation being self-propagated which is important for the aspect of the Bakhtinian carnival, as David is not a passive spectator in the event of the parade with its degradation (see: Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, xiv). McCarter states that the MT may have been tampered with so that the text would not read as David becoming low in God's eyes. If the original text had "in his eyes", this may not be immediately taken as a declaration of humility but rather as an indictment against David's character as king (McCarter, *II Samuel*, 186).

[97] Alter, *The David Story*, 228.

[98] Rosenstock, "David's Play", 67.

established shrine, with the "homes of Yahweh and the human king set side by side".[99] This designation of setting the ark in its place may also recall the Philistine return of the ark to the Israelites (1 Sam 5:11) with this proper return and stationing being "finally achieved with the transfer of the ark to the city of David".[100] The tent itself echoes the "tent of meeting" (Num 7:89), with the following rituals of sacrifice, blessing, and distribution being reflective of the first sacrifices offered at the tent of meeting by the newly ordained Aaron (Lev 9:22-23), so that David's actions have a priestly aspect.[101] Despite these similarities, the two structures are not to be equated with one another, neither is this Davidic tent to be taken as a "miniature version of Solomon's temple".[102] This is a new edifice for a new form of relationship with God. With each mention of the ark, and here with God's residence in Jerusalem, there is a celebration of both "the new and [an acknowledgement of] the old, as if the ark had a previous life".[103]

The nature of the outdoor tent lends itself well to the important carnivalesque concept of impermanence. The structure of the tent gives the impression of it being set outdoors, suggesting an element of openness, in contrast to the closed or finalised structure of a temple. The imagery associated with the carnival is all that is unfinished and open to the world as opposed to completed and static images (usually associated with more classical forms). The body in classical depictions is "fenced off from all other bodies", and does not allow for the free and familiar contact of the carnival which promotes the rejuvenating experience central to the carnival.[104] A more permanent structure would remove the concept of the temporary nature of this arrangement which, far from being negative, allows for the relationship and God himself to exist in the "ever incomplete character of being".[105] This unfinished nature of the tent, and by extension the nature of the community's and God's relationship, allows for the possibility of continued growth and renewal of both.

David's setting up of a specific place for God, attended by the community as a whole, allows for the divine cosmic terror to have a definitive place within the community. It is "this exclusive emblem of Yahweh's presence [that] finds its way to Jerusalem,

[99] Fleming, "David and the Ark", 83. Yet this would presume the narrative is relying on a later tradition, further on in the narrative (1 Kgs 8:4-6).
[100] Anderson, *2 Samuel*, 106.
[101] Morrison, *2 Samuel*, 90.
[102] Anderson, *2 Samuel*, 106.
[103] Fleming, "David and the Ark", 81.
[104] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 29.
[105] Ibid, 32.

brought there by David, the figure who gives the city its status as permanent capital".[106] The previous divide between Deity and persons has been bridged with the person of David; his dancing and officiating with and between the two sides has allowed for this to occur. David's dancing and degradation of himself through exposure, the all-consuming nature of the parade, and the total involvement of the people and God serve to create "a specific, free atmosphere [and] lend a bodily character to objects [and] fuse the body and the world" into one form.[107] This singular form, residing in the peculiar realism of the carnival, is an essential concept of the grotesque imagery that parodies reality, allowing for the renewal that comes with carnivalesque laughter. The king plays the clown, the people become one exuberant mass, and the Deity gets a new house within the body of the community and within the especially erected tent in Jerusalem. In a Bakhtinian perspective, this movement of God as the narrative cosmic terror lends "a bodily character to [the Deity] which become[s] closer, more intimate, more easily grasped [and] transforms [the] cosmic terror into a gay carnival" entity.[108] God may not be intimately knowable to all yet he has become far more recognisable.

David has a significant role in this successful bridging of the gap between the community and God. Within the second stage of the transfer of the ark, he plays the dual role of clown-king, undermining the conventional image of how a king should act, as well as the priest officiating for the people. He offers sacrifices to the LORD and blesses the people (2 Sam 6:17-18), and thus signifies his office as priest-king. This moment of David's boundary-defying role could easily be compared to Saul's moment of priestly moonlighting (1 Sam 13:9). The narrative does not explain why Saul's effort resulted in his being removed from his position as king yet, David's actions result in the jubilant blessing of all involved. Perhaps it has more to do with Samuel's ire at the time for being side-lined by Saul, or perhaps it is because of the nature of David's activity. While Saul's priestly activity arose out of fear, David's own sacrificing and blessing of the people is tied to the carnivalesque attitude associated with the transfer of the ark which stands as the

[106] Fleming, "David and the Ark", 77.
[107] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 311.
[108] Ibid, 335. Bakhtin here uses "gay carnival *monster*" to describe the transformation of the cosmic terror within the carnival scheme and through the grotesque body. Yet this designation of 'monster' still gives a sense of fear being associated with the cosmic terror which would seem to impede a true communion with God within the carnival space, so God will here be understood as an entity will be preferred here. The term 'gay' should be taken to mean 'happy' or 'jubilant' as intended by the translator of Bakhtin and so will be retained.

culmination of the whole carnival scheme in the Books of Samuel. Once again; David is the better in comparison to Saul.

The zenith of the carnival experience within the Samuel narratives occurs in the distribution and apparent devouring of food following David's priestly activity: "He distributed to all the people, to the whole multitude of Israel, every man and woman: to each one loaf of bread, and one date cake, and one raisin cake" (2 Sam 6:19). It is this climax toward which "all of the narrated action" is aimed.[109] The sacrifices presented to God by David would also factor into the feasting imagery associated with this passage, with food, feasting, and the subsequent devouring of the portions given to the people being central to the establishment of the feast-like imagery.[110] The feast in the carnival scheme is a "banquet for all the world", wherein all are drawn to the table together.[111] The vision of feasting and consuming is essential to the grotesque imagery of the carnival because of its duality; it is the wide-open maw which devours and destroys while also giving nourishment, and being the point at which "the ever unfinished, ever creating body, the link in the chain of genetic development…enter into each other".[112] The person encounters and is able to conquer the world in the moment of eating and consuming, a joyful activity that allows the person to "devour [the world] without being devoured by it".[113] This amalgamation of forms is a body where "becoming rather than completion is evident, a body whose openness to the world and the future is emphatically symbolised by the consuming maws, pregnant stomachs, evident phalluses, and gargantuan evacuations that make it up".[114]

Feasting carries with it a communal aspect as well which accords with the triumphant attitude of eating. Within this great gathering of devourers, the individual eating experience is suspended in favour of the image of one, huge gaping maw, one grasping hand, one "whole multitude" (2 Sam 6:19) that reaches out to David and God to receive nourishment in the form of the offered provisions, thus involving God and David in the experience of the feast as well. Just as a cook cannot be separated from the enjoyment of a meal, so too God cannot be removed from the activity of the feast here. It is within this

[109] Rosenstock, "David's Play", 65.
[110] The consuming of the provisions given out by David is not explicitly mentioned, yet it can be assumed that these were then eaten by the people (either there, on the travel home, or at home).
[111] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 278.
[112] Ibid, 26.
[113] Ibid, 281.
[114] Dentith, *Bakhtinian Thought*, 68.

vision of the feast-like distribution at the end of the carnival that the true triumph of the event is solidified, wherein the boundary of the community's body is transgressed. It is here that the community "tastes the world, introduces it into his body, makes it part of himself [wherein] the limits between man and the world are erased, to man's advantage".[115]

The community and God meet together in the act of eating, the boundaries between the individual members' bodies are erased, and the jubilant moment of God's integration and settlement within the city of David is realised within the "unique phenomena" of the feast.[116] It is through this image of the feasting mouth that "future triumphs are presented in material bodily images of abundance and rebirth".[117] The ceremony of sacrificing and the carnival itself is completed with the distribution of special provisions to the assembly. This action is probably intended to carry the blessing back to the home, so that everyone can participate in the celebration. The blessing given by David, on behalf of God, seems to have something to do with "the economic prosperity and the biological success of the house, understood as the site of the reproduction of the family unit".[118] And so each member of the community returns home, filled with joy; "all except one".[119]

After completing the sacrifices before God and distributing the provisions to the masses, David returns home to bless his own household (2 Sam 6:20). Yet there still exists the unresolved tension between Michal and David, which returns to the narrative scene as Michal comes out to presumably welcome David home. This would be only the second time the pair have spoken within this narrative episode (the first time being before David's flight in 1 Samuel 19), and when they do here it is an explosion of outraged sarcasm: "How the king of Israel distinguished himself today, when he uncovered himself today before the eyes of his servants' wenches, as one of the vulgar fellows continually uncovers himself" (2 Sam 6:20). The previous loving response by Michal stands in stark contrast to her reaction to David here; "Michal may have swooned when she first saw David, but she does not fawn over him now, like a slave girl [yet] neither does she wallow in despair".[120]

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[115] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 281.
[116] Ibid.
[117] Ibid, 286.
[118] Rosenstock, "David's Play", 67.
[119] Morrison, *2 Samuel*, 90.
[120] Benjamin Morse, "The Defence of Michal: Pre-Raphaelite Persuasion in 2 Samuel 6", *BibInt* 21-1 (2013), 19-32, here 32.

The moment David returns home from his successful and joyful parade, his recently pilfered wife attempts to undercut him! Far from being the timid maiden, left at home, Michal presses herself forward and emerges as a character who is far from helpless.[121] The glory which Michal ascribes to David here is obviously rhetorical and is juxtaposed against the salacious displays of the vulgar fellows, both displays centring on the uncovering or exposing of oneself in public. Michal's condemnation uses "remarkably scornful and sexually debasing language towards her husband and king from a once loving wife".[122] David's dancing and his self-exposure "and loss of honour, at least in Michal's eyes, is somehow meant to signal the inversion of the expected pattern".[123]

The undermining of *how* a king should act is clearly not something which Michal agrees with, and she would seem to have a definitive image of a monarch which David does not share with her. A king is presumed to possess "an entire range of attributes in addition to his politico-legal authority, such as wisdom, a knowledge of statecraft, a devotion to principles of order, [and] a sense of justice" which would be lacking in a fool.[124] Yet David here is his own fool, thus undermining the expected figure of a monarch and instead presenting one which Michal does not approve of. She further attempts to emasculate David by mentioning the maidservants who were either in attendance at the celebration (unlike Michal) or else were observers of the celebration. Not alone has the king exposed himself, he has done so in front of "the eyes of the maids of his servants" (2 Sam 6:20 LXX) whom Michal seems to hold in a similar contempt as she regards her husband. The lower classes have looked upon the naked form of the king, something which should be for her alone. Michal's ire arises from the idea that David "revealed himself to the slave women of his servants [and] may indicate that these women were not simply in the parade audience, but dancing along with David".[125] The verb "uncovered" here seems to carry with it sexual connotations, and Michal's reference to this "suggests an edge of sexual jealousy as well as political resentment in her rage against him".[126] David's exposure is contrasted with the relative hiddenness of God's glory, and "thus, Michal's taunt[ing] is precisely directed at David's pretension to bring the divine glory into Jerusalem by the very

[121] Ibid, 20.
[122] David J. Zucker and Moshe Reiss, "David's Wives: Love, Power, and Lust", *BTB* 46.2 (2016), 70-78, here 73.
[123] Rosenstock, "David's Play", 67.
[124] Bernstein, *Bitter Carnival*, 18.
[125] Wright, "Music and Dance in 2 Samuel 6", 222-223.
[126] Alter, *The David Story*, 229.

reversal of YHWH's self-concealment".[127] Moreover, besides Michal's offence at David's exposure, "the [apparent] disrespectful wearing of the priestly garment accords with the prophetic distrust of kings".[128] David's display before the ark has offended Michal on two fronts; a moral one and a personal one.

Michal's personal umbrage at David's quasi-erotic display and her moral disagreement with it both arise from her idea of honour. The notion of sexual jealousy which Michal holds against the maidservants could also arise from this sense of honour not being properly accorded to her, as well as a sense of her not being privy to a part of David which he has freely given or at least exposed to all those around him (which is not befitting of a king). The participation of women in the parade is never explicitly mentioned by the narrator "so Michal's reference to them betrays a particular torment" over David's seeming sexual availability to all except Michal. This situation renders Michal as "sexually disposable, so here Michal musters her personal authority to protest her position and insult him in front of the household".[129] David's ecstatic display which Michal deems to be dishonourable is juxtaposed against the glory which accompanies the transfer of the ark to Jerusalem, and the honour which had been given to the ark God's embodiment in the world. Michal's speech does not include the honour which is due to God. Michal criticises this exact celebration, with these types of displays seeming to "compromise the propriety of the ceremony".[130] Her focus is purely that which David should have for himself and by extension for her; "the difference between Michal and David [has] something to do with the way that one's 'house' becomes 'blessed'".[131] This notion of blessing is firmly established in Michal's mind as being one thing, yet the narrative has now portrayed it as something far more casual in terms of contact, which comes into conflict with this former understanding of blessing. In this way, "a norm can only be contested once it has been recognised as such, and a relationship inverted only after its initial premises are firmly known".[132] This is where the personal as well as the embodied ideological quarrel comes

[127] Rosenstock, "David's Play", 70. Cf. Exod 33:18-20 regarding God hiding his glory from Moses. Yet it is interesting to note that the Bible speaks of God himself having some sort of physical form; Gen 2:7, 3:8, 32:30, 32; Exod 24:10, 33:22-23.
[128] Morse, "The Defence of Michal", 27.
[129] Ibid, 29.
[130] Wright, "Music and Dance in 2 Samuel 6", 216.
[131] Rosenstock, "David's Play", 65. By comparison with the MT, the LXX softens the sharpness of Michal's exclamation by prefacing it with the statement that she "blessed him" (2 Sam 6:20) before 'tearing into' him. This plays well into the common marketplace language used in the carnival, which places blessings and curses side by side (Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 151).
[132] Bernstein, *Bitter Carnival*, 19.

from, as the narrative "conceives of the estrangement [between man and wife] in terms of honour and shame".[133] It is this procession and celebration which has taken David from "humble shepherd to exalted leader by way of a ritual dance, transient humility, exceptional attire, and unusual conduct which Michal [has] deemed unseemly and indecorous for the successor to her father".[134]

The two figures of Michal and David are set against one another, standing as the embodiment of two juxtaposed ideological stances, with Michal's speech allowed to enter the narrative arena first. The importance of 'covering up' within Michal's speech seems parodic as the argument between man and wife "seems to have happened in the street for all to see".[135] Such a public disagreement fits the carnival atmosphere of insults and common 'marketplace' language. The public argument between the two ironically goes against Michal's calls for decency and 'hiding' oneself as this form of insulting speech is "frank and free, permitting no distance between those came in contact with each other and liberating from norms of etiquette".[136] This is a confident (if unwise) move by Michal, as she confronts her royal husband so publicly, the forceful nature of her confrontation thus placing Michal "in a most unfeminine role".[137] According to Michal's judgement, David is not conducting himself as a king should. He has exposed himself in a scurrilous manner. She is the daughter of a king and has a fixed sense of how a king should be honoured, whereas David has "demonstrated that he is no more than riffraff" in Michal's eyes.[138] Her words to David carry with them the condemnation of his role as king, as possible "code for 'my father made a better king than you'".[139] The honour of the occasion should have belonged to David and he should have carried himself in such a dignified manner, as far as Michal is concerned. It could be suggested that Michal takes "offense at David's dancing

[133] Gary Stansell, "Honor and Shame in the David Narratives", *Semeia* 68 (1994), 55-79, here 65.
[134] James W. Flanagan, "Social Transformation and Ritual in 2 Samuel 6", in *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honour of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday,* eds. Carol L. Meyers and M. O'Connor (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 361-372, here 368.
[135] Morrison, *2 Samuel*, 91.
[136] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 10.
[137] Adele Berlin, "Characterization in Biblical Narrative: David's Wives", *JSOT* 23 (1982), 69-85, here 72. Berlin also notes that Michal is never once described as being beautiful or conventionally attractive in the Samuel narratives, which may have affected how David acted towards her (and may be a reason behind his possible abstaining from sharing her bed later).
[138] Alter, *The David Story*, 229. This notion of debasing David has occurred before with Nabal (1 Sam 25:10-11), who equated David with a servant who had escaped his master. As with Nabal, Michal's derogatory remarks to David will not end well for her.
[139] Morrison, *2 Samuel*, 91.

because her values were more conservative than David's, but her haughty tone suggests that the issue was not moral scruples but royal pride".[140]

The honour due to God does not factor into Michal's argument in a blatantly obvious way. Her mention of the maidservants and the dancers alongside David draws the king's person metaphorically onto the same social plane as those whom Michal deems as lesser. In her view, the form of the king should be above and removed from the prying eyes and grasping hands of the community, thereby almost equating the honour of the person of the king with that of God. The carnival experience is marked by free and familiar contact as well as the removal of social and physical barriers amongst the members of the community, all of which make the carnival such a liberating and rejuvenating moment, yet this type of contact is deemed as something shameful within the framework of Michal's ideological stance. Yet David does not remain silent to Michal's insulting remarks and will "try to redefine both honour and dishonour to his wife".[141]

David's speech is given a greater sense of prominence in relation to Michal's, as her argument is posed first and yet it is his which concludes discussion between the two: "It was before the LORD, who chose me over your father and over all his house to appoint me as ruler over the people of the LORD, Israel. And I will play before the LORD, and I will be dishonoured still more than this and will become lowly in my eyes. But by the maidservants of whom you spoke, by them I will be honoured" (2 Sam 6:21-22). In David's speech he does not accord the receiving of honour to his own person but rather through and by God. He first puts Michal 'in her place' before reversing the placement of honour away from himself as Michal had done. Yet there is a victorious sense to his debasing himself that is missing from Michal's taunting words, just as before her father, Saul, David had called himself a "dead dog" and a "flea" (1 Sam 24:14).

The first rebuttal by David is to honour himself above Michal and her father's house, all of which had been accomplished through God who is the figure at the core of David's honour speech. David's second segment of speech raises the notion of dishonour to one of honour, as well as including the carnivalesque reversal of redefining those whom Michal derided as being dishonourable and moving them to a higher position of honour by the king. Whereas the maidservants are deemed dishonourable by Michal and their gazes

[140] Cartledge, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 441.
[141] Alter, *The David Story*, 229.

are viewed as disreputable, David states that he will become honoured by these same women and via the same action which had offended Michal. So too are the dancers or vulgar fellows raised up by David, as he tells Michal he will continue to act as they do and thus become honoured primarily through such 'debasement' as she would understand it to be. Regardless of Michal's disparaging outlook, that may be "objectively correct, the deity does not reject David's endeavours".[142] David continues to challenge the expected image of a king as well as the anticipated notion of the person to whom honour should be given. It is David who "assumed the role of a jesting 'player', while Michal was cast in the role of a serious disparager" and it is David's role that is able to retain a sense of honour through dishonouring himself.[143] David stands as a counter-ideological stance, one which runs counter to Michal.

In the Books of Samuel, the figure of the clown-king has been portrayed in two different ways with regards the characters of Saul and David. Saul is the bumbling, uncertain, yet physically impressive ideal king-type but is lacking internally. Meanwhile David is the handsome, confident, yet physically unremarkable young man who has the countenance for leadership. Honour for Saul was accorded to the person of the king, as evidenced by his daughter's outlook.[144] Yet for David the honour and respect due to God takes precedence. Within this figure of the clown-king "the same image, re-imagined under different pressures, could be transformed to suggest a gust of wind powerful enough to blow away pretensions or to kindle into fire a spark of truth".[145] For David, this truth is that honour is not to be accorded to the person of the king (and therefore giving a certain sense of divinity to him) but rather honour is due to and in fact resides with God. David does not and will not "compete with YHWH for glory, but precisely by refusing glory David seeks to remain the chosen one of YHWH".[146] This would appear to be something that David had figured out earlier in the narrative when he deems is 'safe' to move the ark again (2 Sam 6:12).

The honour of this moment is not for David, but for God. David is but a man, leading the larger community toward God. This is something which Michal has missed. If

[142] Wright, "Music and Dance in 2 Samuel 6", 224.
[143] Rosenstock, "David's Play", 73.
[144] This outlook is also evidenced in Saul's own behaviour, for example, when Saul is far more interested in keeping the good will of the people rather than following God's commands about the Amalekites and Agag (1 Sam 15).
[145] Bernstein, *Bitter Carnival*, 21.
[146] Rosenstock, "David's Play", 74.

David had danced before another to accord himself honour, then the act would have been dishonourable. Yet because it was in the joyful celebration of the ark's integration within the community, the act is rendered honourable.[147] The removal of such inhibitions is what renders David's exposure as admirable, with the form of the king being inconsequential. In this light, David's first segment of speech could be viewed as David attesting to the fact that the choice of king had been initially Saul and was in the end himself, yet could have been any individual of God's choosing. Saul and David, as kings and clowns in their own narrative spaces, "from the perspective of orthodox values [both retain] a common moral blindness and subversive mockery".[148] Yet it is David who maintains the positive relationship with God that promotes this version of the clown-king above the former primarily because of the carnivalesque familiarity which David's person displays. It is through the very dancing which Michal finds so uncouth that David attains a "unique intimacy" with God which Saul was never afforded.[149]

The repeated mention of eyes in David's speech (2 Sam 6:21-22) underscores the spectator status which Michal had accorded to herself, possibly in the hopes of distancing herself from David's shameful displays, and yet her situation as an onlooker has become the proverbial 'stick' that David uses to 'beat' her with. Michal does not engage with the carnival and so is not removed from the position of fear and ignorance which accompanies the totally unknowable God. It is this fear that is "the extreme expression of narrow-minded and stupid seriousness, which is defeated by laughter".[150] Michal does not engage with this laughter and so is not able to engage with the fearless world of liberation in which the carnival exists.[151] In contrast to Michal, David does engage with such debasing language and lack of seriousness and is thus liberated from such seriousness that stagnates the person. David's self-debasement and the provocative stares of the maidservants assume the form of abuse and degradation, yet such that it "never assumes the character merely of personal invective; it is universal, and when all is said and done it always aims at the higher level".[152] Within the carnival, debasing language becomes language which raises up.

[147] Alter, *The David Story*, 229.
[148] Bernstein, *Bitter Carnival*, 26.
[149] Rosenstock, "David's Play", 74.
[150] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 47.
[151] Ibid.
[152] Ibid, 212.

The ambiguity of the honour/dishonour system appears again in David's speech; the dishonour which Michal accorded to the maidservants is transformed by David into honour, while Michal's disapproving gaze is used to humiliate her instead. This form of familiar speech is "ambivalent [and is] filled with both laughter and irony. They may at any moment show their other side; that is, they may be turned into abuses and oaths. They too exercise [a] debasing function".[153] David's retrieval and repackaging of Michal's previous derogatory mentions of the maidservants serves to highlight Michal's ignorance of the intentions behind David's dancing as he insinuates that "the simple slavegirls will understand that his gyrations before the Ark are an act of reverence and will honour him for it".[154] It is the opinion of the 'lowly' maidservants which David holds high versus that of Michal which he had all but dismissed as she spoke. The 'honour' which David mentioned may also carry with it a sexual edge, suggesting that David has the freedom as king to reveal himself to whomever he sees fit. One of those not fit by David's reckoning is Michal. The realisation of David's divine election seems to be completely lost on Michal, and it could be presumed that her mind still holds the image of a king as being one like Saul. Yet her refusal to accept the death of the old and the existence of the new forces Michal to the periphery of the carnival as an uninvolved observer. In a Bakhtinian perspective, the carnival is not built for spectators and this is to Michal's detriment as she is excluded from the rejuvenating experience of the carnival, and excluded from David's bed as well.

The narrative states that Michal had "no child until the day of her death" (2 Sam 6:23). This is the last mention of Michal and she is dismissed from the Samuel narrative completely from this point onward. This lack of intimacy between the two is ambiguous as it is unclear whether this was a punishment from God, a refusal by David (or Michal herself) for the king to share her bed, or if the latter is "to be understood as the agency for the former".[155] The sexualised imagery of David's dancing and the suggestive mentions of the maidservants gazing on David's form is contrasted with the sudden mention of Michal's childless state. While this may seem a sad ending for Michal, her final situation is symptomatic of the ideological struggle which David and she had personified. Michal's resistance to "David's kingship – and the refusal of an heir through her that would have

[153] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 187.
[154] Alter, *The David Story*, 230.
[155] Ibid.

justified his kingship to the northern Saulide tribes" symbolises the ideological gap between the two forms in the metaphorical removal of a shared bed between the two (and subsequent offspring).[156] The two notions of kingship and honour cannot mix because of the extremeness of both stances, and so there can be no union (taken metaphorically here as there being no children). Her non-participation in the carnival and the outright refusal of its schema results in the lack of a child for her; namely the lack of a future for her form of ideology.

Michal carries on the Saulide concept of kingship, focused on the king above all else, wherein honour is accorded to the royal person alone. According to the narrative, this form of monarchic thought had resulted in Saul's death and in Michal's childlessness. Within the scope of the carnival death is "included in life [and is] conceived by grotesque imagery as the struggle of the old life stubbornly resisting the new life about to be born, as the crisis of change".[157] Michal's refusal to accommodate this change results in "the spirit of comedy [departing and] company becomes constraint, reserve eats up the spirit, and people fall into a penurious melancholy in their scruple to be always exact, sane, and reasonable".[158]

Change necessitates a removal of one form of life at the expense of another. So too had Saul been removed as a former image of kingship in favour of a new form. The stagnation associated with Michal's non-involvement is the reversal of the liberating and familiar carnival atmosphere, and it ends with her inability to "grasp the positive regenerating power of laughter".[159] Characteristic of such a carnival scheme is "the ability to absorb every aspect of life into the whorl of it's supposedly 'regenerating power', and to abolish entirely all distinctions between participant and viewer".[160] David and the community participate in such carnivalesque laughter, at David's own expense, yet this promotes the unreserved contact that initiates the rejuvenation of the people. The king no longer resides over and above the people, and God is no longer quarantined away from the community.

[156] Morse, "The Defence of Michal", 32.
[157] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 50.
[158] Santayana, "The Comic Mask and Carnival", 53.
[159] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 45.
[160] Bernstein, *Bitter Carnival*, 17.

This ‘melting pot’ of forms, centred on the lower stratum of the physical form, promotes a new figure of life to which Michal is not privy. This exclusion due to non-participation and negation of the carnival atmosphere shows “just how unappealing is the role of the ‘wise fool’s’ opponent”.[161] It is this amalgamation of persons into one grotesque form that “bears a deeply positive character [as it is] this principle [that] is victorious, for the final result is always abundance, increase”.[162] It is this abundance from which Michal is excluded and so her fruitfulness is impacted; it is the end of one form of life in favour of another. The carnival as established with and through the person of the king enables the establishment of the “golden age of carnival truth [wherein] man returns unto himself” within the community, liberated from false seriousness and granted a period of true renewal as one.[163]

It is at this juncture that the carnival of the Samuel narratives comes to a close, with the community drawn together, although the image of what that community is has not yet been finalised, as “the whole [has] lost the old image [but] has not yet found the new one”.[164] Yet God’s “residence in Jerusalem is not considered eternal, and moreover, its origin is attributed directly to the arrival of David”.[165] It is at this point that the carnival comes to a close as the carnival scheme itself is temporary as a celebration must conclude at some point. If a New Year’s Eve were to run yearlong, it would lose its special character. The same idea applies here. From a Bakhtinian perspective, the carnival offers a “temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order” of the world.[166] While there may exist carnivalesque elements past 2 Samuel 6, the true zenith of this carnival enterprise involving the notion of monarchy has reached its conclusion in David’s installation of the ark in Jerusalem, wherein God has discovered a space amongst the welcoming community. The carnival as a form of reality presented here is temporary, and the world must return to its conventional axis.[167]

[161] Ibid, 22.
[162] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 62.
[163] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 48. This renewal is seen in 2 Sam 7, where the prophet, Nathan, promises David an eternal dynasty.
[164] Ibid, 53.
[165] Fleming, “David and the Ark”, 89.
[166] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 10.
[167] Ibid, 10 and 15.

6.5 - God as the Unfathomable yet Recognisable Cosmic Terror:

The introduction of God onto the narrative stage is in the form of the physical presence of the ark. Up until this point in the stories of Saul and David, although the ark is mentioned in 1 Samuel 4-6, God has been mostly portrayed as a non-corporeal entity that interacts with the world through the bodily forms of others. Yet now a tangible form of the Deity is available to enter the space, a form which can be grasped or a point from which God can move into the world. This tangibility of the divine form is what makes the encounter with God in this segment of Samuel narrative so distinctive. The parade organised by David requires "a concrete focus for the divine presence, and the ark fills that requirement [as] without the ark, some other focal point would have to be imagined, such as a statue or other figure" which seems far more static.[168] It is a form which can be seen, and touched, and one from which reactions can come, and actions can be directed towards it as a point of physical reference. The form of the ark, however, holds significance in terms of history for the community, and it is this historical significance which is at the heart of the major complication of David's transfer of the ark (being the central action of the plot).

The earlier capture of the ark in 1 Sam 4:10-7:2 is recalled with David's attempted removal of the ark from its residence at Kiriath-jearim, where it had been for a lengthy period of time. David gathers together a contingent of men from Israel to transfer the ark into his new population centre of Jerusalem. The location to which these men travel is noted as Baale-judah in 2 Samuel 6 yet, this new place name seems to be a synonym for Kiriath-jearim. The physical presence of God has been safely and uneventfully ensconced at Baale-judah until David comes to claim it for his newly captured city. David's collection of the ark echoes the summoning of the ark by the Israelites (1 Sam 4:3-5) and the subsequent movement of the same in both scenarios is done in a similar manner (cf. 1 Sam 6:10-16), with the ark being carried on a new cart and driven by oxen. This form of transportation was done by the Philistines (cf. 1 Sam 6: 7, 10-11) who accompanied the ark as they sent "it to its place" with guilt offerings as sign of respect for the presence of God (1 Sam 6:2-3). These offerings and the care which these foreigners take in moving the ark stand in opposition to David's rather casual treatment of the same in the first stage of this episode (2 Sam 6:1-5).

[168] Fleming, "David and the Ark", 95.

While the cart and oxen as a mode of transportation of the ark is not incorrect, the presence of poles for carrying the ark would seem to hint that physically carrying the ark by hand would have been the preferred method (cf. Exod 25:14-15). This may not have been deemed improper in terms of care for the ark, yet the transfer of the ark using the cart is a form which lessens the familiar and direct contact which is important for the carnival space. There is no proper contact between the divine and mundane; there is not that familiarity which arises from the removal of boundaries within the carnival scheme. Yet the impropriety associated with David's initial movement of the ark does not arise specifically from the mode of transportation, but rather from the man who instigated it, David himself. The ark of God is the embodiment of the LORD's presence on earth, a source for the divine which the community may gather around and commune with. Yet at the outset, the ark is moved from place to place like an installation, heaved upon a cart and initially plays 'second fiddle' to the grand triumph of King David.

The negative connotations of David's first move of the ark (2 Sam 6:1-11) and the associated imagery arising from the Philistine encounter with the same (1 Sam 5-6) hang over proceedings. While David and the mustered people 'make merry', the discouraging intonations surrounding this transfer of the ark come to a head. As the cart moves along the road, amidst the celebrations of David and his men, the oxen stumble and Uzzah is forced to "stretch out his hand onto the ark of God to hold it back" (2 Sam 6:6 LXX). God is angered in some way by this action, and kills Uzzah then and there (2 Sam 6:7). While the possible rationale behind the death of Uzzah has already been discussed, the unfathomability of the act itself is worth noting. The violence perpetrated against Uzzah may have arisen from God's "position of vulnerability and impotence" within the ark, or from the limitations associated with his physical form in that moment.[169]

There can be no misconception as to the culprit of Uzzah's death; the text explicitly says it was God who struck Uzzah (2 Sam 6:7). Yet the text also seems to indicate that Uzzah was at fault for some reason, "either by commission or omission", despite his actions of grabbing the ark seeming quite reasonable; as he cart was being moved, the oxen stumbled, and Uzzah reacted by attempting to stabilise the ark in case it fell (2 Sam 6:6).[170] The reasoning behind Uzzah's action does not seem to be ill-intentioned; it was a 'gut'

[169] Gilmour, "Divine Violence and Divine Presence", 1.
[170] Ibid, 4.

reaction to his fear of the ark falling and appears less of a punishable act and more as an ill-advised course of action, appearing "not cruel on purpose but only rough, like thoughtless boys".[171] So the rationale behind God's violence against Uzzah would appear to be unreasonable at best and capricious at worst. This 'dark' portrait of God presented here "may be an intentional problemization designed to subvert human claims to divine authority, especially the pretensions of the monarchy".[172] Both Uzzah and God could have acted in a purely reactive manner; Uzzah unconsciously grabbed the ark to stop it falling and God unconsciously struck out at his physical presence being grabbed at. Touching or initiating physical contact with the ark, especially such thoughtless contact, "can only end in catastrophe [and] this is why Uzzah dies".[173]

The notion that the focus of the parade was directed towards the wrong personage may also have played into God's irritability as King David's self-aggrandisement is stopped, the ark is quarantined with Obed-edom, and the king is disheartened. God does not provide any resolution or explanation behind his killing of Uzzah, though the reader may guess at some form of rationale behind the violence. The character of God carries with it a substantial amount of threat, being an ominous and hugely powerful figure (both literally and figuratively), seen as the cosmic terror. Yet this foreboding nature does not hinder human freedom in the strict sense; God's reaction to Uzzah seems to be irrational to some degree and if there is a reason behind it, the Deity does not elaborate on the lesson inherent. As a divine force and 'player' on this carnival stage, God "apparently lets things ride rather than forcing a resolution".[174] David is left to his own devices as to how to continue.

The rationale behind God's violence against Uzzah is something which can only be guessed at, mused about, or theorised. The violence witnessed in the narrative "is an interpretation that readers impose, having a certain ideological charge. It might be a good interpretation, but it is not given explicitly by the text".[175] The narrative assumes "that there is an underlying reason for the violence" yet to the reader of the text "is it simply not

[171] Santayana, "The Comic Mask and Carnival", 57.
[172] Chapman, "Worthy to be Praised: God as a Character in Samuel", 28-29.
[173] Wright, "Music and Dance in 2 Samuel 6", 225.
[174] Chapman, "Worthy to be Praised", 40.
[175] Douglas S. Earl, "Divine and Human Violence in the Historical Books", in *The Oxford Handbook of The Historical Books of the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Brad E. Kelle and Brent A. Strawn (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 284-302, here 285.

communicated" and so God's action remains inexplicable.[176] Yet this inexplicability lends itself well to the unfathomability of God as the cosmic terror, the unknowable and unconquerable other, the abyss in which humanity has no footing. Why did he do it? Nobody knows! The cosmic terror is that which is "the fear of the immeasurable, the infinitely powerful [which] cannot be overcome by force".[177] God stands at this point in the narrative as exactly that; an embodiment of "fear [of] the memories of the past, and the apprehension of future calamities".[178] With the character of God, the reader ought to expect "dissonances and jaggedness to remain…owing to the otherness of God".[179] It is this otherness which carries with it the possibility for such calamities, as that which is other is predominantly unknown and therefore the greater the opportunity for destruction.

By this token, the recollection of imagery from 1 Samuel 5-6 with the movement of the ark, is not coincidental as it was remarked as being a period when "the glory [had] departed from Israel" (1 Sam 4:22 RSV). Whether Uzzah's action can be considered as an affront in some offensive way (perhaps reflecting the improper use of the ark previously; cf. 1 Sam 4:3-4) or whether God's action was unwarranted from a human perspective, the inscrutability which surrounds God's character at this juncture highlights the genuine fear which such a figure could and can provoke. The cosmic terror is that human fear of the unknown and unavoidable; this could also be death or the unknowable expanse of space. It is that which induces a feeling of helplessness and insignificance. Regardless of the reader's reaction to God's activity or how David takes it, the "biblical God is presented as unsearchable".[180] The killing of Uzzah easily sparks a reaction of human helplessness. This then is witnessed when David becomes incensed at the man's death and calls off the parade while he ponders how the ark could come to be in his care, unwilling to move the ark into Jerusalem following Uzzah's death (2 Sam 6:8-10).

Yet while the killing of Uzzah brings with it a sense of dread, it would not be carnival-like to leave such an explicitly negative gloss to proceedings. The death of Uzzah gives rise to an opportunity for renewal, principally within David. As spoken about previously, the focus of the initial parade would seem to reside solely with *David*; he is the king, taking possession of the ark, and transporting it to his city like someone moving a

[176] Gilmour, "Divine Violence and Divine Presence", 6.
[177] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 335.
[178] Ibid.
[179] Earl, "Divine and Human Violence in the Historical Books", 295-96.
[180] Nygaard, "Bakhtinian Carnivalesque and Paul's Foolish and Scandalous Gospel", 376.

couch to a new house. It would be reasonable to state that this is not the way in which the embodiment of God on earth should be recognised or treated. With Uzzah's death, and the subsequent blessing which befalls Obed-edom, David recognises something which reorientates his treatment of the ark. Death and life within the carnival scheme are closely linked, being akin to two sides of the same coin. Death is regarded not solely as an end but also a moment which allows for new life; "death, the dead body, blood as a seed buried in the earth, rising for another life".[181] As Uzzah dies, God "struck him down there" (2 Sam 6:7) which conjures images of the grave and becoming "a variant [of] death inseminating mother earth and making her bear fruit".[182]

This 'fruit' can be taken as an opportunity for David to transform the manner in which he had acted, the pendulum swinging from honouring himself to honouring God instead. Meanwhile God's 'good mood' allows for the community find its own renewal within the carnival space. While God is portrayed as a Deity not above the pettiness of 'lashing out', this involvement might be preferred "even at the cost of possible personal suffering [rather] than to live under the icy decrees of an Unmoved Mover".[183] The narrative oscillates between two facets of God's characterisation, as it suggests "on the one hand the possibility of the most intimate kind of interaction between other characters and this literary deity, while at the same time ensuring that the deity is never fully reduced to human form, never literarily captured or tamed".[184]

The fact that God is *embodied* within the narrative is significant then, as it promotes a tangible and material familiarity between God and the people as a whole as though the two are separate "God and world are not independent of one another".[185] God's form of the ark lends a bodily character to the Deity, wherein he may "become closer, more intimate, more easily grasped" as an entity.[186] The ark is a form which has the ability to interact with person and place, capable of falling to the ground, and becoming enmeshed with the earth. It is this bodily character which stimulates a more parodic treatment of God, in which the

[181] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 327.
[182] Ibid.
[183] Barton, "The Dark Side of God in the Old Testament", 131.
[184] Chapman, "Worthy to be Praised", 41.
[185] Balentine, *Prayer in the Hebrew Bible*, 41. The world requires God for its "origin and its sustenance" while God requires the world from a relational aspect as well as being the tangible arena in which humanity exists.
[186] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 335.

concept of the Deity as the "big other, the transcendent God" is lessened.[187] God is placed into a position where he may even be chided, as David seems to do as he becomes angry with God for Uzzah's death (2 Sam 6:8).

It is this more bodily character which accompanies the LORD's presentation in this segment of the Samuel narrative that plays into the folk imagery of the grotesque as he becomes a part of the community, a piece of the whole communal body involving the people. Previously, God had acted in and through others as an incorporeal form, primarily in and through Saul as the first king (cf. 1 Sam 10:9-13; 11; 19:18-24). Yet here God as the cosmic terror has a visible form that can affect a person in a multitude of ways (cf. 2 Sam 6:7, 11), and even reacts in a strangely human capacity out of the emotion of pure anger at being manhandled (2 Sam 6:7). This tangibility lends well to the carnival sense of materiality and familiarity, wherein the cosmic terror of God may become recognisable to the communal whole. Yet, as David turns the ark aside, it further underscores the unfathomability which still exists with the person of God, an unfathomability which not even David can overcome at that moment. God's violent outburst against Uzzah in the middle of David's triumphant procession makes no logical sense, and this first attempt of ark transfer ends on a deflated note.

The violence perpetrated against Uzzah may not have an inherent 'lesson' for anything which Uzzah may have done; "there is no arguing with God's decisions, but from our perspective they often appear unjust".[188] This "'dark' portrait of God in Samuel may be an intentional problemization designed to subvert human claims to divine authority, especially the pretensions of monarchy".[189] Yet, after the divine 'timeout' in Kiriath-jearim, it is David who seems to grasp something significant. It is the report of the blessing which encourages the king to attempt to move the ark again. The reader is not told what exactly Obed-edom had done to receive divine good fortune, nor what shape this fortune takes. Yet this turn of prosperity is followed by David taking possession of the ark "with jubilation" (2 Sam 6:12). Is this change of fortune intended as a response to David's new understanding or is it a moment of divine backpedalling? It would seem that, much like

[187] Gilmour, "Divine Violence and Divine Presence", 10.
[188] Barton, "The Dark Side of God in the Old Testament", 122.
[189] Chapman, "Worthy to be Praised", 28-29.

humans, God can change his mind which is "philosophically scandalous, yet is essential to the character of the biblical God".[190]

Just as with the rationale behind God striking down Uzzah, the reasoning behind the turn in the narrative to good fortune does not get a complete answer. The unfathomability of God's action may not be "capriciousness on God's part; rather, it is a function of God's absolutely unique manner of being".[191] The "arbitrariness [of the Deity] has a positive as well as a negative side: it is seen in God's free choice of the undeserving as the beneficiaries of divine salvation, not only in the apparently wanton disposition of human life in unjust ways".[192] Yet there is something within this good fortune which inspires David to re-take the ark from Obed-edom (2 Sam 6:12). The ark itself is positioned at the heart of this new parade; it is carried by the people, with sacrifices made with every six paces (2 Sam 6:13). It could be said that this form of transportation is the change which encourages the positive alteration to proceedings, yet what inspired such a shift remains obscure. Regardless of the rationale behind the change to proceedings, it is clear that the reorientation of focus toward God is crucial. The ark is carried by hand by the people, amidst the celebrations directed towards the Deity with David as another celebrant, as sacrifices are made to God with each stage of the movement towards Jerusalem.

The transportation of the ark at this juncture by hand creates a space for the free and familiar contact that is important for the carnival atmosphere. This second form of the parade "contrasts with the first procession, which lacks sacrifices and, though it manifests music and dance, has more restrained performances".[193] The ark is not a separate and divided entity, removed from the community and its king. Rather the ark itself is enmeshed within the communal body of the people, moving and celebrating as one. It is the form working as one to bring about the ultimate rejuvenation of the community with the ark's installation, and it is within this communal form that David figures as the clown-king par excellence. David's dancing and exuberant display before the LORD is a moment of true self-debasement by the king, the suspension of the aggrandisement of the self which undercuts the former (and arguably more traditional) image of the king amidst a triumphant parade. David's dance is an ecstatic display in which the king leaps about with gusto, being

[190] Barton, "The Dark Side of God in the Old Testament", 130. Cf. Exod 32:14; 1 Sam 15:28, 35; Jer 18:8-10 also.
[191] Robert Barron, *2 Samuel* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2015), 57.
[192] Barton, "The Dark Side of God in the Old Testament", 123.
[193] Wright, "Music and Dance in 2 Samuel 6", 225.

scantily clad (2 Sam 6:14). This can be regarded as being scandalous in some way, judging by Michal's reaction to seeing David as they enter Jerusalem with the ark (2 Sam 6:16). This may be perhaps because the king is making a carnivalesque show of himself or indeed exposing himself in front of the congregation that paraded alongside the ark.

This reckless abandoning of shame by the king is a moment of genuine voluntary debasement as "self-exposure is the carnivalisation of the subject's pretensions to glory and power".[194] The reason for the parade as well as David's own attempts to claim honour for himself through the ark have shifted. The king is no longer placed aside and above proceedings but is rather immersed in the celebration itself; he is dancing for God and not for any other individual, not even himself (which is important). David's exuberant display "had not been intended to please Saul or Saul's daughter, but to honour Yahweh, even if it required self-abasement".[195] David's suspension of his own honour in favour of God's allows for the genuine carnival movement to pervade the scene. Any pretensions to self-aggrandisement or self-importance would come across as purely conceited in such an atmosphere and would interrupt the rejuvenating experience at work. While David's dancing and his subsequent rejection of Michal (2 Sam 6:23) may be seen as unseemly and cruel, sparking a similar emotion as God's violent outburst against Uzzah, the reader "ought not to expect God, and those following God's vocation, to be constrained by some Kantian categorical imperative or postmodern ideology or sensitivity".[196]

This suspension of the self by David allows for the social boundary between king and people to be temporarily erased, whereby the physical boundary between the same may be erased. In this narrative, David's familiar and casual nature as king is essential to the carnival scheme's success: unlike Michal, "David [is] no haughty recluse, but a king who [is] willing to share himself with his people – in more ways than one [with] his show of humility [being a true] *show* of humility".[197] God has already transgressed said boundary by being carried in the form of the ark by the people, the point of familiar contact being made at that moment as one tangible form is able to interact with another in an unrestrained yet appropriate manner. Within this space of open and informal exchange between all persons – people, king, and Deity – the clown-king figure of David serves as the proverbial

[194] Rosenstock, "David's Play", 71.
[195] Cartledge, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 441.
[196] Earl, "Divine and Human Violence in the Historical Books", 296.
[197] Cartledge, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 441.

scapegoat upon which the fears and serious nervousness of the past may be pinned. It is through his voluntary debasement that the king may be ridiculed and laughed at by all, thereby negating the superstitious seriousness attached to the conventional person of the king and clearing the way for a new form of community to spring forth.

It is in and through the ridicule attached to this figure of the clown-king (here, David, as he dances before God) that the people and God are able to achieve this form of familiar contact, in a truly bodily and material manner. The carnival at work here portrays "peoples, alongside kings, as sovereign agents".[198] David's erratic display of dancing and the debasement of his self is a rejection by this king of the conventional figure of the aloof monarch. By engaging in such folly David enables "a form of gay festive wisdom" to enter the space which is "free from all laws and restrictions, as well as from preoccupations and seriousness."[199] This new form of wisdom is in fact "a fool's truth [which is] freedom from personal material interests [while being] at the same time earthly and material."[200]

A significant material facet of this fool's truth is the feast, which is a further suspension of the boundary between the self and the world as well as being the person's display of euphoric conquest over the world and nature. The sacrifices function "as a meal for the deity, [and] a sacrifice can be brought to praise the deity, to give him thanks, to ensure future blessing, or to appease wrath that results from human transgression" as well functioning as a common event.[201] The sacrifices offered before God (2 Sam 6:14) and the offerings that David presides over (2 Sam 6:17-18) as well as the food provisions that the people bring home with them (2 Sam 6:19) all factor into this communal celebration, centred on the action of eating. Each moment in which food or animals are mentioned involves all persons (people, God, and David), thereby binding each individual to the other in one whole form. A grasping and devouring entity emerges as a significant manifestation of the grotesque body, the open maw tearing asunder sustenance and the duality of death in life.

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[198] Seth Sanders, "From People to Public in the Iron Age Levant", in *Organisation, Representation, and Symbols of Power in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the 54th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale at Würzburg 20th-25th July 2008*, ed. Wilhelm Gernot (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012), 191-211, here 205.
[199] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 260.
[200] Ibid, 262.
[201] Wright, "Music and Dance in 2 Samuel 6", 224.

Within the feasting imagery the community experiences the world in a sensory manner (through the open mouth), brings the outside world into the body, and thereby makes the world a part of its own body. Through the process of eating "the limits between man and the world are erased, to man's advantage."[202] The carnivalesque elimination of such boundaries allows for free and familiar contact, with the removal of individual expression and any impenetrable surfaces, instead allowing for the body to acquire "cosmic dimensions, while the cosmos acquires a bodily nature".[203] This openness portrayed between Deity, king, and people "represents the body as unbounded, in transformation, materially linked to its past and its future".[204]

Both community and Deity permeate the boundaries between one another, with "the people's growing and ever-victorious body that is 'at home' in the cosmos".[205] The cosmos too finds its own space within this ever-expanding body of the people, with this corporal form possessing a similar elemental force yet being better organised. It is because of this that fear is eradicated; familiarity breeds recognisability and thus removes the previous fear. The former fear resulting from the death of Uzzah, for instance, is no longer a moment of catastrophe. Rather it can be regarded as an opportunity for growth or development, which allowed for the triumphant celebrations now being witnessed, with God becoming if not knowable then at least familiar to the community. Such familiarity removes the terror associated with death as "the death of the individual [here, Uzzah] is only one moment in the triumphant life of the people and of mankind, a moment indispensable for their renewal and improvement".[206]

The sacrifices during the parade and as the ark is installed in Jerusalem are part of the feast imagery, centred on the person of God. While God may not be able to take part in the feasting in the same sensory fashion as the people or David, his centrality to these proceedings includes him in them as a fundamental participant; the people and David celebrate and feast along with God at the conclusion to the carnival parade. Not alone is God figured as part of the parade and following feasting, he is given a genuine place within the community; "And they brought in the ark of the LORD and they set it in its place within the tent that David pitched for it" (2 Sam 6:17). This along with the feast imagery promotes

[202] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 281.
[203] Ibid, 339.
[204] Dentith, *Bakhtinian Thought*, 80.
[205] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 341.
[206] Ibid.

the malleable nature of boundaries – bodily and social – during the carnival, wherein the person "assimilated the cosmic elements" and had thus become a part of the body.[207] Even if the God presented here is "subject to the kind of emotional states that a more philosophical theology would deny him, such as jealous anger, then that has its other side in his love and care for the people, which is not a detached, 'philosophical-king' attitude, but a deep personal involvement".[208] Through such assimilation of elements, the body discovers these cosmic elements and becomes uniquely conscious of them within the personal form of the body; the person "became aware of the cosmos within himself".[209] The feasting by the people here is the eradication of boundaries, and the introduction of another element which removes the impenetrable nature of the body within the sensory and communal act of feasting, eating, and devouring. It would seem that "biblical narrative is not afraid to give God glory through inglorious means".[210]

The feast imagery, ending in the people returning home with shares of food from this spectacle (2 Sam 6:19), leaves the moment of the carnival with the possibility of a continuation with "the potentiality of a new beginning instead of [an] abstract and bare ending" existing through these remnants of the feast.[211] The act of feasting is celebratory in nature and lends itself well to the humorous exchanges which are part of the carnival laughter that overcomes the dour seriousness associated with authoritative stances. This dull fear, derived from the fear of the ultimately overwhelming forces of nature or the cosmos (or an unfathomable Deity), is defeated by celebration and laughter. The act of eating, as well as the by-products of this, allow for "catastrophe [to be] degraded, humanized, and transformed".[212] The former catastrophe, fear, and anguish is suspended (even momentarily) within the parade environment that the people, David, and God have all participated in.

There is a unique experience of knowing God, shared by David with the people in this celebration, "as a companion on the way, who like companions may react to one with a range of emotions, [who] never simply abandons the people to whom he is committed, and

[207] Ibid, 336.
[208] Barton, "The Dark Side of God in the Old Testament", 125.
[209] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 336.
[210] Johnson, "Humor in the Midst of Tragedy", 80.
[211] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 283.
[212] Ibid 336.

certainly never damns them in advance".[213] The carnival scheme portrayed in the Books of Samuel "could be read as the story of God's attempts to lure his people back into right praise, not because God needs such devotion but precisely because such devotion is tantamount to human flourishing".[214] In this manner God "may change [his] hues like the chameleon, not at random but in a fashion which moral optics can determine, as it appears in one perspective or another, for everything in nature is lyrical in its ideal essence, tragic in its fate, and comic in its existence".[215] The God portrayed in the Samuel narratives is a Deity who is "neither complaisant nor rigidly predictable" and this adaptable nature is more important than a banal love which may be momentarily comforting but is limited in the long run.[216] This Deity may not be wholly and completely knowable or even fathomable, yet he is at the very least recognisable and, to some degree, familiar.

[213] Barton, "The Dark Side of God in the Old Testament", 124.
[214] Barron, *2 Samuel*, 51.
[215] Santayana, "The Comic Mask and Carnival", 56.
[216] Chapman, "Worthy to be Praised", 34.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

7.1 - The Bakhtinian Carnival:

This study has attempted to show the presence of a Bakhtinian style carnival or carnivalesque attitude in selected passages within the Books of Samuel (1 Sam 9:1-10:16; 10:17-27; 11:1-15; 19:18-24; 24:1-8; 2 Sam 6:1-23). The characters of Saul and David, and the characterisation of God as portrayed in the narrative have been the focus for this Bakhtinian application. The recognition of elements of dark humour in the texts cited above has provided an 'avenue' for carnivalesque features to be seen in the narrative, even if comedy in the Bible may be considered elusive, or comedy itself considered subjective. The question as to what denotes something as humorous is "it turns out, a serious question and not necessarily an easy one to answer".[1] Dark humour exists in the space where tragedy was and comedy is as "comedy never comes first" in this graduation of genre, so even if the story of Saul is considered as tragic in nature, this does not necessarily undermine the venture of the carnival.[2] Comedy follows tragedy, and tragedy 'feeds' into comedy, thus making it darkly humorous, because "the first highly developed comic notes are developed not apart from, but out of, what has been presented" as tragic.[3] It is within this darker comedic prism that the sympathy for humanity 'wells up' in contrast to the admiration which tragedy holds, and it is this sympathetic approach which enables the human person to be recognised as vulnerable.[4] Comedy is not a site of 'comfort' to a reader but is the location of "the rest of the bitter truth" which is in the process of discovery, and it is this uneasy literary scene in which the carnival exists and works.[5]

The notion of the carnival is an at times an inconsistent theory for treatment of a text, being challenging in terms of the duality and ambiguity it retains. The carnival is a rationale which arises out of Bakhtin's considerations of the works of François Rabelais (specifically focusing on the characters of Pantagruel and Gargantua). In Rabelais' writings, Bakhtin shows "a powerfully charged account of the transition to modernity".[6]

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[1] Johnson, "Humour in the Midst of Tragedy", 65.
[2] Kerr, *Tragedy and Comedy*, 20.
[3] Ibid, 26.
[4] Ibid, 81 and 172.
[5] Ibid, 28.
[6] Dentith, *Bakhtinian Thought*, 66.

As an entry point to the literary approach of the carnival, it can be described as the ridiculing and undermining of a dominant hegemony or institution through the use of laughter (being tragicomic in tone), which will "have a certain undestroyable nonofficial nature".[7] This laughter becomes an outlet for anxiety and fear, allowing for the trepidation associated with anxiety and fear to be worked out by a group of people. However, the scheme of the carnival is more than just an ensemble of people gathered in a circle, laughing for no particular reason.

The humour of the carnival is directed towards the parodying of a dominant authority system or structure, and therefore it aims higher than just ridicule for its own sake. This ridiculing of authority structures by a text removes the stagnating response of fear and uncertainty, pulling such elevated forms down toward the earth so that they become more accessible and less frightening. From a Bakhtinian perspective, the carnival cannot be considered as mere frivolity or an opportunity to provoke something considered sacrosanct for the sake of it. The scheme of the carnival is posited as a principle which "abolishes hierarchies" so to allow "all that is marginalised and excluded" to take over "the centre in a liberating explosion of otherness".[8]

This carnivalesque explosion utilises popular festive forms and vernacular speech to create a truly 'other' space within the sphere of folk culture.[9] This form of culture is accompanied by a strange sense of reality, one which Bakhtin terms as being grotesque in nature and one which "fuse[s] the body and the world".[10] This sense of the world has as its primary function the elimination of boundary markers between persons and society as "all were considered equal during" the duration of the carnival.[11] This removal of boundaries is accomplished through laughter, and the odd pattern of play which marks the carnival. The oddities which make up the itinerary of the carnival are based on popular festive images and familiar speech. These images and 'sayings' involve feasting, parades and spectacles, and the use of "folk humour".[12] All of these aspects are public in nature and this open sense is important for the inclusivity of the community in the carnival scheme as the

[7] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 3.
[8] Stam, *Subversive Pleasures,* 86.
[9] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 4.
[10] Ibid, 311.
[11] Ibid, 10.
[12] Ibid, 5.

carnival's "participants live in it, they live by its laws as long as those laws are in effect; that is, they live a carnivalisitic life".[13]

The open nature of the carnival's communication is represented in the form of the grotesque body, which is "not separated from the rest of the world…not a closed, completed unit; it is unfinished, outgrows itself, transgresses its own limits".[14] This open form of the body which comprises the image of the carnival is the hyperbolic "offshoots" of the human physique; the gaping mouth, grasping hands, the over-hanging belly, the genitals, and phallus.[15] Each of these images moves beyond its own limitations and out into the world, perpetuating the aim of the carnival which is the transgression of boundaries (both physical and social). These images are also highly ambiguous and retain a festive sense, being "elements of one whole laughing aspect of the world", wherein life and death are intermingled and 'touch'.[16] For example, the act of eating gives life to the individual but necessitates the death of an animal or the destruction of plant material, and its by-products are another form of life for the destroyed material which is returned to the earth, and this process acts to remove the bodily boundary between nature and the individual body. The body is thus open totally to the world, in the act of eating and the act of expulsion, and the world finds a 'home' in the person before being given 'new life'. It is the point at which the body, food, and violence all meet with the option for new life being granted. Therefore, while the images of the grotesque body may be seen as frivolous (and they are), they still retain a 'greater' sense, and a more nuanced use in the carnival scheme.

It is within this indefinite frame that the 'characters' of the clown-king and the cosmic terror exist, which are central for the investigation of this thesis. The clown-king becomes the 'head' of the carnival parade, as one who is elected by popular demand and subsequently uncrowned. It is through this process of uncrowning that the clown-king figure is debased and ridiculed, wherein a particular outlook is being personified and ridiculed at the same time. While the beating of such a figure could be considered as tragic or 'sad', it is the carnivalesque meaning behind such debasement which moves the process of 'uncrowning' to become a moment of rebirth. Within the First Book of Samuel, Saul figures as the clown-king who undermines *what* a king should be and David is posited as

[13] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,* 122.
[14] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World,* 26.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid, 152.

one who reverses the expectations of *how* a king should be. It is through the death of the old way of being that a new form of life can grow.

The cosmic terror operates within the carnival as the totality of fear and anxiety; that which cannot be conquered by force and must be accepted as an aspect of life lest it destroy everything in its path. It is the immeasurable and unknowable 'other' which hovers over humanity, silently threatening to tear asunder the matrix of human life. These fears can be mundane in nature, such as the stark realisation that one left their purse on a bus after they got off, or can be cosmically enormous in nature, such as the terror which accompanies thoughts of the unavoidable abyss of death. This is why laughter figures as such an important facet of the carnival; while mired in tragic thought, it still offers a moment for 'newness' of perspective even if it may not be hugely comforting. It breaks away from the standard response of dread to such fears of death and the unknown. It is through the bodily aspect of the carnival that the cosmic terror is able to be regarded from a different perspective; namely a more humorous one. The cosmic terror is removed from its high place of dread and towards the 'ground', into a tangible reality of the body. Much like the interrelated notion of food and dung, the cosmic terror becomes intermingled with the human form. The two meet; the human form becomes a site for the cosmic terror to find its 'home', and the corporeal figure of the person takes on a cosmic aspect with the "assimilation of cosmic elements within the body".[17] God emerges as this totally unknowable and inconceivable cosmic terror in the Books of Samuel, who is seeking to attain his own place within the world, namely a place within and with his community of Israel.

7.2 - Carnivalesque Elements in the Story of Saul, David, and God:

The Bakhtinian features of the carnival (folk humour, marketplace language, feasting, images of the grotesque body) and its constituent figures (the clown-king and cosmic terror) have been applied to select chapters of 1 and 2 Samuel in order to uncover what is 'at stake' in the carnival process of the narrative. The first exploration of carnivalesque features is encountered in 1 Samuel 9 and 10 (specially 1 Sam 9:1-10:16; 10:17-27), and the establishment of Saul's character with the text's primary excursion into the concept of kingship. There exists a folkloristic 'air' within these initial chapters, with Saul's journey

[17] Ibid, 336.

to discover the lost donkeys of his father, Kish, ultimately ending in failure (1 Sam 9:1-10). The journey to find lost donkeys functions as a carnival scene, which juxtaposes Saul's impressive physicality (1 Sam 9:2) with his indecisive and meek inner personality (1 Sam 9:5-10, 21-22; 10:16).

This initial venture into the carnival serves to portray Saul as the clown-king. He has all the appearance of a regal nature; being handsome and tall (more so than any other Israelite). Yet it is appearance only; he is incapable of moving himself along the narrative path to kingship and must be cajoled at every turn by surrounding characters (1 Sam 9:5-10, 12-13, 18, 22, 24, and 27). The folkloristic recounting of the unsuccessful search for the lost donkeys, to the aborted 'romance' scene at the well with the young women (1 Sam 9:11-14), and the strange series of "signs" which appear to Saul after he leaves Samuel (1 Sam 10:2-16) undermine the expected conduct of a king as frequently witnessed in the ANE. Saul has all the appearance of a monarch, yet he lacks any true sense of initiative that would truly mark him as a leader. The carnivalesque scene of his prophetic activity with the band of prophets (1 Sam 10:9-13) opens up the body of the clown-king to the world for ridicule. It is also a point at which the cosmic terror of God is able to enter the story as an entity which brings about confusion as well as being a modifying force, because those who see Saul can no longer recognise him as "God gave him another heart" (1 Sam 10:9). The introduction of the monarchy is accompanied by a sense of confusion, with the uttering of a proverbial saying: "Is Saul also among the prophets?" (1 Sam 10:11). This new form of leadership is still in the process of being worked out. It is still a relative unknown, but has created a point at which the Deity may be able to interact with the community in a tangible manner, through the 'public' form of the ridiculed clown-king.

The next point of carnivalesque discussion is Saul's election by the people at Mizpah (1 Sam 10:17-27) and his first moment of military activity (1 Sam 11:1-15). The sense of Saul being chosen by the people en-masse is a moment of popular consolidation for the institution of monarchy, yet the prophet Samuel seems bitter about the whole enterprise of kingship, but still proceeds with the election process (1 Sam 10:19). The choice falls upon Saul, and at this 'high point' of popular demand for the king, Saul is nowhere to be found (1 Sam 10:21). Saul's attempted evasion of the role of monarch allows for a humorous tone to enter the narrative landscape as the man who is taller than any other Israelite seeks to hide himself under some baggage (1 Sam 10:22). It is Saul's physicality which becomes a point of humour and ridicule with his attempting to hide his large frame,

which the narrative (1 Sam 9:2) and Samuel (1 Sam 10:24) posit as such a positive attribute. Yet the newly-made king seems to have done a good job of hiding himself, as the people are unable to find him, and it is God, irrupting into the narrative, who reveals Saul to the assembly (1 Sam 10:22-23). Saul's removal from the baggage appears as a sort of birth scene; his being pulled from the comforting 'womb' of concealment and into a new life as king. There is a sense of the common marketplace speech inherent in Samuel's speech to the people, as he puts Saul 'on display' for the people to see (1 Sam 10:24), yet there seems to be an almost rhetorical sense to Samuel's words which 'make light' of the earlier failed 'disappearing act'. Each of these acts devalues Saul's standing as king-elect here, undermining this moment of triumph and transforming it into one of ridicule, revealing the absurdity of placing such importance on *what* a king should look like as such a king is ready to dive into some coats to save his own skin!

Yet the people are convinced by Saul's stature and proclaim him as king (1 Sam 10:24). This parody of a 'king-making' process does have a positive edge as a group of "valiant men" rally to Saul's side (1 Sam 10:26), yet this positivity is marred slightly by the mention of a group of "worthless men" who deride the new king (1 Sam 10:27). However, the portrayal of a challenge to the new king's leadership through the derogatory words of the worthless men opens the opportunity for Saul to prove himself as something more than just a proverbial 'punching bag' for the narrative. There must be some moment of triumph for Saul even if it has inherent in it a future debasement, and the advent of kingship in Israel cannot be just mired in negativity. The narrative relates such an opportunity in the siege of Jabesh-gilead by the Ammonite king, Nahash (1 Sam 11:1). This opens up the possibility too for a genuine *use* of kingship, beyond a point at which derision can be directed.

The citizens of Jabesh-gilead are threatened by Nahash, with the removal of the right eye of its population, with the aim of shaming the entire nation of Israel (1 Sam 11:2). The threat posed to the single community of Jabesh-gilead emerges as a risk to the larger population of Israel. The visceral mention of the gouging out of the eyes brings the risk down to the level of the body; it is the amalgamated form of the 'body' of Israel that is at risk, as the threat itself is directed at the whole nation and not just one group of people. It is in this scene that Saul emerges as a genuine 'hero' of the nation, bolstered by God's "breath" which "rushed upon Saul" (1 Sam 11:6) when the young man heard the news of the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead. The folkloristic simplicity of Saul's characterisation in

this episode (1 Sam 11:5) stands in opposition to Samuel's previous outline of how a king would act once placed into power in Israel (1 Sam 8:11-18), instead showing this king to be a humble man who is affected by the woes of the people and, most importantly, *acts* for the people. Saul's rallying of the people through the use of the dismembered oxen (1 Sam 11:7) recalls the atrocities committed by the community against itself in Judges (Judg 19:22-21:25); rape, dismemberment, civil war, and kidnapping.

It is the presence of God's 'breath', through the body of Saul, that brings the community back together as one 'form', as Saul and the Israelites are successful in battle and save Jabesh-gilead (1 Sam 11:11). The institution of kingship is thus portrayed as having a positive nuance in comparison to the parodic elements which had thus far been examined. When 'infused' with God's presence, Saul has the ability to lead the people and loses the previous sense of uncertainty which had marked his character since his introduction. God becomes deeply enmeshed in the saving activity of the community, thus standing counter to the more static forms of other ANE deities. The clown-king is given his 'moment in the sun' before his subsequent downfall, and the community comes together as one to celebrate. Kingship is thus posited as a positive force for the people, when in line with God's activity, and has the ability to save when needed.

The succeeding chapters of 1 Samuel recount the fall of Saul's clown-king figure and the rise of David. The major focus of this thesis following Saul's first military venture in 1 Samuel 11 is the installation of the ark by David in Jerusalem (2 Sam 6), with this event being the 'conclusion' to this particular carnival scheme. Yet there are episodes that appear in the narrative prior to this event which are noteworthy for the carnivalesque elements they contain. The contest between David and Goliath (1 Sam 17) serves as an expression of a grotesque form; that of Goliath's massive bulk (1 Sam 17:4-7) which is portrayed in beast-like terms. The purpose of this hyperbolic description of the Philistine is to show the unexpected nature of David's victory over this mammoth of a man (1 Sam 17:48-51), serving to undermine further the expected image of *what* a king should look like and be. This episode is also the introduction of David onto the narrative stage proper as a rival for Saul. As David's 'star' rises, Saul falls further from grace.

A pivotal carnivalesque moment of Saul's debasement as clown-king is recounted in another moment of prophetic display, wherein the spirit of God overcomes the king and throws him into a state of frenzy, leaving him naked before Samuel (1 Sam 19:18-24). The

king's nudity here serves not just to debase the figure of the monarch further, but also removes the boundary between Saul and the world, leaving him open to ridicule but also showing that the monarchical form is one that is purely human and vulnerable. This display of vulnerability is found again in the account of Saul and David in the wilderness of En-gedi (1 Sam 24:1-8). While on his crusade to capture and kill David, Saul goes into a cave to relieve himself and exposes the form of the king not just to a hidden David, but also to the reader. There is a genuinely human sense of pathos that underlines this moment of vulnerability, as it is a very human need being addressed, and lends itself well to the more comedic tone of the carnival scheme. The degradation on display here centres on the body and the lower stratum, with the expulsion of urine or faecal matter from the body, and back into the earth, becoming a site for positive growth, David's sparing of Saul allows Saul to escape with his life but also provides the king with the opportunity to grasp the inevitable succession of David to the throne. Yet Saul does not take this opportunity, and the pair return to their respective 'corners' (1 Sam 24:16-27).

The following sequence involving David, Nabal, and Abigail (1 Sam 25) becomes an allegory for the fact that Saul is incapable of 'making way' for David as his successor. Nabal is placed as a figure of ridicule, one which the reader is meant to be set against from the outset, being described as "churlish and ill-behaved" (1 Sam 25:3). Nabal could easily be compared with Saul; both being figures who insult David. Nabal verbally abuses David by intimating that David is a slave who has escaped his master (1 Sam 25:10-11), while Saul has forced David to become a nomad who must endure such offenses. Yet both men are caricatures of powerful figures. Saul has all the appearance of power with none of the drive (as established earlier in the narrative) while Nabal lives under the pretence that he is a quasi-monarch. This can be witnessed, for instance, in the banquet which Nabal organises which is said to be "like the feast of a king" (1 Sam 25:36), yet he has rebuffed the actual future king of Israel and not offered him a place at the table. Nabal becomes the 'totem' of kingship which David stands against and whose slights David must endure in order to succeed. This becomes evident through Abigail's speech and God's intervention on David's behalf with Nabal's death (1 Sam 25:24-31, 38).

Nabal's demise by God's 'hand' telegraphs Saul's own death later in the narrative. In both instances, David is definitely not involved which removes any culpability from Israel's next monarch. Saul's road of ineptitude as king, which had begun almost as soon as his military victory against the Ammonites had ended, subsequently results in his death

and the death of most of his sons (1 Sam 31:2-4). Saul's body is beheaded, then put on display on the walls of Beth-shan (1 Sam 31:8-10), along with those of his sons. Yet the jovial sense of the carnival, even when dark at times, will not allow such an end for the clown-king figure. Saul's greatest moment of triumph is recalled as his body is retrieved by the people of Jabesh-gilead (1 Sam 11:1-11), and thus Saul is returned to the collective of Israel (1 Sam 31:11-13). While this may be taken as a poignant end to a tragic character, the carnival sense of these episodes means that Saul's death is not rendered tragically meaningless but is rather imbued with a positive and regenerative force. The death of Saul allows for the 'birth' of David as king, with the former king's death allowing for a sense of renewal with the new monarch. Thus kingship becomes an open circle, a continually shifting form of leadership which is not rendered stagnant by its seclusion to one form. As the cosmic terror, God has moved from completely unknowable to somewhat recognisable through the person of the clown-king. The community may now proceed with David as its 'head', enabling the successful end of the carnival to occur.

The zenith of the carnival procedure of the Books of Samuel appears in David's installation of the ark in Jerusalem (2 Sam 6). The movement of the community from fearful hopelessness to hope-filled celebration is best captured in this narrative episode. The initial parade-like scene (2 Sam 6:1-7) that is portrayed is one which appears to be for David's own benefit as an attempt by David to consolidate his power and make Jerusalem not just a 'capital' in terms of political power but also a site of cultic devotion to God. David's person as king takes the majority of the 'limelight', as the ark is shuffled from its former site at the house of Abinadab (2 Sam 6:1-3). The procession of instruments (2 Sam 6:5) would hint at the carnivalesque movement of this scene, yet it is David's hubris which undermines this seemingly joyous event, resulting in the death of one of the ark's attendants, Uzzah (2 Sam 6:6-7). The killing of Uzzah is sudden in the narrative, and completely unreasonable from a modern understanding. Yet Uzzah's death becomes a sort of 'sacrifice' for the continuation of the installation of the ark. The ark is the point at which the presence of God is manifest on earth, and it was being treated rather like a dog being brought for a walk. There is an honour due to God which 'outranks' any due to David as king, who is given a 'dressing down' as his parade comes undone through God's actions.

Uzzah's death sounds a 'time-out' for the narrative (2 Sam 6:10), and could be seen as negative. However, the report of blessings which came upon the ark's temporary holding site, the house of Obed-edom (2 Sam 6:12), highlight the duality of the carnival; the shift

from death to life, curses to blessings, but also the presence of both in one another. The hiatus of the first parade allows for the genuine jubilation of the second one to occur, wherein God is posited as the central figure for celebration (2 Sam 6:13-16). It is during this second parade that David exposes himself while dancing frantically as the ark enters Jerusalem (2 Sam 6:16), the king's voluntary debasement emerging as a moment of genuine renewal for the community as the boundary between classes is removed. This is something which Michal, Saul's daughter and David's wife, takes umbrage with as she misses the greater meaning behind such exposition. The 'argument' between the two, which occurs towards the end of the episode, centres on the issue of honour. For Michal, honour is situated with the form of the king, and should be 'fenced off' from the rest of the people (2 Sam 6:20). For David, honour is due to God, and it is from God that honour may be granted to another (2 Sam 6:21). David utilises Michal's own words against her and, in a carnivalesque reversal, places those Michal had scorned (the maids of David's servants and the dancers) as the very ones who will become the site of David's honouring himself (2 Sam 6:22). As the ark is installed, the feast-like imagery of abundance is recounted, with every member assembled taking part in this activity, before and with God who is given a place within the community (2 Sam 6:17-19). The cosmic terror of God has been retrieved by the people, brought into the communal whole by the action of the person of the king, and set amongst them, thereby achieving the ultimate carnivalesque goal of integration of the cosmic terror as well as renewal of the community.

7.3 - The Clown-King(s) and the Cosmic Terror:

Throughout the Books of Samuel there exist significant moments of a carnivalesque nature that allow an interaction and consideration of the institution of kingship, as well as God's role within it. The concept of monarchy as witnessed in the ANE (as evidenced by Samuel's speech; 1 Sam 8:11-18) stands as one form that is presented in the text as well as the existence of kingship in other neighbouring ANE nations. The previous form of leadership by judges has ended in failure, following the unjust conduct of Samuel's sons (1 Sam 8:3). Kingship proves to be a necessity for the people so that they may have a continual form of governance, but it is an unknown and untested form of leadership, much like the way that God has become a truly unknown and silent entity to the people at large (1 Sam 3:1).

It is within God's acquiescence to the people's request for a king (1 Sam 8:7, 22) that the Deity may be using this relatively shapeless institution (from an Israelite perspective) to reorientate his connection with the people. It is through the bodies of the clown-kings (Saul and David) that this reorientation is attempted. Saul is posited as looking exactly like *how* a king should be, the expectation of heroism hanging heavily on his large frame (1 Sam 9:2). Yet the degradation and mockery that follows his form reveals the standard vision of what a king is as being faulty; the king is just a man, and looks are very much deceiving.

David, coming as the second form of the clown-king figure, becomes the site at which the new vision of a king is jubilantly expressed. He appears seeming nothing like a king should look (1 Sam 16:12), yet proves to be exactly what is needed, and subverts the expectation of *what* a king should be. Whereas David may be not be as physically intimidating as Saul, the younger man proves to have a certain 'mettle' which the first king lacks (e.g. 1 Sam 17:31-52). David may not have the appearance of the hero stereotype, but he proves to have the temperament which makes him a worthy and capable leader for the community. It is the installation of the ark (2 Sam 6) at which David's role as the clown-king, as well as the carnival scheme as a whole, reaches its zenith. The clown-king is thoroughly debased before the assembly of celebrating people to show that the form of the king alone is not which gives honour; it is by God that such honour is achieved and through the Deity that the community will be renewed.

It is within these figures of the clown-kings that the cosmic terror of 1 and 2 Samuel, God, finds his positive conclusion and a place within the community. The "cosmic dimensions" of such an entity become lowered, brought down toward the earth, and into the more interactive form of the human body.[18] The figure of the cosmic terror becomes a part of God's characterisation, a facet of his 'paper personality' as perceived in the text while also becoming a 'lens' through which the Deity's character can be assessed. The perception of God as the carnivalesque cosmic terror is centred on the unpredictability of God, allowing for the more seemingly capricious activities of the Deity to exist as they are perceived in the text while also imbuing them with a rationale (a carnivalesque rationale, but a rationale nonetheless). For instance, God's killing of Uzzah (2 Sam 6:6-7) is a difficult passage to come to terms with. The killing seems unnecessary at best and mean-spirited at

[18] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 336.

worst, with the killing being "attributed directly to God, using the language of personal agency, and without clearly articulated justifications".[19] Yet the unfathomability of God's striking down of Uzzah is allowed to prosper, even becoming an integral facet of his being the cosmic terror; the carnivalised narrative does not attempt to weld a theological reasoning to this event and proceed. Rather it perceives this as a part of the complexity and fierceness of the Deity as a cosmic terror, the 'mantle' of the cosmic terror thus becoming an element of the Deity's character rather than just a literary convention. It is this fear which is inspired by such unfathomability which also becomes the point at which the renewing effect of the carnival can be directed towards, through the form of the clown-king. It is from the perspective of the Samuel narratives that the character of God emerges as "at turns both tender and terrifying [yet] deserving of thanks and praise".[20]

The corporeal form of the human king becomes the site of renewal for the community, through the actions and interactions of the Deity. God moves from being an entity which is wholly unfathomable and towards one which may not be completely known but is in some sense recognisable. The terrifying and unfathomable nature of the cosmic terror (1 Sam 6:19; 2 Sam 6:7) which inspires merely fear is negated, and the people's response of apostasy as witnessed previously is suspended. God's presence is no longer secluded to certain times, places, or people (e.g. 1 Sam 3:1) but becomes one which is celebrated by the people en-masse (2 Sam 6:15). The Deity truly finds his space within his community, and the community makes a proper space for God amongst themselves.

7.4 - Interpretive Insights from a Carnivalesque Approach:

The utilisation of a Bakhtinian perspective with regards the Books of Samuel allows for a greater illumination of certain aspects of the text, which are otherwise difficult to interpret or engage with. Certain passages and chapters of the Samuel narrative are indefinite in some ways and truly grim in others, whether it be because of certain plot points or the actions of particular characters. The carnivalesque outlook too is bound up in its own complications, associated with the ambiguity and subjectivity of humour as a genre. The complexities of the carnivalesque mode of interpretation offer a new 'way into' the story of Saul and David, giving possible rationales behind these more complex aspects of the

[19] Chapman, "Worthy To Be Praised", 35.
[20] Ibid, 41.

narrative. It seems fitting that these two challenging textual entities might give illumination to one another.

Aspects of Saul's characterisation and depiction give moments of pause to a reader. How does one reconcile Saul's indecent raving (1 Sam 10:9-12; 19:23-24) with his becoming king? How can his failure to find his father's lost donkeys (1 Sam 9:4, 20; 10:2) be explained or assessed? Can Saul be viewed as more than just a tragic figure? The carnival allows for a greater meaning to be ascribed to these moments and his tragic characterisation as a whole. Saul is 'clothed' as the carnivalesque clown-king, one who embodies the struggles and joys associated with this event.

Within the space of the carnival, this figure of the clown-king is elected by all the people, and along the 'parade route' the clown-king is then thrashed, beaten, and insulted by this same gathering. In a Bakhtinian perspective, his body is presented for such public degradation not for the sole reason of popular violence or some empty display of viciousness. Rather these beatings and abuses conversely offer a site from which growth and renewal on a communal level can occur and the people can prosper. This carnivalesque rationale for the function of the clown-king's degradation is crucial to their success and the success of the carnival in general. Even the more mundane accounts of the meals (e.g. 1 Sam 9:22-24; 2 Sam 6:17-19) are given a more central 'role' within the scope of the carnival, becoming the sites at which abundance and regeneration are glimpsed in the ordinary act of eating.

Within the scope of the Books of Samuel, Saul figures as this clown-king. Thereby his 'tragic' characterisation is given an alternative point of examination, without removing that tragedy. Instead, the carnival embraces this more sombre depiction of Israel's first king and makes it a site for prosperity of the community. Saul's uncertainty and indecision at the moment of his introduction to the narrative becomes the first moment at which the figure of the clown-king, and the embodiment of the popular ideals of kingship, is ridiculed. The notion of appearances being deceptive is evident here, and something which the narrative portrays almost immediately. The fact that Saul is incapable of finding these lost animals heightens this undermining of his royal presentation. So too does his unrestrained prophesying (1 Sam 10:9-12) and his later naked raving (1 Sam 19:23-24) 'open up' the person of the king to ridicule, allowing a questioning and critical 'gaze' to fall upon this

monarchic figure: if Israel's' future king is unable to locate a pack of loose donkeys or even control his own body, how is he going to be able to lead the community?

Each of these instances emerges as a point from which true renewal through degradation can occur. It is within and with the beaten body of the clown-king that the community is offered a site of regeneration. The uncertainty surrounding the concept of kingship as well as the fear centred on the Deity is 'worked out' though the quasi-scapegoat figure of the clown-king. Thereby Saul's trials and tribulations throughout the depiction of his reign can be perceived as being more than just the tragic tale of a tragic figure.

For example, the portrayal of Saul's gloomy encounter with the witch at Endor (1 Sam 28) and even the account of his death (1 Sam 31) become more than just moments of tragedy in a tragic tale. Through Saul's assumption of the role of the clown-king in the carnival space, there becomes attached a genuine sense of selfless growth and thereby it is given a constructive rationale, while not negating the tragedy inherent in Saul's portrayal. For instance, the recounting of Saul's death and the subsequent retrieval of his body (1 Sam 31: 6, 11-13) becomes instead a point at which the mode of kingship as well as the community is offered a chance of renewal with Saul's death, transforming into a fertile site from which the new growth of David as king can emerge, while not abandoning Saul to an impersonal void but re-enfolding the former king within the community. Through a carnivalesque treatment, Saul's story becomes infused with a true *tragi-comic* sensibility rather than just being *tragic*.

Other difficult aspects of the text are given a different reasoning through the 'lens' of the carnival. The mention of Michal's childlessness (2 Sam 6:23) could instead be perceived as a more metaphorical conclusion to Michal's *ideological standpoint* rather than a personal indictment of her relationship with David. Her more 'antiquated' approach to the concept of honour and the person of the king is at odds with that of David, the two are incompatible and so are unable to 'bear fruit' together. The seeming meanness of this final line on Michal within the Samuel narrative is thus softened or at least portrayed in a different 'light'.

Similarly, the death of Uzzah (2 Sam 6:6-7) becomes more than an unfathomable action at best or a capricious act by a fickle Deity at worst. Uzzah's sudden death during the initial parade of the ark's installation in Jerusalem in 2 Samuel 6 is a difficult passage to understand or to perceive a rationale within. Was Uzzah at fault? Was David at fault?

Was God just 'acting out' from his comparatively vulnerable position within the ark? Was Uzzah just unlucky? How should a reader interpret God's killing of a seemingly innocent man? Within the scope of the carnival, Uzzah's death is imbued with a sense of narrative logic while not detracting from the incongruity of the event itself. Uzzah's demise, as with the other pivotal deaths witnessed in the Samuel narrative, becomes the point at which a sense of renewal can be glimpsed. It gives David the chance to perceive the erroneous manner of his own self-glorifying parade (2 Sam 6:1-5) and to reorientate the direction to which honour is due; namely towards God. This recognition by David is evident in his confrontation with Michael (2 Sam 6:20-23). Uzzah becomes another 'fall guy' for the carnival venture, but one in whose death a chance of growth can come while allowing the form of God to retain a sense of unfathomability (a 'side' of the Deity's character which the carnivalised material of 1 and 2 Samuel encourages, with regards his portrayal as the cosmic terror). These more tragic or negative aspects of the Books of Samuel are thus infused with a regenerative aspect, one which effects the prosperity of the community in a positive fashion while allowing the tragic or more upsetting elements of the narrative to remain, and co-exists with them rather than excluding them in favour of a more 'happy' ending.

7.5 - Areas for Further Study and Concluding Remarks:

The notion of the carnival is a rich form of investigation for biblical narratives, and areas for further study and research can be seen in other passages. For example, carnivalesque elements may exist in the scene of God wrestling with Jacob and the humorous idea of a human physically wrestling with God (Gen 32:22-32). Similar carnivalesque aspects are present in the story of Eglon as the carnivalesque image of a king, as well as the inclusion of the bodily lower stratum and dung set against the death of the king of Moab (Judg 3:12-30). The story of Samson as seen in the Book of Judges also contains features of the carnivalesque. Within a carnivalesque scheme, Samson could be seen as the debased hero (Judg 16:18-27), and the text includes mentions of the intermingling of food and death in the carcass of the lion which Samson kills with his bare hands (Judg 14:5-9).

The area of the carnival as posed by Mikhail Bakhtin is as intriguing as it is ambiguous (and at times, genuinely complex). There are a number of questions which still arise, are left unanswered, or develop even at the moment of answering. For instance, the

question of whether God, as the cosmic terror, is to be considered as good, bad, or neither (by human estimations) is still puzzling; as seen by the killing of Uzzah (2 Sam 6:6-7), despite the renewing effect for the community which such a death has on the carnival scheme of the installation of the ark. The cosmic terror, then, would appear to be a truly unfinalised entity. The language of the carnival "in a differentiated and even (as in any language) articulate way, gave expression to a unified (but complex) carnival sense of the world, permeating all its forms".[21] The carnival gives a truly new sense of the world, yet one which is uniquely familiar. Everyone pokes fun at their manager at work when they become overworked, or giggles if the politician fumbles his 'lines' during a press conference. It is a lived experience that stretches out beyond medieval festivals and biblical narratives and into the modern word. These carnivalesque experiences are vibrant and familiar, offering the reader a unique opportunity to relate to and engage with their society, their faith, and themselves.

[21] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,* 122.

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