

“He Said, He Said”: Repetition of the Quotation Formula in the Joseph Story and Other Biblical Narratives

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*For my dear wife, Sara,
fifty years after she said and he said, “I do”*

Repetition of the quotation formula (וַיֹּאמֶר and the like) is a common literary device used in biblical narrative to signal *discontinuity*. The discontinuity often involves a *pause in the discourse*. Instead of—or in addition to—a pause, the discontinuity may involve a *change in the discourse parameters*. Most of this was noted by Jewish exegetes of the Middle Ages and later, but their work appears to have been unknown to early critics. The writings of the latter assume that the repetition of וַיֹּאמֶר in Gen 37:21–22 and elsewhere is an anomaly that requires a diachronic explanation. It took roughly a century for the old synchronic approach to such repetition to regain its dominant position. Adherents of the synchronic approach, both medieval and modern, have viewed the repetition of וַיֹּאמֶר in Gen 37:21–22 as an indication that Reuben paused to wait for a positive response that never came. The facts are best explained, however, by taking the repetition of וַיֹּאמֶר in Gen 37:21–22 as signaling a change in the discourse parameters, with regard to both *type* (from internal to external) and *addressee* (from self to other). In verse 21, Reuben speaks to himself in his mind, revealing his true feelings. In verse 22, by contrast, Reuben addresses his brothers, trying to persuade them that he, too, wants Joseph dead, as long as that result is achieved without their spilling blood. This solution is supported by texts in other biblical narratives.

Every place in Scripture where it says וַיֹּאמֶר וַיֹּאמֶר, two times, needs to be interpreted. (Lev. Rab. 26:8)

וַיִּשְׁמַע רְאוּבֵן וַיִּצְלְהוּ מִיָּדָם וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא נִכְנְנוּ נַפְשׁוֹ: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים רְאוּבֵן אֶל־תִּשְׁפְּכֵדָם הַשְּׁלִיכֵנו
אֶת־אֶל־הַבּוֹר הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר בְּמִדְבַּר וְיָד אֶל־תִּשְׁלַח־יָדוֹ לְמַעַן הַצִּיל אֶת־נוֹשְׁמֵי אֶל־אֲבֹתָיו:

In Gen 37:21–22 (above), we find two occurrences of the quotation formula וַיֹּאמֶר. The second occurrence seems superfluous, since Reuben is still the speaker

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and there is no intervening narration. Commentators have interpreted such repetition in biblical narratives in many different ways—some treating the repetition as a meaningful or functional narrative device originating with a skilled author (henceforth: the *synchronic* approach), others assuming that the repetition is the anomalous result of development through time, devoid of any meaning or function (henceforth: the *diachronic* approach).

In this study, I propose a synchronic interpretation of Gen 37:21–22 that accounts for (1) the repetition of the quotation formula in verse 22; (2) the addition of “to them” to the *second* occurrence of the formula (in v. 22) instead of the first occurrence (in v. 21) or both occurrences; (3) the similarities and differences between the two quotations themselves; and (4) similarities between verse 21b and previously noted examples of internal speech in the Bible. The following translation can serve as an introduction to my proposal:

Reuben heard (this, i.e., the plot to kill Joseph) and saved him from (being killed at) their hand(s). He thought, “We will not take his life.” And so Reuben said to them, “Do not shed blood. Throw him into that pit (over there) in the wilderness, but do not lay a hand on him (to kill him)” —(saying that) in order to save him from (being killed at) their hand(s), that he might (or: and to) restore him to his father.

In addition, I will trace the history of the synchronic approach and its competition with the diachronic approach. This history, virtually unknown today, is well worth exploring because it is a microcosm of the history of our field and a fascinating chapter in the history of scholarship in general.

I. DIACHRONIC VIEWS

The diachronic approach to the repetition of וַיֹּאמֶר arose in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It was then that Julius Wellhausen suggested emending “Reuben” in Gen 37:21 to “Judah,” thereby making it possible to assign the two occurrences of וַיֹּאמֶר in verses 21 and 22 to different sources. In later years, redaction critics rejected both the emendation and the source division, while continuing to view the repetition of וַיֹּאמֶר in these verses through a diachronic lens. And some of them, like some of the source critics, compared the *content* of the two quotations, finding either duplication or contradiction. We may profitably begin our investigation with a brief survey of the literature—a sample of comments, in chronological order, representing various diachronic views to which I will refer later in the article.¹

¹Among those excluded from this sample are scholars who reject the emendation of “Reuben” to “Judah” in verse 21 without attempting to explain the repetition of וַיֹּאמֶר, e.g., E. A. Speiser, *Genesis*, AB 1 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964), 291 (“an emendation for which there

Wellhausen: “The main source for the last section of Genesis is also JE. One surmises that this work, here as elsewhere, is assembled out of J and E; our earlier results force us to this and would be shattered were it not demonstrable.... The end of v. 21 has no place next to the beginning of v. 22, and the language is different (אתו v. 22)... I think ... that v. 21 is an incomplete J analogue to v. 22, and Reuben is possibly a correction for Judah.”²

August Dillmann: “The text is composite ...; otherwise, there is no reason for the double וַיֹּאמֶר.”³

S. R. Driver: “With ‘Reuben,’ v. 21^b and v. 22^a are tautologous.”⁴

Donald B. Redford: “Vs. 21 remains redundant whether the emendation to Judah is made or not.”⁵

George W. Coats: “Vss. 21–22 contain two distinct speeches, each with its own narrated introduction, each attributed to Reuben, each designed to forestall the plot to kill Joseph.... To recognize two sources here would clarify the structure of the scene.... The only substantial evidence for compound sources in the chapter ... lies in the double speech.”⁶

Hans-Christoph Schmitt: “Between v. 21 and v. 22 there is a contradiction. In his speech of v. 22, Reuben does not categorically reject the killing of Joseph, as he does in v. 21, but rather merely suggests a type of death other than the

is no encouragement from any of the ancient versions”); Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, rev. ed., trans. John H. Marks, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), 349; Herbert Donner, *Die literarische Gestalt der alttestamentliche Josephsgeschichte*, SHAW.PH 1976.2 (Heidelberg: Winter, 1976), 38 n. 74; Walter Dietrich, *Die Josephserzählung als Novelle und Geschichtsschreibung: Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Pentateuchfrage*, BThSt 14 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1989), 21 n. 43; Horst Seebass, *Genesis*, 3 vols. (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2000), 3:17, 25; see also Seebass, “Zur Quellenscheidung in der Josephsgeschichte,” in *Joseph: Bibel und Literatur; Symposion Helsinki / Lathi 1999*, ed. Friedemann W. Golka and Wolfgang Weiß (Oldenburg: Bibliotheks- und Informationssystem der Universität Oldenburg, 2000), 25–36, here 33; Lothar Ruppert, *Genesis: Ein kritischer und theologischer Kommentar*, 4 vols., FB 70, 98, 106, 118 (Würzburg: Echter, 2008), 4:86, 97, 111–12; Baruch J. Schwartz, “How the Compiler of the Pentateuch Worked: The Composition of Genesis 37,” in *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation*, ed. Craig A. Evans, Joel N. Lohr, and David L. Petersen, VTSup 152 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 263–78, here 267, 271.

²Julius Wellhausen, “Die Composition des Hexateuchs,” *JDT* 21 (1876): 392–450, 531–602; 22 (1877): 407–79, here 21:442–43.

³August Dillmann, *Die Genesis*, 4th ed., KEH 11 (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1882), 375.

⁴S. R. Driver, *The Book of Genesis*, WC (London: Methuen, 1904), 324.

⁵Donald B. Redford, *A Study of the Biblical Story of Joseph (Genesis 37–50)*, VTSup 20 (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 142.

⁶George W. Coats, *From Canaan to Egypt: Structural and Theological Context for the Joseph Story*, CBQMS 4 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1976), 63. This statement does not represent the conclusion of the book, for which see 482 below.

planned bloodshed.... The simplest explanation of v. 21 is that a later redactor attempted to put Reuben in a better light.”⁷

Claus Westermann: “The repeated וַיֹּאמֶר in vv. 21b and 22 is difficult; the first three words of v. 22 are probably an addition.”⁸

Ludwig Schmidt: “... in v. 21f. a doublet is present. This is clear already from the fact that v. 22 has a complete new introduction.... The demand in v. 22, ‘Do not spill blood,’ corresponds in substance to v. 21b, ‘We do not want to kill him.’ As a result, it is actually superfluous.”⁹

Antony F. Campbell and Mark A. O’Brien: “In vv. 21-22 there are two statements that Reuben delivered Joseph out of the brothers’ hands and two verbal interventions by Reuben to spare Joseph’s life.”¹⁰

David M. Carr: “The following are among the clearer indicators of growth: The double speech introduction for Reuben’s speech in Gen. 37:21 and 22....”¹¹

Implicit in most of these statements, which span a period of 120 years, is the idea that the repetition of וַיֹּאמֶר, with no intervening narration or change of speaker, is an anomaly in biblical narrative.¹² Hermann Gunkel makes the idea explicit—at least for Genesis—in commenting on Gen 19:9: “It is a stylistic rule that the narrators of the legend followed almost without exception never to allow a person to speak twice in a row.... Consequently, the dual וַיֹּאמְרוּ is very remarkable.”¹³ As we will see in the next section, this assertion flies in the face of the evidence, evidence

⁷Hans-Christoph Schmitt, *Die nichtpriesterliche Josephsgeschichte: Ein Beitrag zur neuesten Pentateuchkritik*, BZAW 154 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980), 23–24 n. 76.

⁸Claus Westermann, *Genesis: A Commentary*, trans. John J. Scullion, 3 vols. (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984–1986), 3:41. So already Harold M. Wiener, *Pentateuchal Studies* (Oberlin, OH: Bibliotheca Sacra, 1912), 45; and Johannes Dahse, *Textkritische Materialien zur Hexateuchfrage* (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1912), 133. But see n. 12 below.

⁹Ludwig Schmidt, *Literarische Studien zur Josephsgeschichte*, BZAW 167 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1986), 146.

¹⁰Antony F. Campbell and Mark A. O’Brien, *Sources of the Pentateuch: Texts, Introductions, Annotations* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 228–29; see also 231–32.

¹¹David M. Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis: Historical and Literary Approaches* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 284; see also 287.

¹²According to Redford (*Study of the Biblical Story*, 142), this assumption goes back to the Greek translators: “The LXX circumvented the difficulty at least partly by omitting wayōmer ʾēlēhem [sic, for wayyōmer ʾālēhem] Rēʾūbēn in vs. 22, thus making the direct speech of that verse the continuation of vs. 21.” But this assertion is not entirely accurate. The omission is an inner-Greek development; see John William Wevers, *Genesis*, SVTG 1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974), 357. See also Schmidt, *Literarische Studien*, 146.

¹³Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis*, trans. Mark E. Biddle from the 3rd ed., 1910, Mercer Library of Biblical Studies (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997), 208; see also xxxvi: “The rule of style is to avoid two speeches in sequence by the same person.”

that was discussed by many before Gunkel's time. In fact, this stylistic feature is quite common in the Hebrew Bible.

II. SYNCHRONIC VIEWS

The synchronic approach to the repetition of ויאמר is known to critical scholars almost exclusively from research on biblical narrative style published during the past fifty-five years.¹⁴ Few are aware of the earlier work in this area by traditional Jewish exegetes. Scattered throughout the commentaries of these early exegetes are many important insights concerning the use of this narrative device. Space considerations make it impossible to include them all.¹⁵

The earliest discussions of the repetition of ויאמר offer midrashic interpretations of 1 Kgs 20:28, Ezek 10:2, and Esth 7:5, where the repeated formula introduces only a *single* utterance.¹⁶ A new approach to these verses was adopted in the tenth century by Saadia Gaon (882–942 CE; on Esth 7:5) and later by Jonah Ibn Janah (ca. 990–ca. 1055; on Ezek 10:2) and Abraham Ibn Ezra (1089–ca. 1167; on Esth

¹⁴Meir Shiloah (Shiloach), "ויאמר ... ויאמר" in *לחברת לחקר המקרא בישראל לזכר* in *פ. קורנגרין ז"ל Absalom! Narrative and Language in 2Sam., 13–20*, AnBib 81 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978), 130; Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*, BLS 9 (Sheffield: Almond, 1983), 118; Shimon Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, BLS 17 (Sheffield: Almond, 1989), 43–44; Georg Fischer, *Jahwe unser Gott: Sprache, Aufbau und Erzähltechnik in der Berufung des Mose (Ex 3–4)*, OBO 91 (Freiburg, Switzerland: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 41–45; Samuel A. Meier, *Speaking of Speaking: Marking Direct Discourse in the Hebrew Bible*, VTSup 46 (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 73–81; Jean-Louis Ska, "Sommaires proleptiques en Gn 27 et dans l'histoire de Joseph," *Bib 73* (1992): 518–27, here 525; Cynthia L. Miller, *The Representation of Speech in Biblical Hebrew Narrative: A Linguistic Analysis*, HSM 55 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 239–43; E. J. Revell, "The Repetition of Introductions to Speech as a Feature of Biblical Hebrew," *VT 47* (1997): 91–110; Nechama Leibowitz, "ויאמר ... ויאמר" in *ספר זכרון: פרקי נחמה: ספר זכרון*, ed. Moshe Arend et al. (Jerusalem: Jewish Agency, 2001), 495–502; Jerome T. Walsh, *Style and Structure in Biblical Hebrew Narrative* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001), 152–53; Bernard Septimus, "Iterated Quotation Formulae in Talmudic Narrative and Exegesis," in *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation: Essays in Honor of James L. Kugel*, ed. Hindy Najman and Judith H. Newman, JSJSup 83 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 371–98; Steven E. Runge, "A Discourse-Functional Description of Participant Reference in Biblical Hebrew Narrative" (PhD diss., University of Stellenbosch, 2007), 72.

¹⁵For additional comments by traditional exegetes, see Yehudah Shaviv, "אמירה כפולה," *Megadim* 50 (2009): 163–70, which cites Nissim Elyakim, *מידות וכלים: לנצח"ב: העמק דבר* (Rehovot: Moreshet Yaakov, 2003), 357–62. I am indebted to Hillel Novetsky for calling Shaviv's survey to my attention after the present article was accepted for publication.

¹⁶See *מדרש ויקרא רבה*, ed. M. Margulies (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1993), 608–11, and Appendix, 81; see also b. Meg. 16a and y. Sanh. 11.5.30c.

7:5).¹⁷ In this approach, the repetition of ויאמר is a kind of resumptive repetition (*Wiederaufnahme*), having a function but no meaning. Subsequently, in the commentaries of Joseph Bekhor Shor (twelfth century; on Gen 30:27–28) and Hizkuni (Hezekiah ben Manoah; thirteenth century; on Gen 30:27–28 and Exod 16:6–8), this approach was extended to examples where *each occurrence of ויאמר introduces a separate utterance*.¹⁸ Only examples of this type will be discussed below.

For such examples, Saadia had a different approach. In his commentary on Gen 16:9–11, he views “the dividing of the angel’s speech” into three parts—presumably by the iterations of the quotation formula—as being based on content.¹⁹ By the end of the twelfth century, we find a new idea: the repetition of ויאמר signals that the speaker paused to allow something to happen. In commenting on the extra ויאמר in Jer 37:17, Menahem b. Simeon of Posquières (twelfth century) suggests that Jeremiah, after answering Zedekiah’s plaintive question with only a “*yēs*” (= yes), waited for the king to ask the obvious follow-up question.²⁰

Some Tosafist commentaries deduce from the repetition of the quotation formula that the addressee failed to respond. Two of them (MSS Oxford 268 = Bodleian Oppenheim 27, and Oxford 284 = Bodleian Marsh 225) do that in commenting on Gen 15:3, the former doing it also at Gen 20:9.²¹ At Gen 19:9, the Tosafists explain that the men of Sodom first ordered Lot to move away from them; after he complied, they consulted with one another and then addressed Lot again.²² Such interpretations assume that the speaker(s) paused to wait for something.

Joshua Ibn Shu’aib (early fourteenth century) comments on the repetition of the quotation formula in two places. At Gen 15:2–3, he speaks of “two utterances [אמירות]²³ with no reply [ענייה] in between”; at Gen 37:21–22, “two utterances, one after the other, with no reply: ויאמר ויאמר.”²⁴ The two formulations of the problem

¹⁷Richard C. Steiner, *A Biblical Translation in the Making: The Evolution and Impact of Saadia Gaon’s Tafsir* (Cambridge: Harvard University Center for Jewish Studies, 2010), 37, 40; Jonah Ibn Janah, *Le livre des parterres fleuris*, ed. Joseph Derenbourg (Paris: Vieweg, 1886), 281, lines 27–28.

¹⁸Joseph Bekhor Shor, *פירוש רבי יוסף בכור שור על התורה*, ed. Yehoshafat Nevo (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1994), 51; Hezekiah b. Manoah, *פירוש התורה לרבינו חזקיה ב”ר*, ed. C. Chavel (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1981), 60, 118. My understanding of Hizkuni’s approach owes much to Hillel Novetsky.

¹⁹Steiner, *Biblical Translation*, 38–39. See also 481 below.

²⁰Menahem b. Simeon, *מקראות גדולות הכתר: ירמיהו*, ed. Menachem Cohen (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2012), 199.

²¹J. Gellis, *תוספות השלם*, ed. J. Gellis (Jerusalem: Mifal Tosafot Hashalem, 1982–), 2:58, 177.

²²*Ibid.*, 154–55.

²³This is a technical term used in Tannaitic exegesis to refer to utterances introduced by the verb *אמר*, as opposed to *דבר*.

²⁴Joshua Ibn Shu’aib, *דרשות על התורה לר’ יהושע אבן שועיב*, ed. Makor (Jerusalem: Makor, 1969), 6b and 15b.

are very similar, but the explanations are not. At 15:2–3, he writes, “R. Hananel explained that the first (of them) is a thought—as in ‘Esau said in his heart’ (Gen 27:41) and ‘I said in my heart’ (Eccl 2:1)—that is to say, he thought in his heart [חשב בלבו] ‘What will the reward be, seeing I go childless.’”²⁵ At 37:21–22, by contrast, he writes that Reuben spoke a second time (v. 22), presumably after a pause, because “they did not listen to” what he said the first time (v. 21).²⁶

Isaac Abarbanel (fifteenth century) deals often with this device in the Torah and Former Prophets; indeed, he discusses it more frequently than any other pre-modern scholar. In some places, he asks explicitly why there is a superfluous quotation formula and/or points out that the formula interrupts what would otherwise have been a single cohesive utterance (דבור מדובק or אמירה מדובקת).²⁷ Although Abarbanel does not aim for complete consistency, he frequently explains that the speaker was compelled (הוצרך) to speak again after perceiving (typically, from a lack of response) that the first utterance did not succeed in achieving its objective (typically, to influence the addressee or to elicit information).²⁸ In two places, Abarbanel suggests that the addressee who failed to respond was overcome by emotion—fear in Gen 20:9–10, shame in Exod 32:7–10.²⁹

Also worthy of mention is a Bible commentary attributed to the thirteenth-century Spanish talmudist Jonah Gerondi. This work cites a midrash that inserts a reply from Isaac to Esau’s first utterance in Gen 27:36, and it concludes, “They added this midrash because it says ויאמר twice in the verse . . . indicating that Isaac spoke in between.”³⁰ This comment parallels a comment of R. Jonah on a legal passage in the Talmud, a comment that has been explained by Bernard Septimus. In

²⁵ Ibid., 6b. See פירוש רבינו חננאל על התורה, ed. Charles B. Chavel (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1972), 7. See also 486 below.

²⁶ Ibn Shu’aib, דרשות על התורה, 15b.

²⁷ Isaac Abarbanel [Abravanel], פירוש על התורה, 3 vols. (Jerusalem: Benei Arbel, 1964), 1:201a (question 3), 216a (question 6), 220a (question 11), 254b, 322a (question 10), 421a (question 4), 2:313b (question 5), 3:156b (question 3); and Abarbanel, פירוש על נביאים ראשונים (Jerusalem: Torah Vadaat, 1955), 26a line 1.

²⁸ Abarbanel, פירוש על התורה, 1:206a–b (Gen 15:2–3 and Num 32:2–5), 217b–218a (Gen 16:9–11), 255a (Gen 20:9–10), 367a (Gen 37:21–22), 422b (Gen 47:3–4); 2:314a (Exod 32:7–10); 3:141a (Num 28:2–3), 158a (Num 32:2–5); also Abarbanel, פירוש על נביאים ראשונים, 26a (Josh 3:9–10), 50a (Josh 9:20–21), 289a (1 Sam 26:9), 365b (2 Sam 16:10). Abarbanel’s biblical exegesis is sometimes inspired by his experiences at the Spanish court, and his discussion of Gen 15:2–3 and Num 32:2–5 is a good illustration of that: “It frequently happens that a humble man is embarrassed to request something from his lord explicitly, so he makes the request through hints. And if the lord does not understand his hints or will not respond to them, then the petitioner is forced to speak a second time, making the same request explicitly” (פירוש על התורה, 1:206a; see also 1:422b and 4:158a). See also Leibowitz, “ויאמר . . . ויאמר,” 500–501.

²⁹ Abarbanel, פירוש על התורה, 1:255a (Gen 20:9–10); 2:314a (Exod 32:7–10).

³⁰ Jonah Gerondi, דרשות ופירושי רבנו יונה גירונדי לחמשה חומשי תורה, ed. S. Yerushalmi (Jerusalem: Wagsball, 1980), 55. This work appears to have been compiled by a student of both R. Jonah and Ramban (e-mail communication from Hillel Novetsky).

one version of the talmudic passage, the plaintiff's speech is broken up by the repetition of "he said to him" (אמר ליה), with no intervening reply recorded. R. Jonah deduces from the repetition that the defendant must have either remained silent or replied with a concession to the plaintiff.³¹

Moses Mendelssohn's *Biur*, first published in 1780–1783, has a brief discussion by Solomon Dubno at Gen 37:21–22: "And when he saw that they did not listen to him, he then said, 'Don't shed blood. Throw him, etc.' That is why Scripture divides them [his words] into two speeches."³² In other words, Reuben needed to wait to see if his brothers would accept his first admonition.

Judah L. Shapiro deals with the problem several times in his commentary, published in 1815.³³ His view, adopted by Jakob Z. Meklenburg in 1839 and Umberto Cassuto in 1942, is that, when ויאמר is repeated with a single speaker (במדבר אחד), the second ויאמר usually introduces a clarification (פירוש) of the words that follow the first ויאמר.³⁴ This rule works for a few examples, but it is not sufficiently general. It is just a special case of Abarbanel's approach and, indeed, is reminiscent of a few of Abarbanel's comments.³⁵

Samson R. Hirsch, whose commentary was published in 1867–1878, interprets the repetition of ויאמר in several ways.³⁶ In his fullest discussion of this phenomenon, at Exod 32:9, he writes, "Here, too, a pause leaves room for the expected reply or for the immediate carrying out of the command to descend [from the mountain]. Moses's consternation no doubt prevented the former as well as the latter."³⁷ This interpretation of the verse resembles Abarbanel's reading.³⁸ The same goes for Hirsch's comments on Gen 37:22 and Num 32:5.³⁹ In two of these three comments, Hirsch speaks of a pause (*eine Pause*) signaled by the repetition.⁴⁰ In

³¹Septimus, "Iterated Quotation Formulae," 386.

³²Moses Mendelssohn, ed., ספר נתיבות שלום והוא חבור כולל חמשת חמשי תורה, 2nd ed.; 5 vols. (Vienna: A. Schmid, 1795), vol. 1 (Solomon Dubno), s.v. אל תשפכו דם.

³³Judah L. Shapiro, הרכסים לבקעה (Altona, 1815).

³⁴Ibid., 2b (Gen 15:2–3), 42a (Exod 3:14), 48a (Exod 16:6–8); Jakob Z. Meklenburg, הכתב והקבלה, ed. M. Tsuril (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 2015), 128 (Gen 19:9), 329 (Exod 3:14); Umberto (M. D.) Cassuto, פירוש על ספר שמות (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1983), 38 (Exod 3:14).

³⁵Abarbanel, פירוש על התורה, 1:206a–b (Gen 15:2–3 and Num 32:2–5), 422b (Gen 47:3–4); 3:158a (Num 32:2–5). See n. 28 above.

³⁶See Jonathan Jacobs, "Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch as a *Peshat* Commentator: Literary Aspects of His Commentary on the Pentateuch," *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 15 (2012): 190–200, here 196–97.

³⁷Samson R. Hirsch, *Der Pentateuch, übersetzt and erläutert*, 5 vols.; Frankfurt am Main: Kauffmann, 1867–1878), 2:466.

³⁸See 479 above.

³⁹Hirsch, *Der Pentateuch*, 1:509, 4:411–12; Jacobs, "Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch," 196.

⁴⁰Hirsch, *Der Pentateuch*, 2:466, 4:411–12.

other comments, Hirsch attributes the repetition of ויאמר to a change of content or addressee.⁴¹

The synchronic approach to the repetition of the quotation formula had no serious competitor until 1876, when Wellhausen published the first diachronic analysis of Gen 37:21–22.⁴² Dillmann, an editor of the journal where Wellhausen's analysis initially appeared, quickly incorporated it into the fourth edition of his own commentary on Genesis, published in 1882.⁴³ The new approach gained further acceptance when W. E. Addis and S. R. Driver brought it to the United States and England.⁴⁴ Hermann Strack was less impressed. In 1894 he wrote, "For the double ויאמר . . ., cf. 20:9, 10; 27:36; 30:28, 29; and triple ויאמר, 16:9–11. Thus, the repetition is no proof that vv. 21 and 22 are taken from different sources, much less for the assertion (Wellhausen, Dillmann) that v. 21 originally began 'And Judah heard it.'"⁴⁵ Strack, identified by the *Jewish Encyclopedia* in 1907 as "the foremost Christian authority in Germany on Talmudic and rabbinic literature,"⁴⁶ was undoubtedly familiar with some of the earlier discussions of repeated ויאמר. Unlike his Jewish predecessors, however, he did not attempt to explain the repetition.

A decade or two after Strack published his critique of Wellhausen's proposal—at a time when no less a scholar than Gunkel could still assert that repetition of the quotation formula *violated* a rule of biblical style—similar critiques were leveled by three Jewish scholars in Germany. All three were rabbis, well versed in the Jewish exegetical tradition. David Z. Hoffmann (1910 or before) first discusses the repetition of ויאמר in his commentary on Gen 15:3, noting that it is rather common.⁴⁷ In his commentary on Gen 30:27–28, he posits a pause (הפסקה) between Laban's two utterances.⁴⁸ His fullest discussion, at Gen 37:21–22, deals with 24:24–25 and 27:36, as well.⁴⁹ Benno Jacob's treatment (1916) of the repetition of ויאמר in Gen 37:21–22 is the first—and, to this day, one of the few—to draw all of its proof-texts from the Joseph story: "Also, at times, the narrator likes to begin speeches

⁴¹ Jacobs, "Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch," 196–97. See also 478 above.

⁴² See 475 above.

⁴³ See 475 above. The third edition, published in 1875, knows nothing of the analysis; see there 409.

⁴⁴ W. E. Addis, *The Documents of the Hexateuch* (New York: Putnam, 1893), 73 n. 3; and Driver (475 above).

⁴⁵ Hermann L. Strack, *Die Bücher Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus und Numeri*, KK 1 (Munich: Beck, 1894), 118.

⁴⁶ *JE* 11:559, s.v. "Strack, Hermann Leberecht."

⁴⁷ David Z. Hoffmann, *ספר בראשית*, 2 vols. (Bnei Brak: Nezach, 1969–1971), 1:238. This commentary on Genesis is based on notes for lectures delivered by Hoffmann at the Hildesheimer Rabbinical Seminary in Berlin during the period 1878–1910. It was first published six decades later, in Hebrew, by his grandson. Unfortunately, the German original of this commentary (unlike the ones on Leviticus and Deuteronomy) has never been published.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 2:459.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 2:571–72. For the analysis of 27:36, see 486 below.

several times, thereby creating potent pauses: 37:21–22; 41:38, 39, 41, 44; 42:1, 2; 43:29, 30; 45:3, 4. Thus Pharaoh in 41:38ff begins four times as he makes a royal decree.⁵⁰ Jakob Horovitz (1917), whose study is a supplement to Jacob's, focuses on the meaning of the repetition in 37:21–22. Like many of his predecessors, he takes it to mean that Reuben, after speaking in verse 21, did not continue immediately. Instead, he waited to see their reaction, and it was only after he was convinced that the brothers would not listen to him that he resumed speaking, urging them to at least avoid bloodshed.⁵¹

In 1933, Paul Volz and Wilhelm Rudolph published a book-length critique of Wellhausen's theory, with a brief discussion of Gen 37:21–22.⁵² They, too, argue that the repetition of the quotation formula has no diachronic significance, and they provide their own list of prooftexts: Gen 19:9, 47:3–4, 2 Sam 16:10–11, 17:7–8, 2 Kgs 6:27–28, and "perhaps also Esth 7:5." Like Strack, they do not feel the need to explain the repetition.

The most comprehensive and influential study of this question was published by Meir Shiloah in 1964.⁵³ In it, Shiloah analyzes over one hundred examples of the repetition of the quotation formula in the Bible, the great majority of which are relevant to our problem. According to Shiloah, the use of a second ויאמר (with no intervening narration or change of speaker) indicates that the speaker has paused and then resumed speaking. Shiloah divides the examples into seven categories based on the *reason* for the pause. Most of his categories can be reduced to two and can be described in more general terms. The speaker may have paused (1) to wait for a response, whether (a) verbal or (b) physical (especially, compliance with an order); or (2) to signal a change in (a) discourse type, (b) topic, or (c) addressee. Almost all of this was noted earlier by traditional Jewish commentators.⁵⁴

As influential as it was, Shiloah's study did not end the search for meaning in the repeated quotation formula. In 1976, Coats theorized that "a stylistic device" of biblical narrators "is to double speeches at the crucial turning points in the story's plot."⁵⁵ Two years later, Charles Conroy published a similar theory, according to which "the use of two quotation-formulas in two successive uninterrupted discourses by the same speaker" has the function of "sharpening the reader's attention; signaling a new point of major importance within the discourse."⁵⁶

⁵⁰Benno Jacob, *Quellenscheidung und Exegese im Pentateuch* (Leipzig: Kaufmann, 1916), 53. A couple of the examples cited by Jacob show that he defined the phenomenon more loosely than his predecessors and successors.

⁵¹Jakob Horovitz, "Die Josephserzählung," *Jeschurun* 4 (1917): 658–78, here 677.

⁵²Paul Volz and Wilhelm Rudolph, *Der Elohist als Erzähler: Ein Irrweg der Pentateuchkritik? An der Genesis erläutert*, BZAW 63 (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1933), 153.

⁵³Shiloah, "ויאמר," 251–67 (Gen 37:21–22 appears on 258).

⁵⁴Shiloah cites only a few of them; see also Jacobs, "Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch," 196–97.

⁵⁵Coats, *From Canaan to Egypt*, 63.

⁵⁶Conroy, *Absalom Absalom!*, 130.

In 1989, Georg Fischer published an excursus on “repeated speech introductions” (*Wiederholte Redeeinleitungen*) in the Pentateuch in which he argued that, in all of the examples with human speakers, the latter, “and sometimes also their interlocutors, are strongly affected emotionally.”⁵⁷

Samuel A. Meier’s discussion of “אמר ... אמר resumptive within direct discourse,” published in 1992, is mainly a critique of Shiloah’s study.⁵⁸ The only conclusion of that study that he accepts without reservation is that אמר is repeated when there is a change of addressee.⁵⁹

For E. J. Revell, writing in 1997, “a repeated introduction to speech” provides “highlighting,” serving to “draw attention to the following speech.”⁶⁰ It can also mark a change of topic.⁶¹ Steven E. Runge, in 2007, asserts, “Use of a mid-speech quotative frame characteristically highlights the speech that follows, and separates it as a new development.”⁶² The term *highlight*, used by both of these scholars, is reminiscent of the expression “sharpen the reader’s attention” used by Conroy.

Two recent books, by Joel S. Baden and Matthew C. Genung, respectively, are evidence that such discussions have begun to make their way from works on narrative style to books on the composition of Gen 37 and the Pentateuch as a whole.⁶³ Unlike many of his predecessors, Genung does not attempt to find a common denominator (core meaning, *Gemeinbedeutung*) that unites the disparate uses of the device: “There are multiple uses for the repeated quotation formula in consecutive utterances with the same speaker and addressee. Context is the guide for determining its purpose in each individual instance.”⁶⁴

My own view, based on the aforementioned comments and studies, is that the repetition of ויאמר signals *discontinuity*. The discontinuity often involves a *pause in the discourse* (to wait for a response, be it verbal or physical, or to highlight a dramatic conclusion). Instead of—or in addition to—a pause, the discontinuity may involve a *change in the discourse parameters* (type, topic, or addressee). Stated in Saussurean terms, the discontinuity signaled by the repetition of the quotation formula is syntagmatic (along the horizontal axis), paradigmatic (along the vertical axis), or both.

⁵⁷ Fischer, *Jahwe unser Gott*, 43. See also 479 above.

⁵⁸ Meier, *Speaking of Speaking*, 73–81.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 74–75 and 78 n. 1.

⁶⁰ Revell, “Repetition of Introductions,” 108–9; see also 105.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁶² Runge, “Discourse-Functional Description,” 72.

⁶³ Joel S. Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis*, AYBRL (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 262 n. 11; Matthew C. Genung, *The Composition of Genesis 37: Incoherence and Meaning in the Exposition of the Joseph Story*, FAT 2/95 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 56.

⁶⁴ Genung, *Composition of Genesis 37*, 56; see also Shaviv, “אמירה כפולה,” 170.

A. Biblical Evidence for the Synchronic Approach

Synchronic interpretations of repeated *ויאמר* can often be viewed as making the assumption that, when *ויאמר* is repeated with no *explicit* intervening narration (and no change of speaker), there is an *understood* intervening narration that the ancient Israelite audience was capable of recovering. This view of the synchronic approach as a form of gap filling is heuristically valuable, making it possible to find supporting evidence.

Take, for example, Gen 45:3–4:

ויאמר יוסף אל־אָחָיו אֲנִי יוֹסֵף הַעוֹד אָבִי חַי וְלֹא־יָבִילוּ אָחָיו לַעֲנוֹת אֹתוֹ כִּי נִבְהָלוּ מִפְּנָיו:
ויאמר יוסף אל־אָחָיו גִּשׁוּ־נָא אֵלַי וַיִּגְשׁוּ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי יוֹסֵף אֲחֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־מְכַרְתֶּם אֹתִי מִצְרַיִם:

Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?” But his brothers were unable to answer him, for they were terrified of him.⁶⁵ And Joseph said to his brothers, “Come closer to me.” And they came closer. And he said, “I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into Egypt.”

In this passage, *ויאמר* appears three times with no change of speaker or addressee. Before the second *ויאמר*, Joseph pauses, waiting for the brothers to answer his question; when he sees that they are too frightened to respond, he resumes speaking. This supports comments elsewhere by the Tosafists, Abarbanel, and Hirsch.⁶⁶ Before the third *ויאמר*, Joseph pauses once again, waiting for the brothers to obey his command to come closer; once they do so, he again resumes speaking. This supports comments by the Tosafists, Hirsch,⁶⁷ and Shiloah.

Genesis 45:4 is particularly relevant to Josh 3:9–10:

ויאמר יהושע אל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל גִּשׁוּ הִנֵּה וְשָׁמְעוּ אֶת־דְּבָרֵי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹשֻׁעַ

Joshua said to the Israelites, “Come closer to here, and hear the words of the Lord, your God.” And Joshua said ...⁶⁸

The similarity between the two texts suggests that the verb *ויגשו* should be understood at the end of verse 9.

Consider also Josh 5:15:

ויאמר שַׂר־צְבָא ה' אֶל־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ שֶׁל־נַעֲלָךְ מַעַל רַגְלֶךָ כִּי הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה עֹמֵד עָלָיו קֹדֶשׁ
הוא וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ כֵּן:

The captain of the Lord’s host said to Joshua, “Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy,” and Joshua did so.⁶⁹

⁶⁵The importance of this sentence is pointed out by Carr; see 491 below.

⁶⁶See 478, 479, and 480 above.

⁶⁷See 478 and 480 above.

⁶⁸Shiloah, “ויאמר,” 254; and see n. 28 above. See also Gen 19:9, discussed by Septimus, “Iterated Quotation Formulae,” 394–95.

⁶⁹In this example, there is no following utterance and, thus, no repeated *ויאמר*.

This verse suggests that a clause like *ויעש כן משה*, “and Moses did so” (Exod 17:6), should be understood at the end of verse 5 in Exod 3:5–6:

*וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־תִּקְרַב הָלֵם שֶׁל־נַעֲלִיד מֵעַל רַגְלֶיךָ כִּי הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה עוֹמֵד עָלָיו אֲדַמְתָּ קֹדֶשׁ
הוּא: וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנֹכִי ...*

He said, “Do not come closer. Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” And He said, ‘I am ...’”

Such parallel pairs supply further evidence for the validity of the synchronic approach.

B. Extrabiblical Evidence for the Synchronic Approach

The repetition of quotation formulas is known also from extrabiblical sources. Septimus discusses examples of this device from rabbinic literature, showing that it has some of the same uses there that it has in the Bible.⁷⁰ Fischer and Septimus give examples from the Gilgamesh Epic.⁷¹ Meier cites parallels from Ugaritic literature.⁷²

Another parallel can be adduced from Papyrus Amherst 63. In XX, 15, 17–18, the words *מלכא ענה ואימר וימלל לתורתנא*, “the king spoke up and said, addressing the general,” occur twice at a key juncture in the “Tale of Two Brothers in Two Cities.”⁷³ The repetition—with no intervening narration and no change of speaker or addressee—seems to signal a *dramatic pause* intended to highlight the king’s instructions to his general: “Let Babylon be smitten, but keep my brother alive.”⁷⁴ These words, which appear once again at the very end of the “Tale,” are crucially important because they absolve the king of responsibility for his brother’s death.⁷⁵

III. THINKING BEFORE SPEAKING IN THE BIBLE

The meaning “think” for *אמר* is very well attested.⁷⁶ In the second half of the eleventh century, Rashi calls attention to it by adding *בלבו*, *בלבי*, etc. to *אמר* in his

⁷⁰Septimus, “Iterated Quotation Formulae,” 371–98.

⁷¹Fischer, *Jahwe unser Gott*, 41 with n. 15; Septimus, “Iterated Quotation Formulae,” 375 n. 9 (citing a personal communication from Paul-Alain Beaulieu).

⁷²Meier, *Speaking of Speaking*, 75 n. 2, 78 n. 1.

⁷³Richard C. Steiner and Charles F. Nims, “The Aramaic Text in Demotic Script: Text, Translation, and Notes” (published online, 2017), 84–85. See <https://repository.yu.edu/RichardSteiner/Amherst63>; or https://www.academia.edu/31662776/The_Aramaic_Text_in_Demotic_Script_Text_Translation_and_Notes. The transcription given here ignores minor details.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 85 (discussion). Note also the dramatic pause in Jer 37:17, discussed on 478 above and by Leibowitz, “*וַיֹּאמֶר* ... *וַיֹּאמֶר*,” 499.

⁷⁵Steiner and Nims, “Aramaic Text,” 89 (discussion).

⁷⁶For a substantial (but partial) list of examples, see BDB, s.v. “*אמר*,” §2.

commentaries. He does that, for instance, at 1 Sam 16:6: וַיְהִי בְּבוֹאֵם וַיֵּרָא אֶת־אֱלִיאָב וַיֹּהִי אִישׁ אֲתִירֵעוּהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֶיּוֹדָע כִּי־בָאָה הָאִשָּׁה הַגֵּרָה: וַיֹּאמֶר הִבִּי מְשִׁיחוֹ as “When they arrived and he saw Eliab, he thought: ‘Surely the Lord’s anointed stands before Him’” (NJPS).⁷⁷

A more relevant example is Ruth 3:14–15:

וַתִּקַּם בְּטָרִם יָבִיר אִישׁ אֲתִירֵעוּהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֶיּוֹדָע כִּי־בָאָה הָאִשָּׁה הַגֵּרָה: וַיֹּאמֶר הִבִּי
... הַמְטַפַּחַת אֲשֶׁר־עָלֶיךָ וְאַחֲזִיבֶהּ ...

She rose before one person could distinguish another, for he thought, “Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor.” And he said, “Hold out the shawl you are wearing.” (NJPS)

Rashi comments, “He urged her to get up (and leave), because he thought [כי אמר] בלבו, ‘It is unbecoming my dignity to have it be known that the woman came to the threshing floor.’” So, too, in the latest scholarly translation, by Jeremy Schipper: “Then she arose before a man could recognize another. For he thought, ‘May it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor.’ He said, ‘Give me the garment that is on you and hold it.’”⁷⁸ According to this view, וַיֹּאמֶר ... וַיֹּאמֶר in this passage means “he thought ... he said,” the repetition being triggered by two kinds of discontinuity: a change in discourse type (from internal speech to external speech)⁷⁹ and a change in addressee (from self = Boaz to other = Ruth).

The earliest *explicit* claim that X וַיֹּאמֶר ... X וַיֹּאמֶר can mean “X thought ... X said” is the one attributed to Hananel b. Hushiel (first half of the eleventh century) by Ibn Shu’aib in his commentary on Gen 15:2–3.⁸⁰ A comment by Hoffmann concerning Gen 27:36 appears to exhibit a similar claim.⁸¹

For the purposes of this study, the most relevant examples of the repeated quotation formula are the infrequent ones in which X וַיֹּאמֶר ... X וַיֹּאמֶר is expanded to Y וַיֹּאמֶר X אל- Y (as in Gen 37:21–22), with the addressee specified in the *second* occurrence of the formula instead of the first occurrence or both occurrences. It appears that most examples of this expanded formula have the

⁷⁷For the rendering of וַיֹּאמֶר here with “he thought,” see also GWT (God’s Word Translation), RSV, NRSV; and P. Kyle McCarter, *II Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary*, AB 9 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), 273. See also Rashi’s commentary on 1 Sam 18:17 (below), 25:21, Ruth 2:7, etc.

⁷⁸Jeremy Schipper, *Ruth: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AYB 7D (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 74, 152. See also GWT.

⁷⁹This kind of change in discourse type is not mentioned by Shiloah, who speaks only of changes from reply to independent statement.

⁸⁰See 478–79 above. Note that the formulation “two utterances with no reply in between” does not necessarily belong to R. Hananel; Ibn Shu’aib uses it again in a comment that he does not attribute to R. Hananel. Thus, it is not clear whether R. Hananel’s lost original comment proposed a general rule or pertained only to Gen 15:2–3.

⁸¹See Hoffmann, *ספר בראשית*, 2:571–72.

meaning “X thought ... X said to Y.”⁸² In other words, they are equivalent to an even fuller formula, *Y אל־X ויאמר X בלבו* ... *ויאמר X בלבו*, which occurs twice in the Bible: Gen 17:17–18:

וַיִּפֹּל אַבְרָהָם עַל־פָּנָיו וַיִּצְחַק וַיֹּאמֶר בְּלִבּוֹ הֲלֵבֵן מֵאֵה־שָׁנָה יוֹלֵד וְאִם־שָׂרָה הִבְתִּיתְשָׁעִים
שָׁנָה תֵּלֵד: וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים לֹא יִשְׁמַעֲלִי יְהוָה לִפְנֵיךְ:

Abraham fell on his face and laughed. He thought, “Can a child be born to a hundred-year-old man? Can Sarah, a ninety-year-old woman, give birth?” And so Abraham said to God, “Oh that Ishmael might live on before You (through a great multitude of descendants)!”

and Esth 6:6–7:

וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּן בְּלִבּוֹ לְמִי יִחַפֵּץ הַמֶּלֶךְ לַעֲשׂוֹת יְקָר יוֹתֵר מִמֶּנִּי: וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּן אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר
הַמֶּלֶךְ חָפֵץ בִּיקְרוֹ יָבִיאוּ לְבוּשׁ מַלְכוּת ...

Haman thought, “To whom would the king desire to give honor more than me?” And so Haman said to the king, “For the man whom the king desires to honor let royal garb be brought ...”

In both examples, there is a clear contrast between the two occurrences of *ויאמר*, the first modified by *בלבו* and the second by *אל־Y*. My claim is that *בלבו* is not needed to establish the contrast, that a narrator can omit it from this formula without changing the meaning. Put differently, the internal speech component of the formula may be left *unmarked*.⁸³

There are several examples of *Y אל־X ויאמר X ... X ויאמר* (without *בלבו*) that have the meaning “X thought ... X said to Y.” Almost all of them have been recognized by one traditional Jewish exegete or another. Two types can be distinguished, based on whether the addressee of X’s internal speech is (1) X himself/herself or (2) Y, the person(s) standing before X.⁸⁴ In type 1, X speaks silently *to himself/herself* before speaking aloud *to Y*. The internal component contains no second-person verbs or pronouns; its unspecified addressee is X (self) by default. Y may also appear in the internal component, but only in the *third* person (cf. Ruth 3:14–15 above). In type 2, X uses second-person morphemes to address Y *twice*—first

⁸²The only exception I have found is Gen 15:5: *וַיֹּאמֶר הַבְּטָנָא הַשְּׂמִימָה: וַיֹּצֵא אֹתוֹ הַחוּצָה וַיֹּאמֶר אֵתוֹ הַחוּצָה וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ כֹּה יִהְיֶה זְרָעֶךָ: וְסָפַר הַכּוֹכָבִים אִם־יִתְּנֶכֶל לְסָפְרָם אֲתָם וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ כֹּה יִהְיֶה זְרָעֶךָ: “He brought him outside and said, ‘Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.’ Then he said to him, ‘So shall your descendants be.’” (NRSV). As noted by Shiloah (“ויאמר,” 254) and Bar-Efrat (*Narrative Art in the Bible*, 44), the repetition there seems to signal a pause to allow Abraham to try to obey God’s command; see 478, 480, and 484 above.*

⁸³For the term, see Cynthia L. Miller, “Discourse Functions of Quotative Frames in Biblical Hebrew Narrative,” in *Discourse Analysis of Biblical Literature: What It Is and What It Offers*, ed. Walter R. Bodine, SemeiaSt (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 158–82, here 160–61.

⁸⁴I owe this distinction to a comment by Sara Steiner.

However, the use of *ושאול אמר* following *ויאמר שאול* probably indicates that the internal speech preceded the external speech (“Saul had thought”)⁸⁸ and motivated it.⁸⁹ A final parallel to verse 21 is found in verse 25: *וְשָׂאוֹל חָשַׁב לְהַפִּיל אֶת־דָּוִד בְּיַד־ פְּלִשְׁתִּים*, “Saul was intending to bring about David’s downfall at the hand(s) of the Philistines.” The use of *חשב* in this parallel provides further evidence that *אמר* in verses 17 and 21 refers to thought (cf. Isa 10:7).

A plausible example of type 2 is 2 Kgs 6:26–28:

וַיְהִי מַלְךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל עֹבֵר עַל־הַחֹמָה וְאִשָּׁה צָעָקָה אֵלָיו לֵאמֹר הוֹשִׁיעָה אֲדֹנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ: וַיֹּאמֶר אֵל־יִשְׁעָךְ ה' מֵאִן אוֹשִׁיעֶךָ הַמִּן־הַגֶּרֶן אוֹ מִן־הַיִּקְבִּ: וַיֹּאמֶר־לָהּ הַמֶּלֶךְ מַה־לְךְ ...

The NJPS renders thus:

Once, when the king of Israel was walking on the city wall, a woman cried out to him: “Help me, Your Majesty!” “Don’t [ask me],” he replied. “Let the Lord help you! Where could I get help for you, from the threshing floor or the winepress? But what troubles you?” the king asked her.

This rendering is problematic. The response *מה־לך* hardly makes sense as a continuation of verse 27. The NJPS tacitly acknowledges the difficulty by inserting the adversative conjunction “but.”

Mordechai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor view the verses somewhat differently: “27 ... the words are the initial, emotional reaction to the anguished cry of the woman. After calming down, the king begins again in v. 28 with the customary response.”⁹⁰ In other words, the repetition of *ויאמר* indicates a new beginning, following a pause. The reference to the “customary response” is presumably based on 2 Sam 14:4–5: *וְתֹאמֶר הָאִשָּׁה הַתְּקַעִית אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ ... הוֹשִׁיעָה הַמֶּלֶךְ: וַיֹּאמֶר־לָהּ הַמֶּלֶךְ מַה־ לְךְ*, “The woman of Tekoa said to the king ... ‘Help (me), Your Majesty!’ The king said to her, ‘What’s troubling you?’” In other words, the phrase *מה־לך* seems to be the conventional response to the petition formula *הוֹשִׁיעָה הַמֶּלֶךְ*.

It is important to note that *מה־לך* is an *initial* response in 2 Sam 14:5, and one would expect it to function the same way in 2 Kgs 6:28. Cogan and Tadmor seem to take that into account when they write that “the king *begins again* in v. 28 with the customary response.” But it is still a bit odd for the king to ask “What’s troubling you?” after sounding, in his initial response, as though he knows what the problem is.

Commentary, AB 19 (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 486; and Mordechai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor, *II Kings: A New Translation*, AB 11 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1988), 258.

⁸⁸ Alternatively, it may indicate contrast: “But Saul thought.”

⁸⁹ If so, *אמר* *ושאול* is functionally similar to the formula *אמר/אמרתי*, which often introduces internal speech that motivates a previously described action or failure to act (e.g., Gen 20:11, 26:9, 31:31, 32:21, 42:4, Exod 13:17, 1 Sam 20:26, 2 Sam 12:22, 18:18, Job 1:5, etc.), including previously cited external speech (e.g., Gen 38:11). See Nikolaus Bratsiotis, “Der Monolog im Alten Testament,” *ZAW* 73 (1961): 30–70, here 47.

⁹⁰ Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 80; see also Leibowitz, “ויאמר ... ויאמר,” 499.

In my view, the explanation of Abarbanel is more plausible. According to his paraphrase of verse 27, *וַיֹּאמֶר בְּלִבּוֹ אֵל יוֹשֻׁעַד ה'*,⁹¹ the king is addressing the petitioner in his mind. The king's *internal* speech reflects desperation, while his *external* speech, a conventional response, is designed to project normalcy and calm. This interpretation is bolstered by verse 30. There we learn that under his regal *outer* garments, the king was wearing *inner* garments made of sackcloth. There, as in verses 27–28, we find normalcy on the outside concealing desperation on the inside.

Another example of type 2 seems to be found in 2 Sam 16:10-11:

וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ מִה־לִּי וְלָכֶם בְּנֵי צְרוּיָה כֹּה יִקְלַל כִּי ה' אָמַר לוֹ קִלְלֵם אֶת־דָּוִד וּמִי יֹאמֶר מִדּוֹעַ עֲשִׂיתָהּ כֵּן: וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֶל־אַבִּישַׁי וְאֶל־כָּל־עֲבָדָיו הִנֵּה בְּנֵי אִשָּׁרָיִצָּא מִמֶּנִּי מִבְּקֶשׁ אֶת־נַפְשִׁי וְאִף כִּי־עָתָה בְּדֹהֵמֵי הַגָּחוֹ לוֹ וְיִקְלַל ...

I suggest that this means:

The king thought, “What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? He is cursing that way because the Lord said to him, ‘Curse David,’ so who can say, ‘Why have you done that?’” Then David said to Abishai and to all his servants, “My own son, the issue of my body, seeks (to take) my life, how much more so now the Benjaminites. Leave him in peace that he may curse ...”

McCarter, by contrast, takes the first *וַיֹּאמֶר* to mean “he said,” and he is, therefore, bothered by the amount of repetition in these verses.

10–11. This passage is highly repetitious. We may have here an elaborate repository of variants and blended corrections arising from attempts to repair an accident in the text of a single long speech. If this is the case, the primitive text may be irrecoverable. It is also possible, however, that David spoke twice in the primitive text and the repetition, therefore, is authentic and must be interpreted as such.⁹²

If my suggestion is correct, the text does not exhibit any problematic repetition, because the first *וַיֹּאמֶר* means “he thought.”⁹³ David has an ambivalent relationship with the “sons of Zeruiah.”⁹⁴ As recognized by most Bible translations, the rhetorical question *מה־לִּי וְלָכֶם* seems to mean “What have I to do with you?” (cf. Judg 11:12, 1 Kgs 17:18, 2 Kgs 3:13, 2 Chr 35:21). The same annoyed question is asked of Joab and Abishai by David in 2 Sam 19:23, but, even if we assume that it is asked aloud *there*, the context *here* favors a different assumption. In our passage, David is fleeing from Absalom, and he desperately needs the help of Joab and Abishai. Thus, it seems likely that the first *וַיֹּאמֶר* (which, unlike the second, is not modified by *אל-*) means “he thought.” Later, in 19:23, when David’s life is no longer in

⁹¹ Abarbanel, *פירוש על נביאים ראשונים*, 623a.

⁹² McCarter, *II Samuel*, 368.

⁹³ See 492 below.

⁹⁴ For this appellation, used by David in 2 Sam 3:39, 19:23, as well, see the note on 1 Sam 10:11 in NJPS: “to refer to a person merely as the ‘son (*ben*) of ...’ is slighting.”

danger, he will be free to rebuke Joab and Abishai aloud, if he wishes, but for now, at least, David needs to keep his feelings to himself.

IV. THINKING BEFORE SPEAKING IN GENESIS 37:21–22

How are we to interpret the repetition of *וַיֹּאמֶר* in Gen 37:21–22? According to many commentators, some of whom we have discussed above, Reuben paused⁹⁵ to wait for a positive response, and, when none was forthcoming, he was forced to try again,⁹⁶ offering a second proposal⁹⁷ or elaborating on the first.⁹⁸

This interpretation finds some support later in the Joseph story. In Gen 42:1–2, we read:

*וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב לְבָנָיו לָמָּה תִּתְרָאוּ: וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה שָׂמַעְתִּי כִּי יֵשֶׁבֶר בְּמִצְרַיִם דָּדוֹ-שָׂמָּה
וַיִּשְׁבְּרוּ-לָנוּ מִשֶּׁם וְנַחֲיָה וְלֹא נָמוּת:*

Jacob *said* to his sons, “Why do you keep looking at each other?” And he *said*, “I have heard that there is grain in Egypt. Go down there and procure grain for us from there, that we may live and not die.”

According to Carr, “the doubled speech introduction at the outset of Genesis 42 ... actually helps stress the silence of the brothers in response to Jacob’s question.”⁹⁹ Carr supports this claim by comparing 42:1–2 with 45:3–4, where the repeated quotation formula is interrupted by an explicit statement that the brothers did not respond to Joseph’s question.¹⁰⁰ Surprisingly, Carr does not apply any of these insights to Gen 37:21–22, perhaps because verse 21, unlike 45:3, contains no question.

The “he-said-he-said” interpretation of verses 21–22 is seductive, but there is a more compelling interpretation—namely, that *וַיֹּאמֶר* in verse 21 is equivalent to *וַיֹּאמֶר בְּלִבּוֹ*.¹⁰¹ If so, we may translate: “He *thought*, ‘We will not take his life.’ And

⁹⁵Jacob (481–82 above). See also Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation*, 118.

⁹⁶Ibn Shu’aib (479 above); Dubno and Mendelssohn (480 above).

⁹⁷Abarbanel, *פירוש על התורה*, 1:367a; Hirsch, *Der Pentateuch*, 1:256 (discussed by Jacobs, “Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch,” 196); Meir L. Malbim, ... *פירוש המלבי”ם* ... *אוצר הפירושים* ... *התורה והמצוה* (Jerusalem: Pardes, 1956), 1:63a, b; Horovitz (482 above); Genung, *Composition of Genesis* 37, 56.

⁹⁸Ska, “Sommaires proleptiques,” 525.

⁹⁹Carr, *Reading the Fractures*, 285.

¹⁰⁰See 484 above.

¹⁰¹For antecedents of this suggestion (with “speaking to himself” ≠ “thinking”), see Naphtali Z. J. Berlin (רמב”ם ... *העמק דבר* ... *עם פירוש* ... *חומשי תורה* [5 vols.; Vilna: Rom, 1879], 1:275 [קלח א עמ’]): “It doesn’t say ‘he said to them’ as in the adjacent verse; rather, Reuben first approached *speaking to himself* in a thunderous voice: ‘This shall not be ...’; and Wolf Pahrille’s commentary *בראשית* (Lemberg: Balaban, 1880), 287a. On verse 21, Pahrille comments, “He said this as one *speaking to himself*.” Concerning verse 22, he writes, “Afterwards, he spoke to his brothers, as well.” In other respects, these two interpretations are quite

so Reuben said to them, ‘Do not shed blood. Throw him into that pit (over there) in the wilderness, but do not lay a hand upon him (to kill him).’¹⁰²

This interpretation clarifies the relationship between verse 21 and verse 22. It makes perfect sense, under the circumstances, that there would be some disparity (as well as some similarity) between what Reuben thinks and what he says aloud. In his external speech, Reuben tries to persuade his brothers that he, too, wants Joseph dead, as long as that result is achieved without their spilling blood. His internal monologue, by contrast, contains no hint of that. It lacks the formula *ידנו/ידי* *אל/לא תהיה* (ה) *בו/בך* used to urge or promise someone to avoid direct bloodshed (Gen 37:27; 1 Sam 18:17; 24:12, 13).¹⁰³ Taking *ויאמר* to mean “he thought” in verse 21 provides a remarkably simple explanation for both the duplication found by Driver and Schmidt in verses 21–22 and the contradiction found there by Schmitt, just as it does for the duplication found by McCarter in 2 Sam 16:10–11.¹⁰⁴

Closer examination of the text only strengthens the point. According to the interpretation proposed here, the repetition of *ויאמר* signals a change in the discourse parameters, with regard to both type (from internal to external) and addressee (from self to other). In verse 21, Reuben speaks to himself in his mind; in verse 22, he addresses his brothers aloud. That this is correct is hinted at by three telltale differences between *נפש נכנו לא נאמר*, “He thought, ‘We will not take his life,’” and *ויאמר אלהם ראובן אל-תשפכו-דם*, “And so Reuben said to them, ‘Do not shed blood’”—differences in (1) the *quotation formulas* (addressee unspecified vs. specified by *אל-י*); (2) the *verbs* in the speeches (first vs. second person); and (3) the *negators* in the speeches (*לא* vs. *אל*, normally associated with a modal difference in the verb: indicative vs. voluntative [= cohortative + jussive]). The point of (3) is that *נפש נכנו לא* is not a cohortative utterance, addressed to his brothers and himself, meaning “let’s not take his life.” That would normally be expressed not with *לא* but with *אל*, as in *וידנו אל-תהי-בו*, “let not our hand be upon him (to kill

different from each other and from mine. See also Ron Pirson, *The Lord of the Dreams: A Semantic and Literary Analysis of Genesis 37–50*, JSOTSup 355 (London: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 67: “It is even possible that Reuben is talking to himself in v. 21... Only in v. 22 ... [is] the addressee ... mentioned explicitly.” I am indebted to S. Z. Leiman for calling Pahrille’s comment to my attention and sending me scans of this rare volume. Thanks also to Shmuel Klein (YIVO library) for providing photographs of the first edition of Berlin’s commentary.

¹⁰²The expression *X-ב-יד* *שלח* *יד*, where X is a free human being, is used of killing. For *וישמע* *ידם* *ויעלמו* *מידם*, “Reuben heard (this, i.e., the plot to kill Joseph) and saved him from (being killed at) their hand(s),” at the beginning of verse 21 and *להשיבו אל-אביו* *מידם*, “in order to save him from (being killed at) their hand(s), that he might (or: and to) restore him to his father,” at the end of verse 22, see Richard C. Steiner, “*וישמעו מידם*: Proleptic Summaries, Conative Imperfects, and Harmonization in the Joseph Story and Other Biblical Narratives,” in *Ve-ʿEd Yaʿaleh* (Gen 2:6): *Essays in Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies Presented to Edward L. Greenstein*, WAWSup (Atlanta: SBL Press, forthcoming).

¹⁰³The example in 1 Sam 18:17 exhibits different word order.

¹⁰⁴See 475, 475–76, 476, and 490.

him)” (Gen 37:27); אלתהי ידי בו, “let not my hand be upon him (to kill him)” (1 Sam 18:17); and אנחנה אל נקטלנהו, “we, let’s not kill him” (Ahiqar 61).¹⁰⁵

In all likelihood, ויאמר לא נכנו נפש is an internal expression of firm resolve: “He thought, ‘We will not take his life.’” It resembles internal first-person monologues elsewhere in the Bible that express a decision or resolution to inflict harm or refrain from doing so. In some of these, the internal speech is God’s, for example, Gen 8:21: ויאמר ה’ אל-לבו לא-אסף לקלל עוד את-האדמה ... ולא-אסף עוד להבות את-... and the Lord thought to himself (lit., said to his heart), ‘I will never again curse the ground ... nor will I ever again destroy every living being, as I have done’; and Deut 32:26: אמתתי אפאימה אשביטה מאנוש זכרם, “I thought, ‘I will make an end of them, eradicate their memory from humankind.’” In others, it is Israel’s enemies who are doing the thinking, for example, Ps 74:8: אמרו בלבם גינם, “They thought, ‘We will extirpate them altogether’”; and Exod 15:9: אמר אויב, “The enemy thought,¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ For the last example, see Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt*, 4 vols., Texts and Studies for Students (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1986–1999), 3:32–33. A computer search yields eight first-person imperfects with the cohortative ending that are negated by אל (Jer 17:18 bis; Jonah 1:14; Pss 25:2; 31:2, 18; 69:15; 71:1) but none negated by לא. As for the form of the suffixed pronoun when the verb has a cohortative (or final) sense, it can be either *-hū* or *-ennū*. For the former, see Gen 37:20: לכו ונהרגו ונשלוהו, “Come, let us kill him and throw him”; 2 Sam 14:7: ונמתהו אחיו ונתמכה אחיו, “Give up the one who struck his brother, that we may put him to death”; and Jer 18:18: לכו ונבהו, “Come, let us strike him.” For the latter, see Gen 37:27: לכו ונמכרנו לישמעאלים, “Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites”; Judg 14:13: הוצא את-האיש אשר-בא אל-ביתך, “Ask your riddle; let us hear it”; Judg 19:22: תני את-מכה אחיו ונמתהו, “Bring out the man who came to your house, that we may know him”; 2 Kgs 6:29: תני את-נשיתך עץ בלחמו ונכרתנו מארץ, “Give up your son, that we may eat him”; Jer 11:19: לכו ונכריתנה מגוי תיים, “Let us destroy the tree with its fruit; let us cut him off from the land of the living”; and Jer 48:2: לכו ונכריתנה מגוי תיים, “Come, let us cut her off from being a nation.”

¹⁰⁶ For “thought” in this verse, see already שמעאל דרבי ישמעאל, ed. H. S. Horowitz and I. A. Rabin (Frankfurt am Main: Kauffmann, 1931), 139 line 15: “אמר אויב ... From where did Israel come to know what Pharaoh, (back) in Egypt, was thinking [חשב] about them?” See also Martin Luther, *Biblia, das ist, die gantze heilige Schrift Deudsch auff’s new zugericht* (Wittenberg: Hans Lufft, 1544), 40b: “Der Feind gedacht”; Emil Kautzsch, *Die Heilige Schrift des Alten Testaments*, 2 vols. (Freiburg: Mohr, 1894), 1:71; Cassuto, *פירוש על ספר שמות*, 121; Cornelis Houtman, *Exodus*, 4 vols. (Kampen: Kok, 1993–2002), 2:223, 283–84; William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 1–18: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 524; Helmut Utzschneider and Wolfgang Oswald, *Exodus 1–15*, Internationaler exegetischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament 2.1 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2013), 328; etc. There are several reasons to doubt that the words “I shall pursue ...” were uttered aloud by the enemy, for example, as a war cry: (1) the closest parallel is in Ps 74:8, where בלבם appears; (2) since Israel is the referent of third-person pronouns (in תמלאמו and תורישמו, it cannot be the addressee; (3) for exhorting one’s fellows, the ideal mood is not the indicative used here (אריק ... אחלק) but the cohortative used in 14:25 (אנוסה) and 15:1 (אשירה); (4) verse 9 differs in content, form, and length from the war cries in Judg 7:18, 20; CAD 1.1:329 (*alāla* compared with Greek *ἀλαλά*); *ibid.*, 331 (“Ishtar have mercy!”); Xenophon, *Cyr.* 3.3.58–59; etc.

‘I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil, my desire shall have its fill of them, I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.’”

Perhaps the closest parallels to *וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא נִכְנֹו נַפְשׁ* are two cases of internal speech discussed above. In 1 Sam 18:11, *וַיֹּאמֶר אִכָּה בְּדוֹד וּבְקִיר*, “he thought, ‘I will pin David to the wall;’” we find the same two verbs. And in 1 Sam 18:21, *וַיֹּאמֶר שָׂאוֹל*, *אֲתַנְגֵּה לוֹ וְתַהֲיִלוֹ לְמוֹקֶשׁ וְתַהֲיִבוּ יַד־פְּלִשְׁתִּים וַיֹּאמֶר שָׂאוֹל אֶל־דָּוִד בְּשֵׁתִים תַּתְחַתֵּן בִּי הַיּוֹם*, “Saul thought, ‘I will give her to him that she may be a snare for him; let the Philistines’ hand be upon him (to kill him).’ And so Saul said to David, ‘Now it is through *two* (women) that you will (have) become engaged to be my son-in-law!’” the internal utterance expressing a decision about killing someone is immediately followed by an external utterance that begins to carry it out.

Further support for my proposal may perhaps be found in Gen 37:30: *וַיֹּאמֶר הַיֶּלֶד אֲיִנְנֹו וְאֲנִי אֵינֶה אֲנִי־בָּא*, “And he said, ‘The boy is gone; and I, where am I to go?’” According to M. Niehoff, these words of Reuben, introduced by *וַיֹּאמֶר*, are a form of soliloquy:

It emerges from this analysis that Reuben is in Gen 37:29–30 mostly, if not entirely, speaking to himself. Although he is depicted as expressing himself before his brothers, he does not at all expect any reaction to his words. Moreover, it is obvious that he would hardly have wanted them to grasp the full implications of his speech because he mistrusted them in any case and generally did not share his plans with them. Reuben’s inner conflict, too painful to be kept entirely private, is nevertheless phrased in concealed fashion so as to preclude its exposure.¹⁰⁷

If this analysis is correct, it provides strong support for my proposal, because it means that Reuben is once again refraining from fully sharing his thoughts with his brothers. Reuben appears here as the polar opposite of the indiscreet Joseph, whose immature insistence on relating his dreams to his brothers tore his family apart.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The repetition of the quotation formula (*וַיֹּאמֶר* and the like) is common in biblical narrative; it is a literary device used to signal *discontinuity*. The discontinuity often involves a *pause in the discourse* (to wait for a verbal or physical response, or to highlight a dramatic conclusion). Instead of—or in addition to—a pause, the discontinuity may involve a *change in the discourse parameters* (type, topic, or addressee). Stated in Saussurean terms, the discontinuity signaled by the repetition

¹⁰⁷M. Niehoff, “Do Biblical Characters Talk to Themselves? Narrative Modes of Representing Inner Speech in Early Biblical Fiction,” *JBL* 111 (1992): 577–95, here 588, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3267433>.

of the quotation formula is syntagmatic (along the horizontal axis), paradigmatic (along the vertical axis), or both.

Jewish exegetes of the Middle Ages and later noted most of this, thereby anticipating a topic discussed frequently today in creative writing blogs, namely, how to indicate that a speaker has paused. The work of these traditional commentators, however, appears to have been unknown to early modern critics. The writings of the latter assume that the repetition of ויאמר in Gen 37:21–22 and elsewhere is an anomaly that requires a diachronic explanation. It took roughly a century for the old synchronic approach to such repetition to regain its dominant position. This history is a perfect illustration of a problem famously described by George Santayana: “Progress, far from consisting in change, depends on retentiveness.... Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”¹⁰⁸

Adherents of the synchronic approach, both medieval and modern, have viewed the repetition of ויאמר in Gen 37:21–22 as an indication that Reuben paused to wait for a positive response that never came. This view is seductive, but it does not provide a compelling, unified explanation of the differences between ויאמר לא נכנו נפש (v. 21) and ויאמר אלהם ראובן אל־תשפכ־דם (v. 22)—differences in (1) the *quotation formulas*; (2) the *verbs* in the speeches; and (3) the *negators* in the speeches. Nor does it take into account the similarity between לא נכנו נפש and internal first-person monologues elsewhere in the Bible that express a decision or resolution to inflict harm or refrain from doing so.

The facts are best explained by taking the repetition of ויאמר in Gen 37:21–22 as signaling a change in the discourse parameters, with regard to both type (from internal to external) and addressee (from self to other). In verse 21, Reuben speaks to himself in his mind, revealing his true feelings. In verse 22, by contrast, Reuben addresses his brothers, trying to persuade them that he, too, wants Joseph dead, as long as that result is achieved without their spilling blood. This solution to the problems of Gen 37:21–22 is supported by prooftexts in other biblical narratives.

¹⁰⁸ George Santayana, *The Life of Reason*, 5 vols. (New York: Scribner, 1905–1906), 1:284. It is obvious that the invention of the footnote citation has not solved this problem. The compilation of academic databases, accessible to web search engines, has the potential to contribute more to its solution.