

The Achan/Achor Traditions: The Parody of Saul as "Achan" in 1 Samuel 14:24–15:35¹

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ABSTRACT

Within the cultic memory of ancient Israel, Achan is traditionally conceived as the villain par excellence, who according to the Dtr, took from the בָּנָה ban and brought about a decisive military defeat for Israel. By drawing salient parallels between Achan and Saul, the narrator of 1 Sam 14:24–15:35 employs the popular Achan traditions in his scathing polemics against the Saulides. Consequently, the narrator leaves literary clues within the text itself that point to his representation of Saul as Achan, and subtly reveal the "parodic intent" of these materials. Unfortunately, past studies have not fully engaged the "parodic" nature of this pericope, and hence have largely failed to note its narrative significance.

A INTRODUCTION

Parody is an important literary technique and its powerful effect lies primarily in its humorous and critical spirit.² This is readily seen in some of the world's masterpieces in parody. For example, George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, Jonathan Swift's, *Gulliver's Travels* and Miguel Cervantes' *Don Quixote* have universally become staple classics in the description of parody.³ To this list, one could also add, Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* or Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. Unfortunately, these clas-

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² Parody is an "elusive literary term," and has been defined variously by different authors. Often it is used interchangeable with satire. In this present study, however, we narrowly define parody "as an intentionally humorous literary (written) text that achieves its effect" through "distorting the distinguishing characteristics of" a character within a specified text in order to imitate subtly another well-known character or villain of an earlier text. See Martha Bayless, *Parody in the Middle Ages: The Latin Tradition* (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 1996), 2-3. See also Joseph Dane, *A Parody: Critical Concepts Versus Literary Practices: Aristophanes to Sterne* (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988).

³ For the contemporary impacts of other masterpieces in the genre of parody see John Gross, *Oxford Book of Parodies* (London: OUP, 2010).

sics have greatly impacted the writing of parody so that one often does not seriously associate parody with the biblical narratives, hence naturally there is often the tendency to ignore or footnote the presence of "parody" or "parodic intent" in biblical narratives.⁴ However, parodying, laughing at, or making fun of a friend or an opponent is a common practice among people of every society. This is demonstrated, in contemporary societies via many media: political cartoons, gossip columns, jibes against politicians, impersonations by stand-up comics, innuendos on talk shows. Even caricatures conveyed by the graffiti on our streets readily show the capacity of the human society to engage in various kinds of activities which fall generally within the purview of parody.⁵

Due to this inherent capacity to make humorous or critical comments about persons, forms or institutions outside itself, parody locates itself naturally within "meta-fiction."⁶ In particular, M. A. Rose has pointed to the "meta-fictional" character of parody "in ancient as well as modern times."⁷ In ancient times, even though it carried greater risks, the parody of kings, nobility and popular personalities by entertainers in courts and public gatherings was also popular.⁸ For example, among ancient Greeks, entertainers

⁴ For a recent study on biblical parody see Will Kynes, "Beat Your Parodies into Swords, and Your Parodied Books into Spears: A New Paradigm for Parody in the Hebrew Bible," *BibInt* 19 (2011): 275-310.

⁵ Remarkably, Linda Hutcheon has described the defining place of parody in postmodern aestheticism particularly in the use of this genre for the critique of representations and its ideological implications. See Linda Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism* (New York: Routledge, 1989). David Seitz has shown its defining importance in modern teaching and education. See David Seitz, "Mocking Discourse: Parody as Pedagogy," *Pedagogy* 11/2 (2011): 371-394. Darren Blakeborough has shown its significant place in the popular *Simpson* cartoons. See Darren Blakeborough, "'Old People are Useless': Representations of Aging on *The Simpsons*," *CJA* 27/1 (2008): 57-67.

⁶ Margaret A. Rose, describing this propensity of parody, observed, "[i]n reflecting upon another literary work from within a literary form, literary parody is also able to act not only as an 'archaeological' analysis of another literary form and its background, but as a form of 'strong reading' of another work or set of works, to quote the term Harold Bloom. In making its target a part of its own structure parody, however, will not simply break away from its preceding texts, as other 'strong readings' have been described as doing, but will transform them and recreate them within itself. In acting in this and other ways as a commentary upon other literary works, parody is also able to be used as 'meta-fiction'" See Margaret A. Rose, *Parody: Ancient, Modern, and Post-Modern* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 90.

⁷ Rose, *Parody*, 91.

⁸ Describing the social matrix of Lucius of Samosata as an "intellectual entertainer" in his work, *Demonax* and his particular appeal to his "plebeian" Greek audience, Gerald Downing observed, "[t]here are some very similar criticism of

engaged in drama or play which aimed at the parody of established beliefs or to make caricature of religious or political dignitaries for political or entertaining purposes.⁹ In addition, in the ancient Near East, court entertainers also engaged in comic imitation, and the same court practices possibly continued in Roman and medieval times.¹⁰ Consequently, it is reasonable to expect the presence of this form within the biblical text itself as well as the social and political worlds of the biblical narrative.¹¹

In the light of these surrounding ancient court practices, it is possible that professional entertainers in ancient Israelite courts could have engaged in subtle parody of royal opponents or friends in telling their stories.¹² Premised on these ancient story-telling practices, this paper reads the representation of Saul in 1 Sam 14:24–15:35 in the category of parody. It shows the quest of the narrator to connect the first Israelite king with the first Deuteronomist breaker of the **מְרַגָּן** ban, namely Achan.¹³ First, the study

the wealthy and powerful; some very similar affirmations of poverty and simplicity." Gerald Downing, "A Genre for Q and a Social-Cultural Context for Q: Comparing Sets of Similarities with Sets of Differences," *JSNT* 55 (1994): 15.

⁹ See Stephen Halliwell, "The Uses of Laughter in Greek Culture," *CQ* 41/2 (1991): 279-296; Nick R. E. Fisher, "'Hybris' and Dishonour: I," *GR* 23/2 (1976): 177-193; Nick R. E. Fisher, "'Hybris' and Dishonour: II," *GR* 26/1 (1979): 32-47. On some aspects of Greek parody see Pierre J. Lelièvre, "The Basis of Ancient Parody," *GR* 1/2 (1954): 66-81; David D. Leitao, "Plautus, 'Stichus' 155ff: A Greek Parody of Plato's 'Symposium?'" *Mnemosyne* 50/3 (1997): 271-280; Heinrich-Günther Nesselrath, "Parody and Later Greek Comedy," *HSCP* 95 (1993): 181-95; Kathryn Chew, "Achilles Tatius and parody," *CJ* 96 (2000): 57-70; Filippomaria Pontani, "Demosthenes, Parody and the *Frogs*," *Mnemosyne* 62 (2009): 401-416.

¹⁰ On the general treatment of parody in medieval period see Bayless, *Parody in the Middle Ages*, 1-404.

¹¹ For example, Michael B. Dick has observed some prophetic parodies in the Hebrew Bible against the iconic representation of the divine being by ancient Israelites neighbors. See Michael B. Dick, "Prophetic Parodies of Making the Cultic Image," in *Born in Heaven, Made on Earth* (ed. Michael B. Dick; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 1-53.

¹² Similarly, in traditional and modern Africa, for example, the royal palace is never complete without a class of professional "praise singers" who entertain the king by exaggerating his importance, making subtle jests of his greatness and also engage in the parodying of the king's opponents. For example see Patricia B. Mireku-Gyimah et al., "The Art, the Craft and the Changing Fortunes of the Praise Singer among the Akans of Ghana," *HSSJ* 5/2 (2010): 95-104.

¹³ Current scholarship in OT has often challenged the historical and canonical relationships between the book of Joshua and Samuel. It has repeatedly posited that Joshua is the invention of the post-exilic community which projects its yearning for the Promised Land to the idealised conquest stories of the past. This view usually dates the writing of Samuel before Joshua, thus reordering the

shows the popularity of the "Achan traditions" in ancient Israel by describing the different occurrences and allusions to this particular tradition.¹⁴ By representing Saul as an Achan or the villain *par excellence*, the narrator made his humorous and scathing attacks on the Saulides. On these intensive polemics between the Saulides and Davidic dynasties, K. Salmi-Niklander's categorisation of parody in terms of ideological and generic parodies seems appropriate. According to Salmi-Niklander, generic parody plays with "linguistic norms and generic conventions," while, ideological parody, on the other hand, "is directed against both political opponents and the texts representing their ideology."¹⁵ Remarkably, the narrator accomplished this literary representation or parody of Saul, by drawing interesting parallels between the Achan saga of Josh 7 and the literary representations of king Saul in 1 Sam 14:24–15:35.¹⁶ Locked in this world of polemics, the narrative representation of Saul fits properly the political agenda of the narrator of 1 Samuel who, in the words of Meir Steinberg, unmistakably, uses artful camouflage and misdirection to represent his characters.¹⁷ Consequently,

canonical arrangement. While acknowledging the conclusions of modern scholarship on this matter and the possible ignorance of the narrator in 1 Samuel of our present canonical version of Joshua, however, the study assumes that the narrator was quite familiar with the some versions and proto-Joshua traditions on the Achan story.

¹⁴ The use of tradition in this paper did not take the view of tradition as a mechanical or frozen cultic memory, but a dynamic understanding of tradition whereby the central and marginal aspects of the traditions are constantly modified or readjusted in the light of the present challenges of the advocates of these traditions. In fact, this use of traditions may presuppose critical engagement of the same for the ideological benefits of the users. Underscoring similar perspective on traditions, Bernard Levinson rightly observed, "[t]he claim of consistency with the past" in talking of tradition "may equally constitute critical engagement with that past" which "may even permit the revision, reinterpretation, transformation, or abrogation of the tenets of the past." See Bernard Levinson, "The Hermeneutics of Tradition in Deuteronomy: A Reply to J. G. McConville," *JBL* 119/2 (2000): 283.

¹⁵ Kirsti Salmi-Niklander, "Bitter Memories and Burst Soap Bubbles: Irony, Parody, and Satire in the Oral-Literary Tradition of Finnish Working-Class Youth at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century," *IRSH* 52 (2007): 189.

¹⁶ Concerning allusions and drawing of parallels between texts, Yitzhak Berger has rightly said, "[m]ultiple sets of parallels, even when distributed erratically through a narrative, may be designed to produce meaningful comparisons or contrasts." In particular, the present study describes the notable parallels between Saul and Achan. See Yitzhak Berger, "Esther and Benjaminite Royalty: A Study in Inner-Biblical Allusion," *JBL* 129/4 (2010): 626.

¹⁷ See Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 485.

the study here in parody is a quest to unmask what is “artfully camouflaged” in the representation of king Saul by the narrator of 1 Samuel.¹⁸

B THE ACHAN/ACHOR TRADITIONS IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

As a subset of propaganda, parody, in this present study, shows the subversive use of the Achan/Achor tradition to undermine the claims of Saul to kingship.¹⁹ In his study of biblical parody, Gale Yee has observed that two prerequisites are important in identifying a particular piece of narrative as a parody. These two prerequisites include, first that the literary work being parodied must at least be nominally recognisable, and secondly, the readers must also be able to see and “make the connections” and “to get the joke.”²⁰ In recent times, Will Kynes has described “humour” and “subversion” in parody as secondary features, but gives importance to the capacity of parody as means of “ridiculing, rejecting, respecting, and reaffirming.”²¹ Since the Achan/Achor tradition is important to my argument in this entire work, I have devoted the first part of the work to establish the presence and popularity of this tradition in ancient Israel.²²

¹⁸ Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 485

¹⁹ On the treatment of the present passage under study as propaganda see Marsha C. White, “‘History of Saul’s Rise:’ Saulide State Propaganda in 1 Samuel 1-14,” in *A Wise and Discerning Mind: Essays in Honor of Burke O. Long* (ed. Saul M. Olyan and Robert C. Culley; BJS 325; Providence: Brown University Press, 2000), 271-292; Gregory Mobley, “Glimpses of the Heroic Saul,” in *Saul in Story and Tradition* (ed. Carl S. Ehrlich; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 80-87.

²⁰ See Gale Yee, “The Anatomy of Biblical Parody: The Dirge Form in 2 Samuel 1 and Isaiah 14,” *CBQ* 50 (1988): 567.

²¹ Kynes, “Beat Your Parodies into Swords,” 276-310.

²² Chronologically, I do believe that the materials in Achan/Achor stories of Josh 7 predate 1 Sam 14–15 because this section of Joshua comes from a pre-deuteronomistic source. For example, A. Soggin has pointed out to the presence of “pre-deuteronomistic elements” or stories in the book of Joshua. In this perspective, Soggin situated the “first part” (chs. 1-12) of Joshua, where the Achan’s story is found, in a pre-deuteronomistic traditions which have their origin in the “territory of Benjamin” especially the sanctuary at Gilgal. See J. Alberto Soggin, *Joshua: A Commentary* (London: SCM, 1972), 7-14. Soggin observed, “Most present-day commentators draw from this the obvious conclusion that the traditions of chs. 1-12 are in great part of Benjaminite origin, with the sanctuary of Gilgal playing a co-ordinating and unifying role” (Soggin, *Joshua*, 9). He also added, “it is easy to see that we are faced with a mosaic of very different materials, almost all of which, however, are associated with the territory of Benjamin and its sanctuary, Gilgal. The exceptions are the Achan episode, a brief sortie into the neighbouring territory of Judah. . . .” In addition, Soggin treats the “Achan episode” as a “Benjaminitic polemic against Judah.” In 1 Sam 14–15, however, the polemic is by Judah against the Benjamin. On the whole, despite the pre-deuteronomistic char-

To map out the ideological use of the Achan figure and perhaps its "pre-deuteronomistic" character, one has to further recognise the prevalence of this same tradition within the larger ancient Israelite communities.²³ For

acter of Josh 7, Soggin suggests that the casting of lot in 1 Sam 14:40-46 as "unquestionably a very early passage" (see Soggin, *Joshua*, 97-98). Similarly, Graeme Aulds has also taken the same view because he observes that the writer of 1 Samuel is ignorant of the book of Joshua because events and persons in Joshua do not feature in 1 Samuel. As we are going to see, the pervading influence of Achan tradition in ancient Israel points perhaps to the dependence of both the books of Samuel and Joshua on an earlier pre-deuteronomistic Achan tradition. Admittedly, while 1 Samuel generally seems to be oblivious to the events and persons in the book of Joshua, however, the final hands of the deuteronomistic redactor appeared to have shaped these two pericopes to show parallels between the first Israelite king, Saul, and the first law breaker, Achan. Consequently, since the editing presence of Dtr is visible in both Joshua and 1 Samuel, it is possible to attribute the similarities of these two pericopes on the final editing of these texts by the Dtr. See Graeme Auld, *I & II Samuel: A Commentary* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 165-6.

²³ The Achan/Achor tradition appeared to have undergone certain scribal modifications as readily attested by the variant renderings of the name "Achan." With the exception of 1 Chron 2:7, the MT always reads "Achan" as the name of the hero while the LXX and Syriac read *Achar* instead of Achan (Josh 7:1, 18-20, 24; 22:20; 1 Chr 2:7). Apparently, the problem lies with the wordplay between the name of Achan (אָחָן), the occurrence of עַכְרָה in Josh 7:25 and the mentioning of the "valley of Achor" (עַכְרָה) in v. 26. Reconciling these differences, Richard S. Hess suggests that the original name of this hero was "Achan" but after the incident he was nicknamed "Achar" in wordplay to the trouble associated with the incident. See Richard S. Hess, "Achan and Achor: Names and Wordplay in Joshua 7," *HAR* 14 (1994): 94-96. Like Hess, Yair Zakovitch also notes the problematic etymology of Achan/Achar, and suggests that "Achan" was the original name of the hero. However, according to Zakovitch, the early scribes name-derivation practice was contented with a "two and not three" of the root letter wordplay hence the pun between עָחָן and עַכְרָה. In contrast, later scribes dissatisfied with these two roots wordplay, appeared, according to Zakovitch, to seek for three root consonants equivalent for the wordplay, and since "Hebrew does not recognize verb עָחָן," the later scribes added, "the valley of Achor" to match the verb "trouble" (עַכְרָה) in Josh 7:25. Also confronted with the same problem, Zakovitch observed, the Chronicler entirely changed the name of the hero in 1 Chr 2:7 to fit "the valley of Achor" at the end of the Achan story rather than following after the practice of these scribes. See Yair Zakovitch, "A Study of Precise and Partial Derivations in Biblical Etymology," *JSOT* (1980): 36-38. On the other hand, Robert Hubbard connects the change of name in 1 Chr 2:7 with a scribal error who read the original final letter *resh* [ר] as *nun* [נ] thus perpetuating the difference in the name of the character in Chronicles as *Achar* (עַכְרָה) rather than *Achan* (אָחָן). See Robert L. Hubbard, "'What Do these Stones Mean?': Biblical

example, in Deutero-Isaiah, there is eschatological longing whereby the “valley of Achor” is now turned into a “resting place” for the “grazing of cattle” by those who seek Yahweh. The text reads, “And Sharon shall be a pasture land for flocks, and the valley of Achor a resting place for herds, for my people who seek me” (Isa 65:10). In this inverted eschatological world of second Isaiah, the original valley of Achor (or “trouble”) is now a fruitful habitation of God’s people, thus directly opposite of the original Achan/Achor motif in Josh 7 which reminds one of Achan’s unfaithfulness and the gruesome death of his family.²⁴ Similarly, in Hos 2:15, the Achan/Achor motif is seen in Yahweh’s promise to turn “the valley of Achor” into “a door of hope.” The allusion to the original Achan story is unmistakable because while in Josh 7:26, the “valley of Achor” represents death, sorrow and mourning, in Hosea, this same place is inverted now to become a place of great divine blessings.²⁵ According to Douglas Stuart, “[t]his valley, a source of disappointment early in the conquest, would now be a gateway of hope.”²⁶ In spite of the confusing metaphors of the book of Hosea, Francis Landy notes that the verse describes the “turning” of “the place of an original sacrilege—the valley of Achor—into a gate of hope. . . ”²⁷ Walter Brueggemann suggests that the verse describes an “inverse situation of liminality back to a condition of trust and vulnerability.”²⁸ In Josh 7:26, the text reads,

And they raised over him a great heap of stones that stands to this day, and the Lord turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the valley of Achor [עַמְקָעָכָר] to this day.²⁹

Theology and a Motif in Joshua,” *BBR* 11/1 (2001): 18. Hubbard’s view seems to provide simply a better reason for the use of עַכָּר by the chronicler rather than עַמְקָעָכָר.

²⁴ John D. W. Watts describes this verse as the “[p]romise of hope for his chosen” people since Yahweh’s “[f]avorite places in Palestine, Sharon and the Achor valley, will be returned to Israel.” See John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34-66* (WBC 25; Dallas, Tex.: Word, 2005), 912-915.

²⁵ Concerning this verse, James A. Sanders and Paul Capetz also show that this verse is part of the “stirring metaphors” in the prophetic genre which shows “integral aspect” of divine judgment but also a “positive” element as well. See James A. Sanders and Paul Capetz, “Credo in Unum Deum: A Challenge,” *BTB* 39/4 (2009): 208.

²⁶ Douglas Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah* (WBC 31; Dallas, Tex.: Word, 1987), 53.

²⁷ Francis Landy, “In the Wilderness of Speech: Problems of Metaphor in Hosea,” *BibInt* 3/1 (1995): 48.

²⁸ See Walter Brueggemann, “2 Samuel 21-24: An Appendix of Deconstruction?” *CBQ* 50 (1988): 396.

²⁹ For the wordplay between עַכָּר and עַמְקָעָכָר see Hess, “Achan and Achor,” 94-96.

The phrase עַמְקָעָר appeared exactly in Isaiah and Hosea texts, thus directly connecting the three passages under the Achan/Achor motif. Significantly, the allusion in the prophetic genre to Achan/Achor shows the popularity of this tradition and possibly points to its earlier character.³⁰ In addition, the inversion of the same tradition in eschatological longing of Israel's prophets appear to suggest that Achan/Achor was a defining event in the cultic memory of ancient Israel in the past which now necessitates the deliberate projection of happy times by the Israelites prophets in order to displace or counteract this particular ugly incidence in the religious life of ancient Israel.³¹ Ironically, "[t]he 'trouble' Achan suffered was that, in not executing *herem* in Jericho, he suffered the same fate as Jericho."³² However, it is the reversal of this fate on the national level that is now envisaged in the prophetic writings.

Significantly, the Achor/Achan motif seems to have played a defining role in the thought of Israel especially during the post-exilic periods. The importance of this Achan/Achor tradition lies in its emphasis on religious polarities in terms of piety or sacrilege, faithfulness and unfaithfulness which increasingly defined Yahweh-Israelites relationship in post-exilic setting. For example, underscoring the significance of the Achan/Achor motifs in the genealogies of the Chronicler, Brian E. Kelly observes,

[t]he genealogies contain three notes about individuals which make rhetorical use of paronomasia to indicate the significance of these persons: Er, who did 'evil' (עָרָךְ), Achar [Achan], who 'brings trouble' (עָוָרָךְ) and Jabez, born 'in pain' (בָּעָזָב).³³

Concerning the theological importance of the Chronicler's notes on Achan, Kelly further observes,

The language of this note depends on its source (Josh. 7.1), but the significance of מְעָרָךְ is often overlooked by commentators.

³⁰ In his study of "until this day," in the context of Josh 7:26, Jeffrey Geoghegan suggests the possible editing activities of a "preexilic deuteronomistic historian." While this in itself is not conclusive, however, the use and reuse of the Achan tradition in biblical thought, as this present study suggests, points possibly to a tradition that has its origin in the pre-exilic environment. See Jeffrey Geoghegan, "'Until this Day' and the Preexilic Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History," *JBL* 122/2 (2003): 205.

³¹ Robert Hubbard rightly observed, "Achan affair taught Israel the deadly seriousness of apostasy and the terrible corporate culpability that it entails." See Hubbard, "'What Do these Stones Mean?'" 17.

³² Hubbard, "'What Do these Stones Mean?'" 17.

³³ Brian E. Kelly, *Retribution and Eschatology in Chronicles* (JSOTSup 211; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 64.

The Chronicle draws attention to the fact that at the beginning of its occupation of the land, Israel is guilty of serious sin, through Achar's disobedience. The allusion to the theft of the "devoted things," which brought military disaster on the people, is specifically designated an act of לְעָמֵד (Josh 7:1; 22:20). The Chronicler will constantly underline the military consequences of לְעָמֵד, the culmination of which is the exile of the entire guilty community.³⁴

According to Kelly, it appears the Chronicler is making an important analogy between the corporate punishment of Achan's family and the fate of the nation of Israel. Consequently, Achan's rebellion becomes a preview of the future rebellion of the nation of Israel. In this understanding, the parenthetical notes of the Chronicler to the Achan episode in 1 Chron 2:7 stylistically connects the fate of Achan and the fate of Israel. Here, the use of the Achan/Achor motif points to the popularity enjoyed by this tradition in exilic and post-exilic times. In this new exilic context, it appears that Israel as a nation has now understood itself to be the "Achan." That is, Achan, as a traditional icon of rebellion or unfaithfulness to Yahweh now resonates with the religious experiences of the exilic and post-exilic worlds. In this analogy, the Israelites, like Achan, have been unfaithful to Yahweh, and like the fate of Achan, are now destroyed corporately as a nation. On the other hand, Robert G. Boling has also drawn attention to the significance of the Achan/Achor tradition in the expansionist wars of Judges and the monarchical periods. In particular, he notes the important relationship between the "holy wars" in the book of Joshua and the Achan's story. He observes,

. . . tradition regarded the wars of Joshua's days as the holiest of all the ones that Israelites actually fought, and it devoted one whole chapter to a trifling violation of the ḥerem (the sin of Achan in Josh. 7) so that we would not miss the point. The results were at last, however, so ambiguous that an angel arrived at the beginning of Judg. 2 to announce that Yahweh will no longer participate in expansionist battles against the Canaanites. The wars of the Judges are indeed defensive, but they are not primarily holy.³⁵

As blueprint for holy wars, the wars in the book of Joshua provide moral and theological motivations for subsequent wars in Israel's history particularly on the claims of ancient Israel on the Promised Land. It also provides the ideological justification for the various wars launched against the surrounding nations during the expansionist administration of David. It

³⁴ Kelly, *Retribution and Eschatology*, 65.

³⁵ Robert G. Boling, *Judges: Introduction, Translation & Commentary* (AB; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1975), 29.

also possible that Achan story emerges alongside these “holy war” ideologies. According to Boling, influenced by these stories of holy wars, the “anonymous court Historian who compiled 2 Sam 9-20” resulted to the “use of the language of indirection” in the descriptions of the battle of David because even though they were “successful” are “the least holy.”³⁶ This is because David “failed to reckon with the proper piety of his soldiers” such as in the case of the murder of Uriah, the Hittite. Consequently, despite David “going through the holy motions, in preparation for war,” yet this unholy character of his warfare provides “the Chronicler with a plausible rationale for David’s lack of success in building the great Yahweh Temple.”³⁷ If, as reasoned by Boling, the holy wars of Joshua provide the ideological motivation for the wars of David in the tenth century, it is not unreasonable to expect that the Achan story would form part of the background to the telling of these stories.³⁸

On the other hand, Paul J. Kissling also notes the possible allusion to the Achan/Achor motif in 1 Kgs 18:17. Kissling observes,

[i]n 18:17, the word, “troubler” recalls how Achan had brought disaster upon Israel by violating the ban. Ahab, by implication, accuses Elijah of similarly bringing disaster on Israel.³⁹ He adds, the word “troubler” (*עכָר*) recalls the valley named after the Achan incident, Josh. 7.25, 26.⁴⁰

Even though it is possible to read too much into the singular occurrence of this word here, placing *עכָר* in the entire context of the Ahab-Elijah encounter helps to show the full theological significance of the word. Kissling fails to see the mocking significance of the occurrence of *עכָר* here in the speeches of Ahab by the narrator particularly in the light of Ahab’s taking of Jezebel, a foreign nationality whom Yahweh prohibits or bans Israelites from marrying. In addition, the word indicts the dabbling of Ahab into foreign and “forbidden” religious practices and the subsequent taking of Naboth’s inheritance in the light of the deuteronomistic bans on these

³⁶ Boling, *Judges*, 29.

³⁷ Boling, *Judges*, 29.

³⁸ For example see the popularity of the Abimelech’s story among the soldiers during David’s time (2 Sam 11: 18-21). Joab in this passage repeated the killing of Abimelech in Judg 9 by a woman. He remarkably removed all the invested theological importance because he merely saw this particular incident as a military blunder. In short, for Joab, Abimelech was killed in the battle because he came close to the wall.

³⁹ Paul J. Kissling, *Reliable Characters in the Primary History: Profiles of Moses, Joshua, Elijah & Elisha* (JSOTSup 224; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 111.

⁴⁰ Kissling, *Reliable Characters*, 111.

different infringements.⁴¹ Technically, these infringements on the "Deuteronomistic bans" make Ahab another "Achan." Ironically, however, it was Ahab who indicted and called Elijah the "troubler" of Israel or the "Achan." Consequently, from the point of view of Ahab, unflinching loyalty to Yahweh, as exemplified by Elijah, becomes a heinous crime, which he compared to the sacrilege by Achan. In this place, Achan/Achor motif is inverted to create a caricature of "Ahab" who ironically calls a faithful follower of Yahweh, "Achan."

The Achan/Achor tradition reappears also in Josh 22:20 in the speeches of the "envoy" of the ten tribes who were sent to handle the "Transjordanian" impeding crisis. Concerning the occurrence of the Achan/Achor motif here, Lori Rowlett observes,

[t]he fact that the name of Achan is raised in the speech to the Transjordanians in 22:20 indicates an analogy in their situations, the commitment of an "iniquity" which breaks the symbolic unity of "all Israel" under its national deity. The Transjordanians are pointedly reminded that Achan died alone in his iniquity (v. 20). The situation is negotiated to a peaceful conclusion. . . If a peaceful solution had not been reached, the result for the transjordanians would have been the usual punishment for Otherness: destruction (v. 33).⁴²

The Achan/Achor motif was employed here to call back into a symbolic unity a tribe which was considered failing in its covenantal and cultic responsibility to Yahweh.⁴³ The Achan/Achor tradition is used here to rally support by the tribes for the worship of Yahweh. Consequently, the Achan/Achor tradition appears to reiterate the common obligations of each tribe to the service of Yahweh.

⁴¹ The word appeared in the speech of Jacob in Gen 34:30 when he said, "You have brought trouble [בְּתַבְעֵךְ] on me by making me a stench to the Canaanites and Perizzites, the people living in this land." Connecting the presence of to Achan and Deuteronomistic prohibition in Deut 7:25-26, Gershon Hepner, in his study of verbal resonance and intertextuality, notes, "The word בְּתַבְעֵךְ implies that Jacob is not protesting the violence of Simeon and Levi but the way they have violated the Deuteronomic law of proscription (Deut 7:25-26) in the same way that Achan does in the book of Joshua in the Valley of עַכְרָה ('Achor,' Josh. 7:24, 26)." See Gershon Hepner, "Verbal Resonance in the Bible and Intertextuality," *JSOT* 96 (2001): 6.

⁴² Lori L. Rowlett, *Joshua and the Rhetoric of Violence: A New Historicist Analysis* (JSOTSup 226; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 169.

⁴³ See Elie Assis, "The Position and Function of Jos 22 in the Book of Joshua," *ZAW* 116 (2004): 528-541; Auld, "Pluralism Where Least Expected?: Joshua 22 in Biblical Context," *ExpTim* 122/8 (2011): 374-379.

We need to make a quick summary of the different functions of the Achan/Achor traditions to this point. In the preceding discussion, we observed that the Achan/Achor motif occurred in eschatological contexts where ancient Israelites longed for the time when traces of unfaithfulness to Yahweh by Israelites would be gone. This motif appears largely in the prophetic texts. Similarly, the Achan/Achor motif also occurs in the analogy of the Chronicler who associates or compares the fate of Achan to the fate of Israel in the context of the exile or post-exilic environment. In addition, Achan/Achor motif also occurs in the righteous indignation and confrontation against contamination of Israel's religion by foreign influences in Ahab-Elijah narratives. Lastly, it occurs indirectly in the fashioning of David's wars after the "holy wars" ideology of the book of Joshua where the central character of Achan is clearly envisaged as a violator of such "holy war." Beyond these possible functions of the Achan/Achor traditions, Rowlett has pointed to the other functions of these traditions in "centralization of power" and the "negotiation" of cultural boundaries and cultic identities in terms of "insider" and "outsider."⁴⁴ Concerning the ideological significance of the public execution of Achan, the first of the only two public executions in the book of Joshua, Rowlett said,

The people "all Israel" are much more than observers in the execution of Achan. They are themselves the executioners. They all join together as a group to stone Achan. By making the people the executioners, the people are represented as having a personal take in ousting the disorder which has come in their boundaries. The purpose is to make the members of the community, individually and collectively, appear to feel wronged by Achan's action and feel a part of the collective entity that is joining together to punish him. In doing so, they are drawing a border around themselves with Achan on the outside.⁴⁵

Here, the Achan incident helps to generate or gather a communal and cultic solidarity against a member of the community who has forfeited his individual right to exist in the community by sabotaging the religious and political aspirations of the entire community. In this particular angle, the Achan traditions perhaps become popular because of its inherent message of communal solidarity against the forces or persons that seek to sabotage the wellbeing of the community. In this understanding, one would expect the story of Achan to have become popular among ancient Israelites because of its emphasis on communal solidarity and corporate responsibility. For Rowlett, the Deuteronomist writer, using the Achan "discourse," seeks

⁴⁴ Rowlett, *Joshua and the Rhetoric of Violence*, 176.

⁴⁵ Rowlett, *Joshua and the Rhetoric of Violence*, 176.

to evoke the sentiments of the people reading or hearing the story in the 7th century B.C.E.: not only are they not to identify with the disobedient Achan, or potential dissenters of any kind in their society, but they might even actively feel motivated to exclude or punish the Achans among them.⁴⁶

Consequently, in Achan's story "sovereignty is reconstituted by the ritual of public execution and by making the community the executioners."⁴⁷ On the power of the Achan story, as an ideological tool, in negotiating cultic identity, Rowlett notes the significance in the placement of Achan and Rahab stories side-by-side. The location of the Achan and Rahab stories back-to-back in chs. 6 and 7 underscores the basis for the construction of identity in spite of its superficial placement in the battle narratives of Joshua which on the first impression describe or encourage ethnic conflicts, "the Rahab and Achan stories serve as an obverse pair in the negotiations" of identity because "[i]n several important respects, Achan (Joshua 7) is the obverse of Rahab (Joshua 2 and 6)."⁴⁸ In this negotiation of identity, Rahab,

a woman and a prostitute as well as a Canaanite, was the ultimate "Other" who became an insider by voluntarily submitting and pledging her allegiance to Yahweh's hierarchy, represented by Joshua's military machine.⁴⁹

On the other hand, "Achan was the exemplary insider (with the right lineage) who made himself 'Other' by his lack of submission to the hierarchical authority headed by Yahweh." In the "outsider" and "insider" dynamics of the Achan story, it is not impossible to see the importance of this particular story for social or religious control in the history of ancient Israel. Hinting on the use of this story for social control, Rowlett added,

The strong overcoding of the lines of authority in the text makes the power assertion inherent within it perfectly clear: individuals belong to households, which belong to families, the families are subordinate to the patriarchal heads of the tribes, who, in turn, are to find their identity primarily as components of the entity "Israel," whose god is Yahweh. The deity's chosen representative on earth, to whom Yahweh gives commands and to whom the people answerable to, is Joshua. Everyone has a particular place in the centralized system, and everyone ("all Israel") belongs firmly under Joshua's control. Achan, the individual who has tried to step out from under the lines of authority, is

⁴⁶ Rowlett, *Joshua and the Rhetoric of Violence*, 176.

⁴⁷ Rowlett, *Joshua and the Rhetoric of Violence*, 176.

⁴⁸ Rowlett, *Joshua and the Rhetoric of Violence*, 176.

⁴⁹ Rowlett, *Joshua and the Rhetoric of Violence*, 176.

therefore subject to punishment not only by Joshua but by all "Israel," the cohesive yet stratified entity...⁵⁰

Consequently, in the light of this emphasis on authority, "[e]verything which falls underneath Achan's control in the patriarchal system, namely his offspring and possessions, is destroyed along with him." In this consideration, "[t]he total destruction of Achan and everything under him is also reminiscent of the ban, which Achan had violated in his insubordination."⁵¹ Seen in these several perspectives, the significance of the Achan story now transcends its original context of cultic purity or holy wars, but extends to the entirety of socio-political environment of ancient Israel in its quest for social control and encouraging of solidarity among the different members in its religious and political community. Conclusively, Achan traditions emerged to perform several of the stated functions in the social, religious and political worlds of the ancient Israel. All these functions of the traditions reiterate the wickedness, mischief, ungodliness, betrayal and unfaithfulness of Achan. As a villain par excellence, it is not surprising that the historians of David's court employed some features of the Achan traditions in their mockery of Saul.

C ACHAN MOTIFS AND THE PARODY OF SAUL IN 1 SAMUEL 14:24–15:35

In fictional and non-fictional narratives, parody is often preoccupied with the art of imitation of a particular character or object through an amusing mirroring of the original character or object in order to engender a humorous effect. Accordingly, "imitation remains the most tractable" feature of parody, and this singular feature accounts for its common association with the imitative art of mimesis.⁵² In comedy, for example, the actor seeks in dressing, voice, gesture, walk and other personal characteristics to imitate the object of its comic attack.⁵³ Similarly, like comedy, parody uses the vehicle of imitation in order to make its powerful literary or visual effects readily felt. In biblical narrative, the possibility of a narrator casting or

⁵⁰ Rowlett, *Joshua and the Rhetoric of Violence*, 177.

⁵¹ Rowlett, *Joshua and the Rhetoric of Violence*, 177.

⁵² Seymour Chatman, "Parody and Style," *PTod* 22/1 (2001): 35.

⁵³ For example the personal resemblance and the use of comic imitation by Tina Fey to parody Sarah Palin is now recognised to have played a fundamental role in the turn of the American presidential election. See Arhlene A. Flowers and Cory L. Young, "Parody Palin: How Tina Fey's Verbal and Visual Impersonation Revived a Comedy Show and Impacted the 2008 Election," *JVL* 29/1 (2010): 47-67.

recasting a particular character or characters, events or scenes in joking imitation of another popular character or event is clearly attested.⁵⁴

Speaking of parody in its imitation of the original object, Chatman observes, "[o]ften the most telling clue in a parody is the imitation of [the] subject matter."⁵⁵ Furthermore, Hutcheon has observed that parody is "a form of imitation characterized by ironic inversion."⁵⁶ Looking at chs. 14-15 of 1 Samuel, there is an unmistakable representation or parody of Saul in jesting imitation of the Joshua-Achan encounter in Josh 7.⁵⁷ In this imitative capacity, the comic caricature of Saul as an Achan in this passage was fundamentally informed by the Joshua-Achan motifs because, as we are now going to see, narrative parallels are directly drawn by the narrator between the Achan and king Saul.⁵⁸ It appears the narrator has within his

⁵⁴ The narrator of Judge 19 recast his character or characters and events in imitation of the Sodom-Gomorrah saga of Gen 19. For this narrator, the new Sodomites in Israel are now the tribe of Benjamin, and thereby indicting Saul and his royal house. Amit making this observation notes, ". . . it appears that the section of the concubine in Gibeah alludes to Saul through means of the technique of hidden polemic. The explicit condemnation of Gibeah serves the author to shed light upon Saul's origins in the most negative possible way. Lines of analogy are drawn between the hospitality in Gibeah and that of Sodom, thus suggesting to the reader that the city of Saul, Gibeah, is even worse than Sodom. Sodom, in the final analysis, did not perform rape, while the rape committed in Gibeah concluded in the worst possible way—in murder." Amit also notes the hidden polemic in the recasting of the Levite of Judge 19 in the image of Saul. See Yairah Amit, *Hidden Polemics in Biblical Narrative* (trans. Jonathan Chipman; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 181-83. In addition, Berger has also observed the notable representation of Esther as a kind of Saul. For this particular study see Berger, "Esther and Benjaminite," 625-624.

⁵⁵ Berger, "Esther and Benjaminite," 25.

⁵⁶ Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth Century Art Forms* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), xii.

⁵⁷ Simcha S. Brooks has opined that the Saul narrative is recast in Samson narrative and she notes the similarities between these two stories. For her, Samson stories are actually Saul stories told in a concealed manner. See Simcha S. Brooks, "Saul and the Samson Narrative," *JSOT* 71 (1996): 19-25.

⁵⁸ Interestingly, Susan Niditch has observed the merger of the war ideologies in the understanding of ban in Josh 7 and the portrait of Saul in ch. 15. She notes that two understanding of the ban (*herem*) are combined in 1 Sam 15. The war ideology on the ban consists first of the understanding of the *herem* as a "sacrifice" which is devoted to God and secondly the conception of *herem* as divine justice. For this connection between Josh 7 and 1 Sam 15 in terms of war ideologies see Susan Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible: A Study in the Ethics of Violence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 28-55, 56-77. See also Susan Niditch, "War in the Hebrew Bible and Contemporary Parallels," *WW* 15/4 (1995): 402-411.

reach a variant of Joshua and Achan which he now adapts in his literary portraits of Saul.⁵⁹ However, rather than Joshua, the narrator associates Saul with Achan, the legendary "bad guy" of the Hebrew Bible.⁶⁰

The comic nature of the present text presents the different motifs in the Joshua-Achan encounter and applied them to Saul. In passing, Gordon rightly notes the similarity between "Joshua's role in the Achan crisis in Jos. 7,"⁶¹ and Saul's portrait in the present text. However, Gordon merely saw the role of Saul here as that of a "pre-monarchical war-leader in Israel." He also notes the similarity between the lot casting in the present text and the one of the Joshua-Achan saga when he observed, "[t]he sacred lot operated by a process of elimination and the process could be long, as in the story of Achan (Jos. 7), or short, as here."⁶² Gordon also notes the similarity in phraseology of Josh 7:19 and v. 43 of the present passage.⁶³ Meir Sternberg has also described the "rhetorical power from the implicit intertextual and interepisodic relations" between the present pericope and

⁵⁹ Possibly, the Achan story should have been popular in ancient Israel because of its "deeper" concern with issues of holiness which, from the perspective of the narrator, should be protected against the contamination of foreign persons or objects. In this similar understanding, R. E. Clements has underscored "deeper concern" behind the Achan story especially in the author's quest to describe the rippling effects of sin and the need for the community to eradicate it. He also emphasises the author's view that association with foreign objects of idolatrous kinds could unleash the divine anger and withdrawal. In addition, Clement also notes in passing the "apologetic" purpose of the story as the author's offering of reasons to a devastating military defeat. On this description of the nature of Achan's sin in relationship to holiness concerns see Ronald E. Clements, "Achan's Sin: Warfare and Holiness," in *Shall Not the Judge of All the Earth Do What is Right? Studies on the Nature of God in Tribute to James L. Crenshaw* (ed. David Penchansky and Paul L. Redditt; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 113-126.

⁶⁰ In contrast to my treatment, Dawn M. Sellars has generally underscored the positive reading of the representation of Saul within this pericope. According to Sellars, this positive reading of Saul's representation comes in the light of ch. 8 of 1 Sam which describes the monarch in bad light. However, Saul is described particularly in ch. 15 as heeding the "voice" of the people rather than walking in the negative descriptions of the monarch. Even though the reading by Sellars raised interesting possibility, however, she generally is misled by the narrator's misdirection who appears to praise or honour Saul while at the same engaged in vicious attack against him. On her reading of this pericope see Dawn M. Sellars, "An Obedient Servant? The Reign of King Saul (1 Samuel 13-15) Reassessed," *JSOT* 35/3 (2011): 317-338.

⁶¹ Robert P. Gordon, *I & II Samuel: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Regency, 1988), 141.

⁶² Gordon, *I & II Samuel*, 140.

⁶³ Gordon, *I & II Samuel*, 140.

Josh 7.⁶⁴ He also notes that "the points of similarity between the two tales are specified far beyond this broad thematic correspondence" of "spoils put under the ban . . .".⁶⁵

Unfortunately, despite the recognition of the narrative parallels between the Joshua-Achan saga and the present narrative portrait of Saul, Sternberg, Gordon, as many other modern readers, still misses the underlying caricature of Saul in literary trope of a parody.⁶⁶ However, far from being hidden, "a parody *must* use enough" motif from "the target text to be recognizable to its audience."⁶⁷

The present study shows two types of connections between Achan and Saul in terms of direct parallels and direct inversions. The following table first illustrates some direct parallels between Achan in Josh 7 and Saul in 1 Sam 14:24–15:35.

⁶⁴ See Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 497.

⁶⁵ Concerning the interconnection of the fate of Achan and Saul, Sternberg also added, "The expectation generated as early as this stage, that Achan's end foreshadows Saul's, comes true later in the book. In this regard, Saul, "[l]ike his historical mirror image" Achan "dies a violent death, his sons fall with him, and, what is otherwise inexplicable in terms of Hebrew culture and has indeed always puzzled scholars, the corpses are set on fire (the phrase 'burnt them' of Joshua 7:25 recurring in 1 Samuel 31:12)." See Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 498.

⁶⁶ Underscoring the dependence of Joshua on the portrait of Saul in 1 Sam 14, Auld dismissed the literary connections between the two pericopes thus, "There are several connections between this narrative and elements of Josh 6-8. . . . However, despite these correspondences, there is nothing in 1 Sam 14 that indicates knowledge of Joshua. Given the absence throughout Samuel of any explicit reference to any portion of the book of Joshua, we must suppose that Joshua has drawn on Samuel rather than the other way round." See Auld, *I & II Samuel*, 165. To the contrary, there is a close literary connection between the two stories, which points to the mutual dependence of both Joshua and Samuel on a proto-Joshua form of the Achan story rather than the use of Samuel by the narrator of Joshua as suggested by Auld. Consequently, rather than Joshua's use of Saul's portrait in 1 Sam 14-15 to represent Achan, a strong possibility exists in which the Davidic dynasty could have used a pre-Joshua version of Achan as a villain *par excellence* in order to polemically describe the rejection of Saul, thus undermining the legitimacy of Saul to the throne. On the other hand, one wonders for what purpose should a representation of Achan in the image of Israelite first king could have achieved? Or what ideological purpose does it serve to represent Achan as Saul rather than Saul as Achan to post-exilic readers of the book of Joshua?

⁶⁷ Chatman, "Parody," 28.

Achan	Saul
Achan came from a noble lineage (Josh 7:17-18).	Saul came also from a noble lineage (1 Sam 9:1-3)
The casting of lots is used to find an offender who took the substance that was clearly banned (7:13-15).	The casting of lots is also used to find an offender who took the substance that was clearly banned (14:38-42).
Achan disregarded the ban. He took "beautiful mantle from Shinar and two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight..." (Josh 7:24).	Saul also disregarded the ban. He took "the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs—everything that was good" (1 Sam 15:9).
Achan took from the first spoils of the first conquered city, Jericho (7:1).	Saul took from the spoils of the first assignment which was expressively given to him by Yahweh (15:1).
The Israelite soldiers that went to Ai were three thousand men. "So about three thousand men went up; but they were routed by men of Ai" (7:4).	The original soldiers handpicked by Saul were three thousand in number. "Saul chose three thousand men from Israel" (13:2).
The event took place in the vicinity of Beth-Aven. "Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth Aven . . ." (7:2).	The story of Saul is also connected to this same geographical setting. "and the battle shifted to Beth Aven" (14:23. Cf. 13:2). ⁶⁸
The Achan incident is immediately preceded by an oath worded as a curse. "Then Joshua made them take an oath at that time, saying (לֹאמֶר), "Cursed (אָרַיוּ) before the Lord is the man (הַשִּׁיאָן) who rises up and	The infringement is also preceded by an oath which is worded as a curse. "Saul had bound the people under an oath, saying (לֹאמֶר), "Cursed (אָרַיוּ) be any man (הַאֲשֵׁר) who eats food..." (14:24). ⁶⁹

⁶⁸ The occurrence of Beth aven to describe the geographical settings for the story of Achan and Saul is not coincidental, since with the exception of its occurrence in Hosea, the phrase occurred only in these two books. Achan and Saul are the only characters whose story is directly connected to Beth Aven. The phrase occurs seven times in the entire Hebrew Bible: twice in the book of Joshua (7:2; 18:12), twice in the book of Samuel (13:5; 14:23), and three times in Hosea where it is used as a derogatory name for Israel (4:15; 5:8; 10:5). The phrase means "house of wickedness" and was later used as a derogatory term for "Bethel," the "house of God." See Victor H. Matthews, "Back to Bethel: Geographical Reiteration in Biblical Narrative," *JBL* 128/1 (2009): 164.

⁶⁹ On Saul's oath, Marsha White observed, "In its present position between the two rejections, Saul's oath and near sacrifice of Jonathan can only be understood

builds..." (6:26).

Achan was the first Israelite law breaker on the Promised Land who broke faith with Yahweh. "He violated (**עָבֵד**) the covenant of the Lord" (7:15). Achan himself confessed, "I have sinned (**חָטָא**)." 70

Achan and his family were the first and only family to experience corporately the full wrath of Yahweh against the **חרם** ban.

The word **עָבֵד** occurred in Joshua's speech to Achan in 7:25 when he said, "[w]hy have you troubled [עָבֵד] us? The Lord will trouble [עָבֵד] you this day."

Joshua said to Achan in Josh 7:19, "My son, ... Tell [נָרָא] me what you have done (**עָשָׂיתָ**)..."

There is a wordplay on the name "Achan" on the lips of Josh in 7:25a, when he said, "And Joshua said, "Why have you troubled (**עָבֵד**) us? The Lord will trouble (**עָבֵד**) you this day."

Saul was the first king who dramatically broke faith with Yahweh. Saul himself also confessed, "I have sinned (**חָטָא**). I have violated (**עָבֵד**) the Yahweh's command" (15:24).

Saul was the first and only Israelite king who was rejected and his dynasty subsequently terminated because of his infringement of the **חרם** ban.

The word, **עָבֵד** appeared also in the speech of Jonathan in v. 29, when he said, "My father has troubled [עָבֵד] the land." Consequently, by the use of **עָבֵד** and "**אֶתְּאָבִיךְ**" in reference to his father, Jonathan indicted his father and subtly regarded him as an "Achan" figure.

Similarly, the narrator phrased the speech of Saul to Jonathan in v. 43 like the speech of Joshua to Achan in Josh 7:19. When Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell [נָרָא] me what you have done (**עָשָׂיתָ**)" in 14:43.⁷⁰

Finally, the name "Joshua" appeared on the lips of the soldiers, when they said, "Must Jonathan die, who has brought about this great deliverance (**יִשְׁעָה**) in Israel?" in v. 45a.⁷¹

pejoratively." See Marsha White, "Saul and Jonathan in 1 Samuel 1 and 14," in *Saul in Story and Tradition* (ed. Carl S. Ehrlich; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 129.

⁷⁰ However, the narrator clearly omitted "my son" from Saul's speech in 14:43 because it is already implied by the context.

⁷¹ Even though Hertzberg did not underscore the significance of **יִשְׁעָה** in relationship to the Joshua-Achan narrative, nonetheless he notes the importance of the word here, when he observes, "[t]he very word **y'šu'ā** = saving deed, used here by the people, again testifies that the success of the day is one of God's saving acts. 'With God,' Jonathan has won his victory over the uncircumcised. How could it be God's will for him to die? Here, then, there is more than sympathy for the beloved young warrior. One manifestation of the will of God stands over

Following this table, some direct inversions of the Joshua-Achan story in reference to 1 Sam 14:24–15:35 need also emphasis. While the reversals are not compelling as the preceding parallels, however, together they justified our treatment of the two pericopes as parody since reversal also constitutes an important aspect of parody. According to Hutcheon, parody often builds on “a form of repetition with ironic critical distance, marking difference rather than similarity.”⁷² This marking of difference is often reflected as a kind of “conscious distortion” of the original narrative, thus Pierre J. Lelièvre speaks of the “element of conscious distortion” that is “at the heart of parody” which often gives parody its “sophisticated form.”⁷³ Similarly, Kynes observed, “in order for ridicule to occur, there must be some difference between the original and the parody’s imitation.”⁷⁴ Importantly, “unlike other allusions to earlier texts, the emphasis in parody is particularly on this difference.”⁷⁵ The reversal of the two pericopes here falls perfectly within this sophistication of difference which is essential in the making of an effective parody. The few direct inversions between the two pericopes are as follow:

Achan	Saul
The casting of lot was due to a great defeat (7:1-15).	The casting of lot in ch. 14 was as a result of a great victory (14:34-36).
The infringement of the בָּנָן ban brought about great defeat (7:4-5).	The infringement of the בָּנָן ban did not lead to defeat (15:7).
One case of the infringement of the ban is narrated (7:1).	Two cases of the infringement of the ban are given side by side; one centred on Jonathan (14:24-45) and the other on Saul (15:1-35).
Joshua torn (עָרַק) his clothes in mourning for Achan’s infringement of the ban (7:6).	Saul torn (קָרַע) the clothes of Samuel in seeking leniency for his infringement of the divine ban (15:27-28).
The first time in biblical narrative when a prophet torn his clothes (שָׁמַלְתָּה) by himself (7:6).	The first and only time in biblical narrative when a king torn the clothes (שָׁמַלְתָּה) of a prophet (15:27-28).

against another.” See Hans W. Hertzberg, *I & II Samuel: A Commentary* (OTL; trans. John S. Bowden; London: SCM Press, 1964), 117.

⁷² Hutcheon, *Theory of Parody*, xii.

⁷³ Lelièvre, “The Basis,” 80.

⁷⁴ He described parody as an “antithetical allusion.” See Kynes, “Beat Your Parodies into Swords,” 276, 281.

⁷⁵ See Kynes, “Beat Your Parodies into Swords,” 281.

In mourning Joshua and the elders put dust on their "head."

Joshua mourning for the sin of Achan wished they have not crossed over (עַבְרָה) the Jordan (7:7). But Yahweh responded to his mourning by saying that Israel has already crossed (עַבְרָה) or transgressed his commandment (7:11, 15).

In Josh 7:25b-26, we read: "And all Israel stoned them with stones. . . . And they raised over him a great heap of stones that stands to this day, and the Lord turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the valley of Achor to this day."

The lot casting fell on the tribe of Judah and then finally on Achan (7:16-18). The lot fell on the person who brought about the defeat.

Achan was killed for his infringement of the ban (7:25-26).

In rebuking Saul, the people referred to the "hairs" on the "head" of Jonathan (14:45; cf. 15:17).

Jonathan and his servant crossed over (עַבְרָה) to the Philistine (14:1, 4, 6, 8. cf. 23). Saul and his son were place on the other side (עַבְרָה cf. 14:40), and Saul himself confessed after Samuel indicted him of his infringement of the ban that he had crossed (עַבְרָה) or transgressed divine commandment (15:24; cf. 12). The word עַבְרָה featured many times in its various nuances within this pericope.

In reversal, Saul said in 14:33, "You have acted treacherously; roll a great stone to me today." In the Joshua-Achan saga, a large stone was raised and placed on the corpse of Achan and his family, however, the present text speaks of a stone that was raised in order to drain the blood from the meat. Remarkably, this is the only incident of such raising of stone in biblical narrative.

The lot casting in ch. 14 fell originally on Saul and then on his son Jonathan (14:41-42). The lot fell on the person who brought about the victory.

Saul was spared for his infringement of the divine ban.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Though the kingship was taken from Saul in ch. 15, he himself was spared from death for the infringement of the divine ban against the Amalekites. Ironically, Saul wanted to kill his son Jonathan for infringing his own ban on "honey" in ch. 14. On the other hand, even though Saul was spared from death, like Sternberg rightly observed, "Of the two looters, the text now invites us to conclude, Saul deserves death even more than Achan, in view of the difference in status and enemy." In fact, "If Saul wanted to execute ('thou shalt surely die, Jonathan') his victorious son (who has wrought this great deliverance in Israel') for having unwittingly broken ('Jonathan had not heard') the king's impulsive and senseless oath ('Cursed be the man who eats any food until evening), then what penalty

Joshua was before the presence of God in mourning “till evening” (הַעֲרָבָה עַד־הַעֲרָבָה) in 7:6.

Joshua sanctified the people as part of the process of finding Achan (7:13)

All Israelites joined hands to stone Achan in Josh 7:25b.

Saul commanded a fast that lasts “till evening” (עַד־הַעֲרָבָה) in 14:24.

Saul also built his first altar (14:35) in prelude to his infringement

In contrast, the people stood against Saul’s sentencing of Jonathan to death (14:45).

From the preceding parallels and reversals, some passing commentary on the two pericopes seemed necessary. First, for example, 1 Sam 14:24–15:35 and the Joshua-Achan saga are the only graphic descriptions of lot casting in the entire Hebrew Bible where the process was used to find an offender who took a substance that was clearly banned.⁷⁷ In v. 24 of 1 Sam 14, the narrator notes the curse made by Saul on anyone who eats food until the battle is over in the evening, and v. 38 describes his call on the entire people to come for casting of lots to know who has gone against his particular ban. When the two infringements of ch. 14:37-46 by Jonathan and ch. 15:1-35 by Saul are read together, one realises that the narrator actually portrayed Saul as an Achan because Saul himself took from the “banned” cattle and sheep, and directly goes against the divine command to completely destroy the city of the Amalekites (v. 1), which receives more emphasis than Jonathan’s taking of forbidden honey.⁷⁸ Consequently, while Saul was willing to kill his son for unknowingly taking honey or the mild infringement of his own “ban” in 14:38, 44, he knowingly spared the life of Agag and “the best” of the Amalekites whom God through Samuel clearly directed him to completely destroy in 15:1-3. Significantly, in sparing Agag, lies one of the ironies of the present text because Saul is willing to kill his own son for infringing on his own ban, but he is unwilling to kill Agag, the Amalekite, a sworn enemy of the Israelite nation from the per-

does he himself deserve for violating God’s reasoned command?” See Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 498.

⁷⁷ Concerning the use of lot here, Kyle McCarter observes, “[t]his is Saul’s second recorded experience with a lottery; in the first he was chosen king [10:17-27] . . . Nowhere in the OT are we given more detail about the actual procedures of lot casting than in the present passage.” See P. Kyle McCarter, Jr., *I Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary* (AB 8; New York: Doubleday, 1980), 203.

⁷⁸ Concerning the treatment of the ban and its place in the legitimization of violence see John J. Collins, “The Zeal of Phinehas: The Bible and the Legitimation of Violence,” *JBL* 122/1 (2003): 3-21.

spective of the deuteronomist redactor.⁷⁹ Thus, in his determination to kill his own son in the present text lies also an indictment of Saul by the narrator who indirectly implies that Saul himself ought to also die for infringing on the divine ban against the Amalekites. From the perspectives of the narrator, it appears the destiny of Saul is already sealed by the placement of these two ban infringements back to back in chs. 14 and 15.⁸⁰ These two bans are ideologically tied together by the deliberate placement of Saul's genealogy between the two of these infringements. The narrator of 1 Samuel gave the first genealogy of Saul in 1 Sam 9:1, but he deliberately placed the second genealogy of Saul in between the two infringements in 14:24-48 and 15:1-35. Enclosed between the two infringements, the genealogy of Saul in 14:49-52 is crafted to connect Saul to these two bans. Consequently, while the first genealogy introduces Saul, the second genealogy presents the story of his rejection. In reading these two bans together, the story of Saul receives a slanted characterisation that is reminiscent of the Achan story.

Also, this particular way of reading these texts provides further clarity in the use of lot in the election/finding of Saul in 10:17-17. Incidentally, even though lot casting is employed for other purposes, lot casting in biblical tradition was commonly used to find the guilty party.⁸¹ Noting the direct significance of the three lot castings in the 14:38-44, in Josh 7, and the use of this means in the election/finding of Saul in 10:17-27, Kyle McCarter notes,

In this light the similarity between the narrative of Saul's selection by lot and the accounts found elsewhere in the Bible of the use of the lottery to determine a hidden offender becomes significant. The passages in question are Joshua 7 and 1 Sam 14:38-44—the only other detailed reports of the use of the sacred lots in the Bible. The formal similarities among the three passages are

⁷⁹ In Exod 17:14, the text reads: "Then Yahweh said to Moses, 'Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.'"

⁸⁰ The failure of Saul to fully execute the ban on the Amalekites rendered a heavy blow to the royal aspirations of the Saulides, and possibly necessitates the writing of a post-exilic text of Esther in order to right this wrong. Interestingly, Esther, the protagonist is linked to Saul through Mordecai, and Haman, the antagonist is an Agagite, possibly the lineage of Agag, the Amalekite king whom Saul spared. For the fascinating study of this allusion and motif see Berger, "Esther and Benjaminite," 625-624.

⁸¹ In this regard, Polzin observes, "The public choice by lot of Saul for king follows this pattern of 'seizing the culprit'... 'in some kind of covenantal transgression'... thus suggesting 'Saul, as Israel's first king, is singled out as a personification of kingship's sinfulness.' See Robert Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomic History* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989), 104.

striking, but in the other examples the purpose of the lot casting is to discover an unknown guilty individual, in the one case Achan and in the other Jonathan. While it is certainly true that lot casting was used for other purposes than the exposure of a criminal (including indeed, the designation of individual for office), the combination of features that appears here. . . casts a shadow over Saul's election. Again it would be overstating the case to say that all of this means Saul is guilty of something—that will come later—but there is a clear if subtle implication that he is an offending party by virtue of the election itself.⁸²

Secondly, there is a notable ideological connection between the two pericopes. For example, the word, **עכָר** appeared in the speech of Jonathan in v. 29, when he said, "My father has troubled [עכָר] the land." The same word also occurred in Joshua's speech to Achan in 7:25 when he said, "[w]hy have you troubled [עכָר] us? The Lord will trouble [עכָר] you this day." It also appeared in the divine speeches to Israelites commanding them not to take the banned things from Jericho in 6:18. Here categorically, Yahweh said,

[b]ut keep away from the banned things, so that you will not bring about your own destruction by taking any of them. Otherwise you will make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble [עכָר] on it.

Like we have already suggested, by the use of **עכָר** in reference to his father, Jonathan indicted his father and subtly regarded him as another "Achan" figure. On the discourse level, however, the narrator places this word on the lips of Jonathan to make jest of Saul who appears to be like Joshua in his casting of lots, but is actually the "Achan" or the "troubler" of Israel. This characterisation of Saul as "Achan" extends to ch. 15 where Saul is now clearly portrayed to have taken the banned things from the city of the Amalekites. Indirectly, through this characterisation, the narrator's polemic against Saul is evidently clear in spite of his praise of the military exploits of Saul in vv. 46-48. This praise of Saul is another misdirection of the narrator in order to deflate the powerful parody against Saul.⁸³ The misdirection of the narrator is most obvious in v. 48. Consider the way he speaks of Saul's military campaign against the Amalekites. He said, "He [Saul] fought valiantly and defeated the Amalekites, delivering Israel from the hands of those who had plundered them."⁸⁴ It appeared from this

⁸² See McCarter, Jr., *I Samuel*, 196.

⁸³ On the study of biblical political satire and its difference with parody see Ze'ev Weisman, *Political Satire in the Bible* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1998), 1-72.

⁸⁴ Speaking on these last verses of ch. 14, Tony W. Cartledge observed, "The Last few verses of ch. 14 offer what seems to be a summary statement of Saul's

particular verse that his military expedition against the Amalekites was a "success story" but the entire ch. 15 goes against this verdict of the narrator here and underscores that Saul's military campaign against the Amalekites was actually a failure, which led to the turning of the kingdom from Saul to David. Consequently, this misdirection also lies behind the quick mentioning of Saul's military campaign immediately after making a parody of him as the Achan through the preceding allusions and reversals. This fits properly the criteria of homage and criticism described by Chatman as indispensable for a successful parody.⁸⁵ In this same perspective, Blakeborough has also pointed out to the defining necessity of homage and criticism in parody when he observed, "Parody simultaneously ridicules as it pays respect and homage."⁸⁶ In addition, Lelièvre also observed, "parody can be penetrating without being malicious: certainly there is no reason to suppose that the parodist cannot rise to serious appreciation . . ."⁸⁷

To further underscore this intent of parody, one has to understand that king Saul is the only king in biblical narratives and within deuteronomistic history who is directly connected to the infringements of the בְּנֵי ban. Similarly, Saul is also the only king whose election to kingship was the product of lots' casting. In this subtle way, Saul's kingship is directly linked to a notorious offender of the בְּנֵי ban where both the story of infringement and lots casting is also converged. On this ideological level, the story of Achan is also the only story within biblical narrative where the convergence of the בְּנֵי infringements and lots casting took place. The ideological closeness of these stories is not merely accidental since they also show similarities in their narrations. Admittedly, it is not possible to make conclusive statement on the chronological relationship between the book of Samuel and Joshua, however, it appears that the redactor of Samuel has acquaintance with materials which are proto-Joshua in nature. The Achan tradition possibly has earlier oral and literary versions that predated the presentation in the canonical book of Joshua. The echo of the book of Joshua in Samuel whether through this pre-Joshua version or through the work of a redactor is clearly seen in the use of the Gibeonites story in 2 Sam 21 and his reference to the book of Jashar in 2 Sam 1:18 which both

reign, even though he remains king to the end of 1 Samuel. The narrator seems to be telling us that Saul's tenure on the throne was as good as over." Consequently the genealogy and the summary of one's achievements are common feature of obituary notice, however, the obituary notice of Saul is left out to the end. In this summary and genealogy, the narrator has already dismissed or point theologically speaking to the dead of Saul. See Tony W. Cartledge, *1 & 2 Samuel* (SHBC; Macon, Ga.: Smyth & Helwys, 2001), 187.

⁸⁵ Chatman, "Parody," 33.

⁸⁶ Blakeborough, "'Old People are Useless,'" 60.

⁸⁷ Lelièvre, "The Basis," 75.

appeared in the canonical book of Joshua (9:1-10:43, 10:13). Even if this connection of the book of Joshua to Samuel is tenuous, the Achan tradition, from the present study, appeared to have found its way into the hands of the Davidic court historians and was exploited in the polemic attack against the Saulides. Like the other bad guy tradition in modern human societies, the Achan narrative could have enjoyed a circulation among the elites as well as the popular folk in various forms. While the Achan materials in 1 Samuel might not directly come from the book of Joshua, there is no doubt the redactor was familiar with a variant form of Achan tradition which he directly used in his narration of the rejection of Saul. For this redactor, the fate of the first Israelite king is parodied to reflect the first and only character in biblical narrative who is notoriously connected to the breach of the **מִרְאֵב** ban. On this narrative template, it seems the pro-Davidic narrator put the old story of Achan into new, creative and polemic use.

To put this study to a final rest, an important reference to a recent study on the relationship of these two pericopes is needful. In her treatment of the oath of Saul in 1 Sam 14 and the story of Achan, Marsha C. White describes eight possible parallels between these two stories. For White, the two stories shared the following parallels:

- (1) a transgression by an individual soldier, (2) the consequent military defeat either in fact or expectation after an initial victory, (3) the commander's knowledge that the defeat was or will be caused by an infraction of divinely regulated discipline, (4) his awareness that victory can be had only by rooting out the offender, (5) his divisions of the army into units for casting of lots, (6) his application of lots to determine the transgressor, (7) his confrontation of the guilty party, (8) and his determination to execute the offender in order to purge God's army of the contaminating sin.⁸⁸

Significantly, White observed, "In other words, Saul's prosecution of the Philistine war is to be compared with Joshua's implementation of the conquest of Canaan, and Saul's oath is on a level with Joshua's ban."⁸⁹ Even though she fails to see the parody involved in the crafting of the two stories, and generally describes the oath of Saul as positive, however, she notes the intriguing parallels shared by the two pericopes which further underscores its parodic character. In this sense, Saul's war of conquest against the Philistines at the institution of the monarchy acts as a literary type of Joshua's war against the Canaanites during the pre-monarchical period. However, in the light of the preceding similarities between Saul and Achan, Saul in the rhetoric of 1 Sam 14-15 is placed in the literary mould of

⁸⁸ White, "Saul and Jonathan," 132.

⁸⁹ White, "Saul and Jonathan," 132.

Achan rather than Joshua. Considered in this way, Saul has a double-faced characterisation in this passage namely a caricature of Joshua and a disguise for Achan. Using Kynes' distinction, rather than a "target," the narrator of 1 Samuel employed the Achan tradition as a "weapon" to subvert and undermine his representation of king Saul.⁹⁰

D CONCLUSION

Connecting the version of the Achan story in Josh 7 and the representation of Saul in 1 Sam 14:24–15:35, the study describes some parallels and reversions between the two narratives which aimed at the parody of Saul as an Achan figure. On this ideological pole, for example, King Saul is the only king in biblical narrative who is clearly connected to both the infringements of the בָּנָן ban and the only king whose election to the throne came via lots casting (10:17-27). It is not also surprising that the Achan narrative is the only biblical narrative where the infringing of the בָּנָן ban and the lots casting also converged. It seems in the ideological struggle of the two royal houses of ancient Israel, the parodist of David's court deliberately connect Saul's rejection as king to the legendary villain Achan who broke faith with Yahweh.⁹¹ In particular, by representing Saul as an Achan, the narrator shows himself to be a "propagandist" and "a sophisticated" ideologist who uses creatively the ancient tradition of the "bad guy" Achan to sabotage the political claims of Saulides to the throne. At the end, he won a decisive victory against the Saulides by turning Saul

⁹⁰ In this sense, parody does not undermine the "precursor" or "target" text (Achan tradition), but "respectfully use the precursor as a weapon to attack some aspect of the world depicted in the parodying text." See Kynes, "Beat Your Parodies into Swords," 292.

⁹¹ "The danger of parody," according to J. Marcus, "is that it may turn into reality." See Joel Marcus, "Crucifixion as Parodic Exaltation," *JBL* 125/1 (2006): 86. Interestingly, the literary portrait of Saul as a villain has indeed become the defined "reality" for many readers of the Bible. From the preceding study, it appears the narrator of 1 Samuel pressed home his polemic agenda by subtly associating Saul with the villain Achan, whose disobedience became crystallised in various theological traditions after him. In this literary representation or parody, the narrator shows a certain sophistication in his art of representation. Describing the general sophistication that attends critical parody, Lelièvre rightly observed, "Critical parody with its appreciation of the quiddity of its original is a more intellectual and sophisticated form of humour than the non-critical variety." Even though Lelièvre notes the absence of this kind of critical parody in "antiquity," the present study argues contrary. See Lelièvre, "The Basis," 74. Surprisingly, modern readers have generally missed this particular parody. The reason for this neglect comes partly from the inability to read the two infringements of chs. 14 and 15 together. Interestingly, the narrator or redactor placed the genealogy of Saul in-between these two infringements of the ban (14:49-52), thus further pointing to the importance of these two infringements.

from the earlier charismatic figure of former passages (chs. 9-12), and thus beginning the process that would inevitably move Saul to the witch's house in 1 Sam 28. Remarkably, in placing Saul in the witch's house and his representation of Saul as Achan, the narrator plays with the portraits of Saul as an ostracised figure. In both portraits, Saul is placed outside the community of the faithful worshippers of Yahweh. Located within this "foreign" cultic space, Saul forfeits any legitimacy to rule. In the end, Saul became a patron of witchcraft, and also the villain *par excellence* with cultic likeness to Achan. Ironically, it was at this decisive point in the narrative of 1 Samuel, and immediately in ch. 16, that the likable picture of David is presented, and his legitimacy to the throne clearly stressed.⁹²

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⁹² For a Machiavellian reading of David narratives particularly in the succession narratives see Baruch Halpern, *David's Secret Demons: Messiah, Murderer, Traitor, King* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001). See also Cephas T. A. Tushima, *The Fate of Saul's Progeny in the Reign of David* (Eugene, Oreg.: Pickwick Publications, 2011).

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