

Ruling the *rûah*: Emotional Experience and Expression in Ancient Hebrew

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ABSTRACT: Emotions are one of the most fascinating and difficult aspects of human experience, and have received significant attention in biblical studies. This paper explores how one Hebrew lexeme, *rûah*, provides a point of entry into the complex world of how emotions are expressed in ancient texts. Drawing from some insights of Cognitive Linguistics, it examines the use of *rûah* to express the experience of impatience and patience, and arrogance and humility. This paper then challenges a long-held but simplistic equation of *rûah* with *anger*, and argues that a more nuanced and complex relationship exists between lexeme and emotion than most citations in scholarship suggest.

KEYWORDS: emotions, ruah, breath, anger, patience, arrogance, semantics, metaphor, cognitive-linguistics

טוב ארך אפים מגבור ומשל ברוחו מלכד עיר

Better patient than a mighty warrior; and one who rules his *rûah* than one who takes a city.

(Prov 16:32)

1. Emotion in Human Life and the Bible

It is difficult to consider the human person without attention to *emotion*. The affective dimension is central to our experience as humans and provides an interesting perspective to bring to the Bible—an opportunity to better understand something of the people within and behind these texts.¹ This paper will shed light on a new pathway into understanding the emotional experiences expressed in the Hebrew Bible by focussing on the lexeme רוח.

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- 1 Emotion studies is a rapidly growing subset of biblical studies. Helpful orientating surveys and approaches can be found in M.R. Schlimm, “Emotion, Embodiment, and Ethics: Engaging Anger in Genesis,” *Bodies, Embodiment, and Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (eds. S.T. Kamionkowski – W. Kim) (LHBOTS 465; New York: Clark 2010) 146–158; P.A. Kruger, “Emotions in the Hebrew Bible: A Few Observations on Prospects and Challenges,” *OTE* 28/2 (2015) 395–420; F. Mirguet, “What

In Classical Hebrew, רוּחַ exhibits a high degree of polysemy, used in reference to phenomena ranging from the meteorological (*wind*, Eccl 1:6; Ps 1:4), the divine (*Spirit*, Judg 3:10; Isa 61:1), other beings (*'spirits'*, 1 Kgs 22:21), and in diverse ways to humanity. It is within this complex sub-structure of the anthropological uses of רוּחַ that we observe its relationship with emotion. רוּחַ often refers to human *breath* (Gen 6:17; Job 9:18), and relatedly, *life*—especially as that imparted to humans by God (e.g., Ps 104:29; Eccl 12:7; Job 34:14).² The רוּחַ is typically localised within the human person, leading to provocative associations between it and the source of human actions and speech—what we might refer to as its *volitional* use, or perhaps more broadly (if at the risk of anachronism), the *internal self*.³ Many of these possible uses could relate to the expression of emotion (e.g., the relationship of breathing patterns with emotion), and so it is not surprising that רוּחַ has been associated with affective experience for some time.⁴ However, this usage of רוּחַ is often described either in quite vague generic terms such as “temperament,” “disposition,” “psychic forces,” or with reference to quite specific experiences, especially “courage” and “anger.” The tendency towards lexicographical brevity (what is a “psychic force”?), polysemous translational glosses such as “temper” (which may refer in English to both a person’s general emotional situation or the specific experience of anger), and very limited textual support (the sense “anger” is asserted based on three out of approximately 378 instances of רוּחַ in the Hebrew Bible), indicate that the nature of the relationship between רוּחַ and emotion is ripe for more rigorous attention.

We propose to begin this reappraisal by drawing from the insights of frame semantics, cognitive scripts, and a kind of cognitive metaphor/metonymy to demonstrate the use of spatial figurative language in the depiction of PATIENCE/IMPATIENCE and HUMILITY/ARROGANCE, and use these as a point of reference to question the casual equation of רוּחַ with ANGER.⁵

Is an ‘Emotion’ in the Hebrew Bible?: An Experience That Exceeds Most Contemporary Concepts,” *BibInt* 24 (2016) 442–465. More widely in ANES, M. Jaques, “The Discourse of Emotion in Ancient Mesopotamia: A Theoretical Approach,” *Visualizing Emotions in the Ancient Near East* (ed. S. Kipfer) (OBO 285; Fribourg: Academic Press 2017) 185–205.

2 The conceptual relationships generated by רוּחַ’s potential reference to divine and human (and beyond) often makes precise semantic categorisation possible. This ambiguity is put to good use by the authors of biblical texts.

3 For a recent exploration of some of the connections between רוּחַ and the category of selfhood, see C.A. Newsom, *The Spirit within Me. Self and Agency in Ancient Israel and Second Temple Judaism* (AYBRL; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 2021) chs. 2–3.

4 See *BDB s.v.* “רוּחַ” 3; *HALOT s.v.* “רוּחַ” 7; *CDCH s.v.* “רוּחַ” 3b(3, 5, 7); M.V. Van Pelt – W.C. Kaiser, Jr. – D.I. Block, “רוּחַ,” *NIDOTTE* III, 1071–1072; “the psychic component of the complex notion of vitality,” C. Westermann – R. Albertz, “רוּחַ,” *TLOT* III, 1210; “expressions of temperament ... emotions ... moral dispositions ... psychological forces,” H.-J. Fabry – S. Tengström, “רוּחַ,” *TDOT* XIII, 389; A.R. Johnson, *The Vitality of the Individual in the Thought of Ancient Israel*, 2 ed. (Cardiff: University of Wales 1964) 25–33; É. Dhorme, *L’emploi métaphorique des noms de parties du corps. En Hébreu et en Akkadien* (Paris: Librairie Victor Lecoffre 1923) 81.

5 Most readers will recognise these approaches to language as belonging to the family of Cognitive Linguistics. While we will address some particulars of these approaches as part of our study below, those seeking a helpful orientation to the field may refer to C.H.J. van der Merwe, “Biblical Hebrew and Cognitive Linguistics:

2. רוּחַ and PATIENCE/IMPATIENCE

The first group of texts we will examine employs רוּחַ to express the experience of PATIENCE and IMPATIENCE in terms of spatial LENGTH.

Proverbs 14:29

אֵרוֹךְ אֶפְסִים רַב־תְּבוּנָה וְקֹצֵר־רוּחַ מְרִים אוֹלָתָּהּ:

The “long of nostrils” are great of understanding, and the “short of *rûah*” exalt stupidity.⁶

Job 21:4

הֲאֵנֹכִי לְאָדָם שִׁיחִי וְאִם־מְדוּעַ לֹא־תִקְצַר רוּחִי:

Is my complaint against a human being? Or why should my *rûah* not be shortened?

Exodus 6:9

וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה כֵּן אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה מִקְצַר רוּחַ וּמִעֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה:

Moses spoke thus to the sons of Israel, but they did not listen to Moses because of their “shortness of *rûah*” and because of their harsh labour.

Micah 2:7

הֲאֵמֹר בֵּית־יַעֲקֹב הִקְצַר רוּחַ יְהוָה אֱמֹלָה מֵעַלְלִיו הֲלוֹא דְבַרִּי יִיטִיבוּ עִם הַיָּשָׁר הוֹלֵךְ:

Should this be said, house of Jacob? Is the “*rûah* of Yhwh shortened”? Are these his deeds? Do not my words do good to the one who walks uprightly?

Ecclesiastes 7:8

טוֹב אַחֲרִית דְּבַר מֵרֵאשִׁיתוֹ טוֹב אֶרֶךְ־רוּחַ מִגְבַּה־רוּחַ:

Better the end of a thing than its beginning; better the “long of *rûah*” than the “high in *rûah*.”

Sirach^A 5:11

הִיָּה מִמָּהֵר לְהֹאזִין וּבְאֶרֶךְ רוּחַ הַשֵּׁב פִּתְגָּם:

Be quick to hear but in “length of *rûah*” speak your answer.

A General Orientation,” *New Perspectives in Biblical and Rabbinic Hebrew* (eds. A.D. Hornkohl – G. Khan) (Cambridge Semitic Languages and Cultures 7; Cambridge: University of Cambridge & Open Book 2021) 641–696. For the most comprehensive “state-of-the-art” for the field more generally, see V. Evans, *Cognitive Linguistics. A Complete Guide*, 2 ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2019). In keeping with conventions within Cognitive Linguistics, concepts are in small caps to distinguish them from the lexical units used to evoke such concepts in language use. Thus, ANGER is that evoked in various ways by *anger*, *colère*, אַף, etc. While these words share sufficient semantic overlap to be frequently offered as cross-linguistic equivalents, each language differs in its conceptualisation and categorisation of feelings.

⁶ Unattributed translations are my own. In all translations, the transliteration *rûah* has been substituted for all English glosses, and quotation marks mark intentionally “wooden” glosses pertinent to our analysis.

The figurative language common across these texts is of the relative “length” or relative “shortness” of the רוּחַ. To understand how this metaphor expresses emotion, it is necessary to examine the function of the SHORT/LONG model in light of other anthropological metaphors—especially נפש + קצר—as well as consider the usage of רוּחַ in this model.

The root קצר often profiles the schematic lack of length or act of shortening something.⁷ When used in reference to time, it suggests a prematurely shortened period (with רוּחַ, Ps 65:46; 104:24; Job 14:1; with שְׁנָה, Prov 10:27). It also regularly appears with anthropological nouns, such as יָד “hand” (Num 11:23; Isa 50:2a; 59:1) referring to the loss or lack of power.⁸ Perhaps most semantically relevant for understanding רוּחַ, קצר appears with נפש in Num 21:4; Judg 10:16; 16:16; and Zech 11:8. These anthropological nouns are closely related in this metaphor but they should not be treated as fully synonymous (see below).⁹ The SHORT metaphors involving רוּחַ and נפש depict the lack or loss of capacity of a person or group within the text to endure an event. How this is presented is a matter of perspective, with either the person or group perceiving the situation as intolerable—what we might call *impatience* (e.g., Zech 11:8)—or the discourse itself evaluating the event and depicting it as unbearable—what we might call *exhaustion* (e.g., Exod 6:9).¹⁰ This metaphor may be characterised as SPATIAL LENGTH IS CAPACITY TO ACT. When depicting the experience of IMPATIENCE, the texts demonstrate the lack of the text’s “self” (i.e., the proverbial self, Job, Israel) to control themselves or their circumstance. The verbal instantiation of this figurative depiction likely indicates a premature restriction of capacity that should otherwise exist (analogous to the usage with TIME nouns above), while the adjectival and nominal uses of the roots likely characterise the resultant state of incapacity. There are few explicit metaphorical mappings present beyond the central correlation of LENGTH and CAPACITY, but there are some hints at a *cognitive script* for this emotion. These scripts are complex culturally-embedded conceptual frames. A *frame* is any systems of concepts related in such a way that to understand any one of them, one must understand the whole structure. In language, when a linguistic element evokes a conceptual element, all the other related elements within the frame are made cognitively available by it.¹¹ Emotional scripts are abstracted

7 With both קצר and ארך what the relative “length” is measured against is not inherent to the lexeme itself, it is provided by the context or relies upon a general cultural “landmark” for what counts as long or short.

8 With יָד standing metonymically for POWER, J. Bergman – W. von Soden – P.R. Ackroyd, “יָד,” *TDOTV*, 418–424.

9 Robert D. Haak’s seminal essay (“A Study and New Interpretation of *qsr nps*,” *JBL* 101 [1982] 161, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3260715>) is frequently cited as evidence of קצר + נפש and קצר + רוּחַ as functionally synonymous. More recently, see the equivalence assumed in Katrin Müller’s otherwise excellent work, *Lobe den Herrn, meine “Seele.” Eine kognitiv-linguistische Studie zur nāfæš des Menschen im Alten Testament* (BWANT 215; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 2018) 146–147. Haak’s study errs on several points, including functionally equating distinct anthropological terms, failing to note the importance of internal or discourse perspective, and over-confidence in his reading of UDB 1.16 6 34. On the Ugaritic texts, see M. McAfee, *Life and Mortality in Ugaritic. A Lexical and Literary Study* (EANEC 7; University Park: Eisenbrauns 2019) 104–107.

10 Contra Haak’s suggestion (“A Study and New Interpretation of *qsr nps*,” 162) that “impatience” and “weakness” are entirely distinct uses of the phrase.

11 C.J. Fillmore – C. Baker, “A Frames Approach to Semantic Analysis,” *The Oxford Handbook of Linguistic Analysis* (eds. B. Heine – H. Narrog) (OHL; Oxford: Oxford University Press 2010) 313–339; Evans, *Cognitive Linguistics*, 394–401.

from language data and seek to describe the expected sequence (i.e., related conceptual information) of an experience within a culture, such as the events that typically give rise to an emotion, expected physiological or behavioural corollaries of the emotion, the usual objects, subjects, and moral evaluation of the emotion, etc. For IMPATIENCE, the causal event is often a perception of imminent death (see the presence of *למות* in Num 21:5, and potentially comically in Judg 16:16) or grave injustice (Exod 6:9; Judg 10:16; Job 21:4; Zech 11:8). This often leads to COMPLAINT (Num 21:5; Job 21:4; Zech 11:9) but may also result in resistance to action (Exod 6:9; Judg 10:16?).

The opposing LENGTH metaphor is significantly rarer, and likely is an explicit and playful inversion of the SHORT metaphor.¹² The *רוח* that can be “shortened” in IMPATIENCE, can also be conceptualised as “long” in PATIENCE. In Eccl 7:8 this is evaluated as ethically superior to the related HEIGHT metaphor we will explore below.

The use of *רוח* and *נפש* as compatible lexemes suggests this was a valid and active metaphor in ancient Hebrew.¹³ It also suggests that there is some semantic compatibility between *רוח* and *נפש* that motivates their common use. The most obvious semantic overlap between the lexemes is the concept of LIFE. However, the stativity implied in Exod 6:9 and divine referent of Mic 2:7 and Judg 10:16, combined with the clear respiratory parallel *אֶרֶץ אֲפִים* in Prov 14:29 suggests that the common semantic reference may be to the related sense, *respiration*.¹⁴ Normal breathing rhythms are associated with the normal functioning of the self, and represent complete control of one’s actions. Abbreviated breathing patterns indicate the loss of such control, i.e., a loss of capacity to act appropriately (either in IMPATIENCE or EXHAUSTION). Alternatively, the “lengthening” of breathing patterns expresses the presence of self-control, i.e., the experience of PATIENCE. This is consistent with the widespread observation in many languages that physical and expressive responses of an emotion are used to metonymically take the place of the emotion.¹⁵ The link between respiratory lexemes and the realm of self-control indicates at least one point of intersection between the internally-located *רוח* and the realm of VOLITION, the internally-located capacity to act or restrain action.

¹² There is one further curious Aramaic parallel in 4Q550 1 3–4, *בִּהּ בִּשְׁתָּא 4 אֲרַכְתָּ רוּחָא דִּי אֵלִי*, which is part of a complicated court narrative and is often construed as *appeasement* (perhaps, the “lengthening” of capacity?), see “L’esprit du Roi s’apaisa,” E. Puech, *Qumrân Grotte 4-XXVII. Textes araméens, deuxième partie. 4Q550–4Q575a, 4Q580–4Q587 et appendices* (DJD 37; Oxford: Clarendon 2009) 13–15. The only instance of *נפש* and *אֶרֶץ* (Job 6:11) appears to profile *נפש* as *life* and so does not evoke the emotion metaphor.

¹³ P.D. King, *Surrounded by Bitterness. Image Schemas and Metaphors for Conceptualizing Distress in Classical Hebrew* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick 2012) 96.

¹⁴ Nominal *נפש* rarely relates directly to *breath* in Hebrew, although the verbal root in Exod 23:12; 31:17; 2 Sam 16:14 as well as the potential metonymic relation between *throat* and respiration (Job 41:13) make it at least plausible. On *נפש* as BREATH, see Müller, *Meine “Seele”*, 126–141, esp. 136–138. Édouard Dhorme (*L’emploi métaphorique*, 111) correlates *רוח* and *נפש* as BREATH, but then understands this to mutually refer to the INTERNAL SELF (appealing to Isa 26:9).

¹⁵ While long observed in emotion and literary studies, this particular cognitive metonymy was first stated as such in Z. Kövecses, *Emotion Concepts* (New York: Springer 1990) 134.

We cannot say with certainty why נפש and רוח are used to evoke the same metaphor—although the distribution of texts makes chronological or lectal explanations unlikely. Perhaps it is a matter of lexical focus, wherein instances where the respiratory motivations for the metaphor are more salient prefer רוח as it is more centrally-evocative of BREATH/BREATHING. By contrast, the stronger association between נפש and LIFE may lend itself to other uses. Alternatively, the lexical selection may be motivated by the textual context, where other uses of רוח may be leveraged in the broader discourse. For example, רוח in Mic 2:7 becomes more significant in light of the characterisation of Micah as “filled” with רוח for justice; or the semantic associations of רוח with SPEECH prompt its use in Job 21:4 or Sir 5:11.¹⁶ Indeed, the use in Eccl 7:8 allows for the spatial play of LENGTH and HEIGHT to be explored below.

3. רוח and ARROGANCE/HUMILITY

The juxtaposition of a LONG and HIGH רוח in Eccl 7:8 introduces the second emotional expression in our study: the depiction of ARROGANCE/HUMILITY as relative HEIGHT.

Proverbs 16:18–19

18 לפני־שבר גאון ולפני כשלון גבה רוח:

19 טוב שפל־רוח את־עניים מחלק שלל את־גאים:

18 Before destruction, arrogance; before stumbling, “height of *rûah*.”

19 It is better to be of a lowly *rûah* among the poor, than to divide plunder with the arrogant.

Proverbs 29:23

גאות אדם תשפילנו ושפל־רוח יתמך כבוד:

The arrogance of humanity brings humiliation; but the lowly of *rûah* obtain honour.

Ecclesiastes 7:8

טוב אחרית דבר מראשיתו טוב ארך־רוח מגבה־רוח:

Better the end of a thing than its beginning; better the “long of *rûah*” than the “high in *rûah*.”

Isaiah 57:15

כי כה אמר רם ונשא שכן עד וקדוש שמו מרום וקדוש אשכון ואת־דכא ושפל־רוח להחיות רוח שפלים ולהחיות לב נדכאים:

For thus said the High and Exalted One, who dwells forever, and whose name is holy: “On high and in holiness I dwell, yet with the crushed and lowly of *rûah*, to revive the *rûah* of the lowly and to revive the heart of the crushed.”

¹⁶ On Mic 2:7 and 3:5–8, see J.R. Levison, *Filled with the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2009) 41–47.

To understand the emotions being expressed in these texts, we must pay attention to the conceptual structure of the metaphor they evoke—especially the cultural script of the circumstances that lead to and arise from HEIGHT—as well as the semantic contribution of רוּחַ to these figurative expressions.

HEIGHT is highly metaphorically productive in Ancient Hebrew, as it is in many languages.¹⁷ When the “high” entity is a person, there is a frequent association between spatial height and social status (SOCIAL STATUS IS PHYSICAL HEIGHT).¹⁸ To be “high” is to be counted as in authority and worthy of honour, and conversely, to be “low” is to be considered of lesser status.¹⁹ The discourse provides the perspective from which this status is to be evaluated. The root גָּאָה is used in reference to Yhwh’s exaltation in Exod 15:1, 21, and is considered an appropriate “elevation” by the wider discourse context. However, the “elevation” of the proverbial figure in Prov 16:18–19 is considered inappropriate and is characterised negatively.²⁰ The discourse perspective determines the sub-metaphor, ARROGANCE IS BEING HIGH or EMINENCE IS BEING HIGH. The same perspectivisation occurs with other anthropological nouns in similar metaphors. “Lifting” (נִשָּׂא) the eyes (2 Kgs 19:22) or head (Job 10:15) are presented negatively as arrogance when performed by the person possessing those bodily members but are presented positively when performed by another to the person (Gen 40:3; Ps 3:3). With גָּבַה, elevated אִף “face” (Ps 10:4), לֵב “heart” (Prov 16:5; 2 Chr 32:25–26), and עֵינַיִם “eyes” (Ps 101:5) are all similarly associated with inappropriate self-evaluation.²¹ It seems likely that this pattern of perspectivisation and evaluation is maintained when רוּחַ is elevated entity. To have a “high” (גָּבַה) רוּחַ does not indicate superior status, but rather the self-perception of superior status. The typical internal location of רוּחַ in the person likely motivates its use in this metaphor, approximating what we might call the “internal self.”²² The self is being located in relation to others, and thus SOCIAL STATUS IS PHYSICAL HEIGHT becomes morally weighted as ARROGANCE IS BEING HIGH.

While the LENGTH metaphor with רוּחַ displayed a preference for SHORT over LONG values, the HEIGHT metaphor appears equally valid at either end of the scale. Prov 16:19 preferences the category of שָׁפֵל־רוּחַ over the arrogant. Just as a person may locate themselves

17 L. Ryken *et al.* (eds.), *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press 1998) s.v. “High, Height, High Place.”

18 See N.L. Tilford, *Sensing World, Sensing Wisdom. The Cognitive Foundation of Biblical Metaphors* (AIL 31; Atlanta, GA: SBL Press 2017) 163; more widely, Z. Kövecses, *Metaphors of Anger, Pride, and Love. A Lexical Approach to the Structure of Concepts* (PB 8; Amsterdam: Benjamins 1986) 45.

19 In Hebrew, the verbal forms of roots such as גָּאָה, גָּבַה, שָׁפֵל, etc. are used of spatial location (confirming the metaphor), but the nominal forms commonly carry the figurative meaning (suggesting this metaphor is deeply embedded).

20 Similarly, גָּבַה appears positively of Yhwh in, for example, Isa 5:16, but negatively in Prov 16:18–19, Isa 3:16.

21 R. Hentschke, “גָּבַה,” *TDOT* II, 359. The one exception to the negative evaluation is 2 Chr 17:6, where Jehoshaphat is described as having a “high heart in the ways of Yhwh.” This supports our proposition above regarding the importance of discourse perspective.

22 Nicole L. Tilford (*Sensing*, 151) suggests that in such metaphors, the inner nature of the experience preferences proprioceptive motivations, given the close relationship between an individual’s awareness of themselves in space and their “sense of corporeal being.”

as superior to others (depicted as BEING HIGH), they may similarly locate themselves as inferior to others: HUMILITY IS BEING LOW. There are wider metaphorical associations between a low position on a VERTICAL scale and being in a state DISTRESS.²³ This conceptually aligns HUMILITY with the potential or reality of suffering as indicated even in our passages by עניים (Prov 16:19) and דכא (Isa 57:15).

In Prov 16:18–19 and 29:23 we see a highly-compressed emotion script for ARROGANCE/HUMILITY. When the discourse agent (i.e., the person in view in the text) moves themselves up the VERTICAL scale, there is an expectation that they will “fall” downwards to the bottom of the scale: arrogance (= height) inevitably leads to destruction (= low status/distress).²⁴ The inverse is also shown in which “low” things are eventually lifted from their state to a place of greater esteem by another, usually divine, agent (Prov 29:23; Ps 9:14; 30:2; 40:3; 113:4–8; Isa 57:15). This metaphorical scale, and the script it assumes, warns against self-elevation. To evaluate yourself beyond what is spiritually and social advisable is to invite an inevitable correction. Indeed, it is judged wiser to adopt a “lower” position and self-estimation than invite the “fall” that awaits the “high of רוּח.”

4. רוּח and ANGER

We began by arguing that the role of רוּח in emotional expression has been long recognised but insufficiently studied. So far, we have demonstrated how רוּח is used in the expression of two distinct emotional experiences that are depicted using spatial figurative language that leverage the polysemy of רוּח in subtle and poignant ways. The final part of this exploration is also the most speculative: reappraising the relationship of רוּח and ANGER.

רוּח has been closely associated with the specific emotion of ANGER, as widely attested in English translations, standard lexica, and textual commentaries.²⁵ While ANGER is one of the most studied emotions in linguistic and biblical studies, there has been very little work

23 King, *Surrounded*, 100–132. דכא instantiates a further metaphor where DISTRESS IS FRAGMENTATION.

24 Philip D. King (*Surrounded*, 114–126) demonstrates how VERTICALITY is productive in depicting DISTRESS, which may explain the description of the endpoint of the “fall” due to pride as שבר “destruction.” For ANES parallels, see also G. Zisa, “Going, Returning, Rising: The Movement of the Organs in the Mesopotamian Anatomy,” *Kaskal* 16 (2019) 453–476.

25 For example, “temper, especially anger,” *BDB s.v.* “רוּחַ” 3c; “ill temper, rage, wrath,” *HALOT s.v.* “רוּחַ” 7f; “anger,” *CDCH s.v.* “רוּחַ” 3b(7); “directly, rūah indicates only impulsive, life-strengthening psychic forces such as anger, rage, courage, perseverance ... even more intense arrogance, as sometimes even manifest directly in excited breathing,” Westermann – Albrecht, “רוּחַ,” *TLOT* III, 1210; “the person’s own rūah is the source of phenomena associated with aggressiveness, whether anger or courage as the virtue of one’s own spiritual strength,” Fabry – Tengström, “רוּחַ,” *TDOT* XIII, 389. Further, Johnson, *Vitality*, 26; “breath as the hard breathing through the nostrils in anger,” C.A. Briggs, “The Use of רוּח in the Old Testament,” *JBL* 19 (1900) 133; “physical strength, courage, and anger, and viewed sometimes as the seat or source of all of these and especially of violent agitation,” W.R., Schoemaker, “The Use of רוּח in the Old Testament, and of Πνευμα in the New Testament: A Lexicographical Study,” *JBL* 23 (1904) 18; “ce qui a permis cet usage, c’est l’influence de la colère sur la respiration,” Dhorme, *L’emploi métaphorique*, 81.

done in clarifying the nature of its relationship with רוח.²⁶ In addition to the terse glosses provided by lexica, previous studies referred to “psychic vitality,” “physical powers,” or “one’s own spiritual strength,” that when present in abundance manifest as ANGER.²⁷ These descriptions are rooted in often unexpressed theories of human composition and behaviour that limit their ability to elucidate these uses of רוח.

To evaluate the nature of the relationship between רוח and ANGER two groups of texts need to be examined. The first group are often peripherally cited as evidence of this meaning for רוח and include Isa 25:4–5, related passages such as Exod 15:8; Ps 18:16; Job 4:9, and Job 15:12–13. We will argue that some of the texts in this first group *do* involve רוח in the expression of ANGER, but as part of larger metaphorical or metonymic constructs involving meteorological source frames. The second group are those passages that are most frequently presented as evidence that רוח directly evokes the experience of ANGER: Prov 16:32; Eccl 10:4; and Judg 8:3. We will seek to demonstrate that closer attention to these texts suggest alternative readings of this second group of texts that are at least equally, if not more, persuasive than *anger*.

4.1. Texts Occasionally Cited as Evidence of רוח as ANGER

This first group of texts are only occasionally referenced when discussing רוח as ANGER. Typically, this group includes Isa 25:4–5, and sometimes related passages such as Exod 15:8; Ps 18:16; and Job 4:9. While only mentioned in the *TDOT* article and rarely in commentaries on other related texts, we also suggest Job 15:13 belongs in this category.²⁸

26 See, for example, C. Ostermann, *Cognitive Lexicography. A New Approach to Lexicography Making Use of Cognitive Semantics* (Lexicographica. Series Maior 149; Berlin: De Gruyter 2015) 143; Z. Kövecses, “The Concept of Anger: Universal or Culture Specific?,” *Psychopathology* 33 (2000) 160; originally developed in G. Lakoff – Z. Kövecses, “The Cognitive Model of Anger Inherent in American English,” *Cultural Models in Language and Thought* (eds. D. Holland – N. Quinn) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1987) 211–214. Within biblical studies, earlier studies such as P.A. Kruger, “A Cognitive Interpretation of the Emotion of Anger in the Hebrew Bible,” *JNSL* 26 (2000) 181–193 and E.J. van Wolde, *Reframing Biblical Studies. When Language and Text Meet Culture, Cognition, and Context* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns 2009) 62–72 have been criticised for adopting too much from American English analyses, and more culturally and linguistically situated models developed in response. See Z. Kotzé, *The Conceptualisation of Anger in the Hebrew Bible* (Diss. Stellenbosch University; Stellenbosch 2004); Z. Kotzé, “Humoral Theory as Motivation for Anger Metaphors in the Hebrew Bible,” *SALALS* 23 (2005) 205–209; M.R. Schlimm, *From Fratricide to Forgiveness. The Language and Ethics of Anger in Genesis* (Siphrut 7; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns 2011) 51–52.

27 Westermann – Albertz, “רוח,” *TLOT* III, 1208; Johnson, *Vitality*, 26; Fabry – Tengström, “רוח,” *TDOT* XIII, 389.

28 Where רוח is commonly glossed as *anger*, É. Dhorme, *Le Livre de Job*, 2 ed. (EBib; Paris: Librairie Victor Lecoffre 1926) 194; F.I. Andersen, *Job. An Introduction and Commentary* (TOTC 14; Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press 1976) 191; D.J.A. Clines, *Job 1–20* (WBC 17; Dallas, TX: Word Books 2006) 341; G.H. Wilson, *Job* (UTB; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic 2012) 164; L. Wilson, *Job* (THOTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2015) 92.

Isaiah 25:4–5a

4 כִּי־הִיִּית מֵעוֹ לְדֹל מֵעוֹ לְאִבְיוֹן בְּצַרְלֹו מַחֲסֵה מִזֶּרֶם צֶל מַחֲרֵב כִּי רוּחַ עֲרִיצִים כּוֹרֵם קִיר 5 כְּחֹרֵב בְּצִיּוֹן

4 For you are a refuge to the poor, a refuge to the needy in his distress, a shelter from the rainstorm, a shade from the heat; for the *rûah* of the ruthless is like a rainstorm against a wall, 5 like heat in a dry land.²⁹

The proximity of other meteorological terms such as זֶרֶם and חֹרֵב exerts significant contextual constraint on how we understand רוּחַ, namely, as *wind*.³⁰ Several times throughout Isaiah, divine ANGER is portrayed as *wind* (Isa 11:4, 15; 17:13; 27:8; 30:28; 32:2; 40:7; 41:16; 59:19). Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, this is more typically and specifically expressed as ANGER IS A HOT WIND—an image grounded in the experience of the sirocco/‘east wind’ and the sudden destruction it could cause to crops.³¹ The metaphor conceptually aligns humanity with vegetation exposed to the hot and dry wind, suffering and wilting as the objects of intense and destructive divine anger (Isa 11:15; 27:8; 30:27–28; 40:7; similarly, Ps 11:6; 83:14–16; Amos 1:2; Ezek 19:12; Jer 4:11; 13:24; 18:17).³² Notably, all these texts present a divine subject of the experience of ANGER, directed towards human agonists. Here in Isaiah 25, the imagery is inverted such that human subjects (עֲרִיצִים) are unleashing their ANGER as a destructive wind against a divine agonist—to no effect.³³

Other related texts rarely cited in support of רוּחַ as ANGER reflect a similar cluster of metaphors. Exod 15:8; Ps 18:16; and Job 4:9 are closely related lexically and syntactically, especially in explicitly joining רוּחַ and the divine אֵף (Exod 15:8; Ps 18:16; Job 4:9) and נִשְׁמָה (Ps 18:16; Job 4:9). These collocations suggest that divine respiration is in view, evoking a further metaphor WIND IS DIVINE BREATH.³⁴ This metaphor blends with ANGER IS WIND/HOT WIND to form the metaphorical complex above with its typical divine subject.

These texts demonstrate that רוּחַ can be used in the expression of ANGER. However, overwhelmingly, רוּחַ is used in conjunction with other lexemes to evoke BREATH (as part

29 While emending קִיר “wall” to קוֹר “cold, winter,” is plausible, קִיר makes sense within the characterisation of God as refuge and enjoys the support of Targ. and Isa 28:17, so J.N. Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39* (NICOT 1; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1986) 468; B.S. Childs, *Isaiah. A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox 2001) 181; J.D.W. Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, Rev. ed. (WBC 24; Nashville, TN: Nelson 2005) 385. Given the pairing of *storm* and *heat* earlier in the verse, it seems likely that the start of Isa 25:5 should be included as the parallel comparative clause to 25:4c, so Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 462.

30 On contextual constraints to semantic construal, see W. Croft – D.A. Cruse, *Cognitive Linguistics* (CTL; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2004) 101–103.

31 D.M. Swanson, “East Wind,” *EDB* 362. Without articulating its metaphorical nature and effect, John Wright (“*Rûah*: A Survey,” *The Concept of Spirit. Papers from The Concept of Spirit Conference Held at St. Paul’s College, University of Sydney, 21–24 May 1984* [eds. D.W. Dockrill – R.G. Tanner] [Prudentia; Auckland: University of Auckland 1985] 10) notes the east wind is frequently an “instrument of God’s judgement and refining.”

32 Kotzé, *The Conceptualisation of Anger*, 170.

33 Although the potential wordplay of צִיּוֹן with “Zion” hints at the close relationship between Yhwh and those he protects. This may evoke a more complex cultural frame involving God’s foundation of, dwelling in, and protection of the city of Zion, see J.J.M. Roberts, *First Isaiah. A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress 2015) 322.

34 See the overlapping meteorological lexemes in Ps 18:11–15.

of WIND IS DIVINE BREATH) or WIND (as part of ANGER IS WIND/HOT WIND) to express divine ANGER. The exception to this divine subject in Isa 25:4–5 is likely an intentional poetic inversion of this metaphor and its expectations so as to emphasise God's protective role.

Job 15:12–13

מה־יִקְחֶךָ לִבְךָ וּמִה־יִרְזָמוֹן עֵינֶיךָ:
כִּי־תִשֵּׁב אֱלֹהֵי רוּחַךְ וְהִצָּאת מִפִּי מִלִּין:

¹² Why let your heart carry you away, and why let your eyes flash, ¹³ that you turn your *rûah* against God, and bring from your mouth such words?

This text may be another inversion of the use of רוּחַ for divine ANGER, reversing the roles of divine subject and human object to accuse Job. Yet, the syntax and discourse context suggests otherwise. In Job 9:18, hiphil שׁוּב appeared with רוּחַ in reference to the relentless of the divine assault upon Job, restricting Job's life by preventing the return of his *breath* (see similar collocations in Judg 15:19; 1 Sam 30:2).³⁵ The similar syntax in Job 15:13 suggests that a similar meaning for רוּחַ is present, *breath*. This is supported by the immediate context of Job 15:7, where Eliphaz evokes a complex cultural frame, the first human. In the Hebrew Bible and in the ANES more widely, this cultural concept was understood to have been formed of *breath* and *dust* (Gen 2:7; Eccl 3:19–20; 12:7; Ps 104:29–30). However, Eliphaz does not appear to be referring to Job's *life* in this instance, but rather to how he is using his God-given *breath* to speak against God—corroborated by explicit references to speech in the b-colon.³⁶ Arguably, this use of רוּחַ appears in an broader experience of ANGER, but as with Isaiah and the Isaiah-like texts above, רוּחַ does not directly refer to the experience of ANGER itself.

The first category of texts, peripherally cited as evidence for understanding רוּחַ as ANGER, demonstrate that the lexeme can appear in such expressions but only as part of wider figurative networks that express the emotion. As Matthew Schlimm notes when commenting on lexical associations with ANGER: “although there are cases in which [רוּחַ] has connections with anger ... רוּחַ is not innately connected with anger.”³⁷

4.2. Texts Centrally Cited as Evidence of רוּחַ as ANGER

This second category of texts are those that are most commonly cited as indicating an innate connection between רוּחַ and ANGER: Prov 16:32; Eccl 10:4; and Judg 8:3.

³⁵ Schlimm (*Fratricide*, 73) notes that when שׁוּב appears in contexts of ANGER, it most commonly refers to the cessation of the emotion.

³⁶ So Targ., Dhorme, *Le Livre de Job*, 193–194; pace A.B. Ehrlich, *Randglossen zur hebräischen Bibel. Textkritisches, sprachliches und sachliches* (Hildesheim: Olms 1968) VI, 241.

³⁷ Schlimm, *Fratricide*, 86 n. 42. The category of “innate” is vague. We understand it to mean that there is no entrenched linguistic convention in which a natural speaker would use רוּחַ to evoke ANGER outside of a large literary metaphor or metonym.

Proverbs 16:32

טוב ארך אפים מגבור ומשל ברוחו מלכד עיר:

Better patient than a mighty warrior; and one who rules his *rúah* than one who takes a city.

A minority of commentators and other scholars understand *רוח* here as referring to ANGER.³⁸ Paul Kruger and Zacharias Kotzé understand this figuratively: Kruger as a metaphor, ANGER IS AN OPPONENT in keeping with the military imagery of *משל* and *לכד עיר*, and Kotzé as a metonym, HEAVY BREATHING FOR ANGER, in keeping with the parallel use of *אפים*. Prov 14:29 above similarly juxtaposed *אפים* and *רוח* as reflective of emotional states depicting the lack or presence of capacity to control one's actions, and the conceptual links between PATIENCE and ANGER are significant. However, *משל* typically refers to a longer-term relationship of authority over (ב) another, which suggests that the experience of ANGER is not that which requires defeat and subjugation.³⁹ Rather, *רוח* more likely refers to the internal self.⁴⁰ As Richard J. Clifford aptly puts it, "conquest of self is better than conquest of others."⁴¹

Ecclesiastes 10:4

אם־רוח המושל תעלה עליך מקומך אל־תנח כי מרפא יניח חטאים גדולים:

If the *rúah* of the ruler rises against you, do not leave your post, for calmness puts to rest great offenses.

In contrast to a minority of scholars who consider *רוח* in Prov 16:32 to directly refer to ANGER, Eccl 10:4 is almost universally read as such.⁴² This text offers advice on interacting with local authorities.⁴³ If "anger" is an acceptable gloss for *רוח*, this verse neatly matches

38 M.V. Fox, *Proverbs 10–31. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 18B; New York: Doubleday 2009) 599; Kruger, "A Cognitive Interpretation," 190; Kotzé, *Conceptualisation of Anger*, 85; C.L. Seow, *Ecclesiastes* (AB 18C; New York: Doubleday 1997) 313; R.E. Murphy, *Ecclesiastes* (WBC 23A; Grand Rapids, MI: Word Books 1992) 98 (although there is no mention of this in his later Proverbs commentary). English translations vary: "spirit" (ESV, KJV), "temper" (NET, NRSV), "self-control" (NIV2011, JPS), "emotions" (CSB).

39 Even Daniel Lys (*Rúach. Le souffle dans l'Ancien Testament. Enquête anthropologique à travers l'histoire théologique d'Israël* [ÉHPR 56; Paris: Presses Universitaires de France 1962] 304), who frequently equates *רוח* with *colère*, notes, "on peut d'ailleurs penser que cette maîtrise de *r*: est plus que limitation de *colère*."

40 So Targ. and Syr., both of which use reflexive נפש in place of *רוח*.

41 R.J. Clifford, *Proverbs. A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox 1999) 162.

42 K&D 54:374; R. Lauha, *Psychophysischer Sprachgebrauch im Alten Testament: Eine Strukturesemantische Analyse von לב, נפש, und רוח* (AASF DHL 35; Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedekatemia 1983) 228; J.L. Crenshaw, *Ecclesiastes. A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia, PA: Westminster 1987) 170; Murphy, *Ecclesiastes*, 98; Seow, *Ecclesiastes*, 313; T. Longman, *The Book of Ecclesiastes* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1998) 240; C.G. Bartholomew, *Ecclesiastes* (BCOTWP; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic 2009) 320. In translation, similarly ESV, NET, NIV2011, NRSV, CSB, and JPS. Apart from my doctoral thesis accepted in 2021, Stuart Weeks is the only recent dissenting voice (see below).

43 The ambiguity of *המושל* is interesting. It is certainly not on the level of the מלך "king" in Eccl 8:3, and arguably refers to a less specific and more localised official, "Amtsträgers," M. Köhlmoos, *Kohélet. Der Prediger Salomo* (ATD 16/5; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2015) 218.

the typical script for ANGER in Ancient Hebrew suggested by Schlimm. ANGER is caused by a perceived wrongdoing, and is typically directed by those possessing a degree of power against those judged responsible for the perceived wrongdoing. It usually entails a separation of some sort between parties, often involving violence, and is almost always negatively evaluated (except for kingly or divine anger, which, like the HEIGHT metaphors above, is considered appropriate).⁴⁴

Eccl 10:4 depicts a social superior as the subject of ANGER, which has been caused by perceived wrongdoing. In addition, there is a similar co-text in 2 Sam 11:20a which features חמה, a term more directly evocative of ANGER: ויהי אַמ־תַּעֲלֶה חֶמֶת הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאָמַר לְךָ “then, if the king’s anger rises, and if he says to you...”⁴⁵ This makes the ANGER reading for רוּחַ plausible. Yet, this does not mean that it is the only possible explanation.

At this point in our study, we have demonstrated that, apart from contextually clear instances of ANGER IS WIND, there are only two instances where רוּחַ may evoke ANGER: here and Judg 8:3. This raises the question of *linguistic relevance*.⁴⁶ There is a tendency in linguistic communication to minimise the cognitive processing effort required for a hearer to infer the intended meaning.⁴⁷ If ANGER is a very rare use of רוּחַ (which, even allowing for the small corpus size of Classical Hebrew, seems fair to say), what is the justification for its use in these two texts? What does this lexeme contribute to these texts that a more direct (i.e., requiring less processing cost) way of expressing ANGER, such as חמה, does not?⁴⁸

These questions suggest that alternative readings for רוּחַ should at least be explored for these texts. One such reading attempts to provide a metaphorical motivation for the use of רוּחַ, such as HEAVY BREATHING FOR ANGER.⁴⁹ This blends a relatively more typical use of רוּחַ, *breath*, with the contextually-suggested emotion, ANGER. However, apart from the divine uses surveyed above (which are themselves blended with ANGER IS WIND), there is a paucity of examples where the human experience of ANGER is presented via respiration patterns. There is also nothing in the immediate context to evoke such metonyms or metaphors.

⁴⁴ Summarising Schlimm, *Fratricide*, 63–64.

⁴⁵ חמה “heat” evokes ANGER via the PHYSICAL AND EXPRESSIVE RESPONSES OF AN EMOTION FOR THE EMOTION metonym. This is an example of Schlimm’s “innate connection,” i.e., the lexeme can be understood as evoking ANGER apart from any HEAT lexemes in the context.

⁴⁶ This concept derives from Relevance Theory, on which see E.-A. Gutt, *Translation and Relevance. Cognition and Context*, 2 ed. (Manchester: St Jerome 2000). While not strictly part of Cognitive Linguistics, the two share some overlap, see V. Evans – M. Green, *Cognitive Linguistics. An Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University 2006) §13.2.

⁴⁷ E.-A. Gutt, *Relevance Theory. A Guide to Successful Communication in Translation* (New York: SIL 1992) 25.

⁴⁸ Indeed, while ancient versions often gloss חור with lexemes that may evoke ANGER, such as ἔργη (Prov 16:32 LXX), θυμός (Prov 29:11 LXX), and سحر (Prov 29:11 Syr.), the versions here follow the MT quite closely: πνευμα + ἀναβῆ (LXX); روح + اُصْلَح (Syr.); and spiritus + ascendere (Vulg.). This is all the more remarkable given how greatly the versions diverge in translating the second colon of the verse.

⁴⁹ So Johnson, *Vitality*, 379; Z. Kortzé, “A Cognitive Linguistic Methodology for the Study of Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible,” *JNSL* 31 (2005) 113.

Two further readings rely upon wider semantic associations of רוּחַ. The Targum of Eccl 10:4 expands the reference to רוּחַ to רוּחַ דִּיצְרָא בִּישָׂא to רוּחַ, removing the reference to social superiors in favour of a more personal plea that leaves the original text far behind. Stuart Weeks links the use of רוּחַ and עַל with LEADERSHIP, as in the narrative of Num 11:29 (presumably, too, Judg 3:10; 1 Sam 10:10; Isa 11:2; 42:1). רוּחַ is thus a mark that “those people are endowed with authority,” and here “a way of describing the urge to take control, which Qohelet believes should be avoided.”⁵⁰ Again, this is a fairly specialised use of רוּחַ that would require some contextual information to reliably evoke.

We tentatively suggest a novel reading that better explains the use of רוּחַ while acknowledging the contextual adherence to a typical emotional script. The verbal root עֲלָה is incredibly common (~894x in the Hebrew Bible) and can evoke many of the varied metaphorical uses of HEIGHT. When combined with an עַל prepositional phrase, it most commonly refers to vertical movement with hostile intent (e.g., Judg 6:3; 15:10; 1 Kgs 15:17)—likely motivated by a cultural model in which defensive structures were typically associated with geographical height. Alternatively, it may refer to gaining superiority over another according to the STATUS IS HEIGHT metaphor (Deut 28:43; Ps 137:6; Prov 31:29).⁵¹ If we allow that רוּחַ does *not* refer to ANGER here, we may consider other more conventional uses such as the internal SELF. This usage was already noted as motivating the use of רוּחַ in the HEIGHT metaphors for ARROGANCE/HUMILITY above. This generates a plausible reading of the text wherein עַל and עֲלָה profile the relative HEIGHT (i.e., STATUS) difference between the ruler’s *self-perception* and the proverbial “you.”⁵² The מוֹשֵׁל exhibits an inflated self-estimation that is exerted against the reader, with Qoheleth counselling the reader to remain at “your post” (neither proudly contesting, nor meekly grovelling).⁵³ Given the typical script for ARROGANCE, this advice is rooted in the expectation of a corrective “downwards” movement in which those who elevate themselves are catastrophically humbled.

This reading is at least as plausible as the ANGER construal, better explains the choice of רוּחַ, and enjoys greater support from clearer emotional expressions involving the lexeme. Given the significant overlap in the cultural models for ANGER and ARROGANCE in the ANE (e.g., status imbalances), the ethical advice on either reading remains remarkably similar. Even if this particular reading is not considered persuasive, the questions regarding the universal acceptance of the ANGER reading must be seriously considered by future engagements of this text.

50 S. Weeks, *Ecclesiastes 5–12. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary* (ICC; London: Bloomsbury – Clark 2021) 493.

51 Crenshaw (*Ecclesiastes*, 170) sees something of a vertical metaphor at play here in the contrast of מֶרֶץ and רוּחַ, יִיחַ and עֲלָה, even though the second colon of this verse is highly ambiguous.

52 This may even motivate the shift from general wisdom statements to the second-person address in this verse.

53 Indeed, נֹחַ may act as a foil to the movement profiled by עֲלָה: remain in the appropriate “level” befitting your status until equilibrium is restored.

Judges 8:3c

אז רפתה רוחם מעליו הדבר הזה:

Then, their *ruhām* relaxed(?) from against him when he spoke this word.

Judg 8:3 is the final and most frequently cited text in support of רוח as ANGER.⁵⁴ The Ephraimites take issue with Gideon's victory over the Midianites, complaining that they are denied their role in the fight (Judg 8:1). Gideon assures them that their capture of the Midianite leaders was superior to his victory (8:2), and the situation is defused (8:3). Construing רוח as ANGER yields a very plausible reading of the text: Gideon reassures the Ephraimites, and their "anger subsides from against him."⁵⁵

There are at least two issues with this assumed reading. The first simply repeats the question asked above. If ANGER is a permissible sense for רוח, it is a rare one. What does this lexeme contribute to this discourse unit that a more typical ANGER lexeme does not?⁵⁶

The second issue is how רפה is to be understood in this context. The verb can refer to the loosening or slackening of something (Job 12:21), but more typically appears with יד to refer to discouragement or weakness (Lachish Ostrakon 6 lines 5b–7; 2 Sam 17:2; Ezra 4:4; 2 Chr 15:7; 1 QpHab 7:10). This state often arises because of verbal communication (2 Sam 4:1; Jer 6:24; 38:4). רפה may also refer to abandonment (Deut 4:32; 31:6; Ps 138:8). It is difficult to know what sense is intended in this context, and it certainly does not appear to constrain רוח to ANGER.⁵⁷ Rather, we need to find a construal of this text that makes sense of both of these lexemes with minimal contextual constraint applied to either.

As above, we need to seek a more compelling reading for this text. Like Eccl 10:4, some have suggested the metonym HEAVY BREATHING FOR ANGER explains both רוח and the discourse context.⁵⁸ Similarly, too, some suggest a rare anthropological instantiation of the ANGER IS WIND.⁵⁹ Unfortunately, רפה nowhere appears with lexemes of *breath* or *wind*

⁵⁴ *BDB s.v.* "רוח," 3; *CDCH s.v.* "רוח," 3b(7); *HALOT s.v.* "רוח," 7f.; Johnson, *Vitality*, 29; T.C. Butler, *Judges* (WBC 8; Nashville, TN: Nelson 2009) 218; R.D. Nelson, *Judges. A Critical and Rhetorical Commentary* (London: Bloomsbury – Clark 2017) 156. In contemporary English translation, see ESV, NRSV, KJV, CSB, JPS.

⁵⁵ Syriac explicitly encodes this reading, ܕܝܗ ܦܘܡܬ ܡܥܬܠܬܐ ܡܢܗ, "then their anger departed from him."

⁵⁶ Discourses typically build preferential construals for lexemes as they unfold, requiring greater contextual pressure to render rarer or unexpected uses as salient, see R.W. Langacker, *Cognitive Grammar. A Basic Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2008) 457–499. Within Judges, רוח exclusively appears alongside יהוה save for this text and Judg 9:23; 15:19.

⁵⁷ Pace Mark S. Smith, who argues that, "it is the verb 'to subside' ... that points to *rûah* here in the semantic field of 'anger' (*ap*)" (M.S. Smith – E. Bloch-Smith, *Judges 1. A Commentary on Judges 1:1–10:5* [Hermeneia; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress 2021] 535).

⁵⁸ So K&D 4:351; Kotzé, *Conceptualisation of Anger*, 86; L.A. Dietch, *Authority and Violence in the Gideon and Abimelech Narratives. A Sociological and Literary Exploration of Judges 6–9* (Hebrew Bible Monographs 75; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix 2015) 84. While we remain unconvinced for this reading, Linda A. Dietch's rendering is semantically and poetically apt: Gideon's words cause their "huffing and puffing to cease."

⁵⁹ Johnson, *Vitality*, 26.

in Ancient Hebrew that might validate such a combination, although the typically divine subject of *ANGER IS WIND* counts against that reading.

We posit two possible readings that may better explain the text. The first is that *רפה* may somewhat obliquely evoke the *ARROGANCE IS PHYSICAL HEIGHT* metaphor explored above.⁶⁰ This is salient to the immediate context where the central issue of the text is the indignation of the Ephraimites, and Gideon's speech intends to "placate the Ephraimites by massaging their inflated egos."⁶¹ It also construes *רוח* in an established manner, as referring to the *SELF* of the Ephraimites that has been elevated over and against the divinely-chosen judge, Gideon. In response to his soothing words, the corrective "downwards motion" of their *רוחם* is portrayed by *רפה*.⁶² However, this would be an unexpected use of *רפה*. Isa 5:24 uses *רפה* when depicting grass sinking into a fire, but this almost certainly refers to the shrivelling (i.e., "slackening") of the grass stem rather than a directed "sinking" action.

The second, preferable, reading is that *רוח* refers to the part or aspect of a person capable of and responsible for action, their *VOLITION*. There are several elements that support this, although they are admittedly fairly indirect. The first is the use of *רפה* in Jer 49:24, where it appears to refer to the loss of the will to fight in Damascus. Analogously, in Judg 8:3, the Ephraimites lose their will to fight against Gideon, with *רוח* present to explicitly indicate their *VOLITION*. The second is the strength of convention associating *יד* and *רפה* as indicating a loss of ability to act. We noted above a further convention associating *יד* and *קצר* to refer to the loss of capacity to act in a situation, and how this illuminated the collocation of *רוח* and *קצר*. Is it possible that in the specific semantic field of *CAPACITY*, *רוח* and *יד* were sufficiently compatible to generate the unique *רוח* and *רפה* collocation here? The discourse context at least maintains the typical cause of the loss of *CAPACITY* via a verbal communication that removes the impetus to action.

The conventional reading of *רוח* as directly referring to *anger* may well be correct. We have sought to demonstrate that the passages typically used as evidence of this close relationship between *רוח* and the expression of *ANGER* are not as simple as they appear. They can, and perhaps should, be explained in terms of other, better attested, uses of *רוח* and broader metaphoric and metonymic depictions of emotional experiences. When *רוח* features in the expression of *ANGER* it is within fairly well-established metaphors of divine action, and never without contextual markers that indicate its metaphorical or metonymic conceptualisation by, for example, meteorological lexemes marking *ANGER IS WIND*. There

60 Robert Boling's (*Judges. Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* [AB 6; New York: Doubleday 1975] 150) translation of *רוח* as "indignation" perhaps encodes something of this construal.

61 B.G. Webb, *The Book of Judges* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2012) 251.

62 So Targ. *נוח* (see also 2 Kgs 2:15 Targ.), which can refer to physical descent or evoke the *HEIGHT IS STATUS* metaphor, "to go down in status or value", *CAL*, *s.v.* "נוח". Perhaps also we could elicit 1 Kgs 11:26 (see also Exod 14:8; Num 15:30; 33:3), where a possible inversion of the *יד* + *רפה* metaphor depicts rebellion against an authority figure using *יד* + *רום*. This might suggest that "raising" and "relaxing" were considered semantically compatible partial antonyms, although the unique.

is at least cause for caution in using *anger* as a gloss for רוּחַ in translations and scholarship without significant exegetical warrant.⁶³

5. The Unruly רוּחַ

Ancient Hebrew has many ways to depict emotional experience, especially through metaphor and metonymy. The use of רוּחַ in expressing such emotions has been long recognised, but rarely examined closely. Reading texts with the aid of modern advances in linguistics provides new avenues for understand how these expressions function and the experiences to which they point. PATIENCE and IMPATIENCE are depicted via metonymy, where the breathing patterns of the experiencer of the emotion stands for the emotion itself, evoking the presence or absence of capacity to act in a situation. HUMILITY and ARROGANCE are depicted metaphorically as the relative HEIGHT of the self over against others, with a cultural expectation of self-elevation being moderated by external agents or circumstances. Not only did רוּחַ provide a place of entry to examine these two pairs of experiences, but it also allowed us to question the long-held link between רוּחַ and ANGER. The relationship between this lexeme and the expression of ANGER is more complex and nuanced than the casual citations of texts and translational glosses often imply, and at the very least scholars need to abandon mere citations of lexicæ in support of this reading.

In these and other emotional expressions we did not examine (such as רוּחַ and lexemes of fragmentation such as שָׁבַר, נָכַח, and דָּכָא with רוּחַ to depict DISTRESS), we see רוּחַ reflecting the *person* experiencing the emotions—their breathing, capacity to act, and self-estimation. Given that the same רוּחַ may be both “lengthened” in PATIENCE and “shortened” in IMPATIENCE, “elevated” in ARROGANCE or “lowered” in HUMILITY, the sage’s words in Prov 16:32 gain renewed poignancy. Wisdom lies not in the strength to gain power over others, but over oneself.

⁶³ A related factor awaiting further research is the translational equivalents provided in the early versions, especially the LXX. רוּחַ appears to be understood as ANGER in Prov 16:32 (ὀργή); 17:27 (ὀργή); 18:14 (ὀργή); 29:11 (ὀργή); Eccl 7:8 (ὀργή); Isa 59:19 (ὀργή); Ezek 39:29 (ὀργή); Zech 6:8 (ὀργή); and Job 15:13 (ὀργή). ὀργή clearly demonstrates that רוּחַ was (rightly or wrongly) understood as equivalent to *anger* by the translator. θυμός likely also reflects this understanding—although the semantic range for θυμός makes it a peculiarly apt counterpart to רוּחַ, as θυμός may also refer to a person’s *self* or *volition*. It would be worth examining how the polysemy of רוּחַ and polysemy of θυμός influenced the translation equivalents offered in the LXX. For example, the compound μακρόθυμος (used for the LENGTH metaphors above) appears to be a Septuagintal neologism designed to reflect Hebrew phrases and that entered wider Greek much later (the only non-biblical/Christian reference occurs in the 4th century epigram of Pallas, *Analecta Patristica*, 11.317.1).

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