

# Calvin and His Interpretative Method

By Michael Mewborn

## **Introduction**

### ***Interpretation and the Mind***

The process of perception and comprehension is rooted in the way in which our minds receive and handle information. The mind does not merely catalog and store information in a simplistic format as we generally assume. We must rethink what the mind does when it “catalogs” and “stores” information. The mind actually takes a hands-on approach to information (events, writings, media, etc.) that is encountered by developing and influencing all information encountered. Interestingly, the mind and the human faculties, which are conscious, distinct and dynamic, are in many ways influencing and effecting information as it is immediately encountered. Information that is newly encountered immediately meets with a plethora of known information which has been pondered and weighted for its importance and influence; associations and relationships are formed between new and old information. The newly encountered information faces mental categories which are not static but are changing and dynamic. Our brains look and act like a sponge and when information enters, it gets mixed with everything else inside and when we are “squeezed” or respond to questions, statements, problems, events, etc., that information which departs is not identical to that which entered.

Additionally, the mind perceives and interprets all information within given contexts: the context of the reader (ourselves), author and text; these also are the three distinct aspects of interpretation. Therefore, we interpret all information encountered whether it is in textual communication or verbal dialogue within its given contexts.

Therefore, we do not merely encounter and store information. Or rather, we must rethink the meaning of these processes. The processes of evaluation and information intake are complex processes which involve our entire personhood in large part because our faculties are interrelated. Newly encountered information garners feelings, thoughts, attitudes, preferences, etc.; we weigh and categorize new information not only based on the nature of that information but on the basis of everything else we know; categories for memory are determined not only by the information encountered but by the nature and associations of our personhood. Hence interpretation, which is the perception and understanding of information, is inherently personal, requires a comprehensive action and response of our entire person and is innate to human existence.

### ***The Fundamental Question***

Each of us approaches the text with a particular disposition and intuition toward knowledge, i.e. basically a certain way of understanding and comprehending which is most personal. Each has a certain way of acknowledging and associating with information. Therefore, each Christian approaches the text with a certain procedure or course of action for textual understanding, a certain way of grasping Scriptural meaning. The basic question of this work is: How did Calvin exposit the text, what was his method, his procedure for textual understanding? The question is broad but nonetheless relevant. One’s approach surely involves certain systems and rules per se, but when one approaches Scripture, they bring not merely rules, but their entire selves. So the term “approach” entails all of one’s personality and abilities, all of one’s ways of understanding information and acknowledging meaning. We cannot ask the

question of Calvin without also asking it of ourselves so this work begs the question, “How do we approach Scripture?”

These questions, as this work will affirm, again have significant relation to all of our existence, and do not merely address which commentary or lexical aid we pull from the shelf. This work does not treat these questions comprehensively and hence is not designed to wholly critique Calvin’s exposition. Even though the present question focuses primarily on the “text”, I do not believe the biblical author or reader to be insignificant or less important than the concept of textuality, but they are rather the other two vital aspects of interpretation and could and should be dealt with at equal depth. Although, this work deals with significant factors and aspects involved mainly in Calvin’s approach to the text, the other two aspects of interpretation are necessarily interrelated to exegesis.

### ***Admissions of the Author***

This work is in large part a synopsis of some major factors and aspects in Calvin’s exposition; it is designed to bring clarity to the question of why and how Calvin performed exposition. But the writer must respectfully submit that this question proves in some ways elusive due to its profundity and breadth. The writer also humbly admits that even though this work attempts to maintain a certain conciseness and clarity on all points mentioned, it is apparent that multiple factors (some not stated) contribute to the major points discussed.

### ***Why I am Writing***

Importantly, this work is not based on the existing dichotomy between the infallible God and the fallible human. In other words, the exegete’s views on the practice of interpretation or of his personal interpretations do not need to be modified and enhanced only because we are sinful and God is holy. This work does not “piggyback” on this dichotomy. Interpretation as a human activity needs to be examined due principally to *the nature of interpretation and meaning*. In other words, I am not writing to make my interpretations better because I am innately sinful and God is inherently holy, even though this is a wise truth and has been the backbone of many such efforts. However, I am writing to understand the nature of interpretation and meaning because it is an aspect of God’s communicative actions and knowledge; it is an aspect of God’s creation. Hopefully, this point will be elucidated.

### ***The Usage of the Term “Interpretation”***

This work employs the term “interpretation” inclusive to the other related terms—exposition, hermeneutics and exegesis unless specifically defined otherwise. I do this for simplicity sake knowing that with a more in-depth study, particularly related to interpretation, these terms would prove distinct. Furthermore, the broadness of the topic of Calvin’s approach and the interrelatedness of the interpretive process necessitate that one conceptualize the whole of Calvin’s expository activities, from beginning study to final proclamation, but particular emphasis is placed upon his exegesis prior to public proclamation.

So this work addresses particular factors and aspects of his thought in exposition. The word “exposit” when used loosely would describe the method of the mass of preachers. But the question of exposition even in its broadness sheds specific knowledge and insight on one’s aims and practices in interpretation; it is a reflection of one’s awareness and consciousness of God, the text and himself; it is a procedure or trajectory, a means to an end. Importantly, exegesis communicates about its user and is not merely a tool or method for communication; it articulates and critiques its user as it is being used.

### ***The Current Relevance of this Study***

This work not only gives a brief summary of Calvin's exposition, it more importantly turns a critical eye to the hermeneutic process and various aspects of interpretation. So I communicate pertinent questions that arise involving exegesis. Calvin's hermeneutic provides a frame of reference which both reinforces the evangelical base of interaction regarding exegesis and more importantly rouses further critical questioning.

One may pose the question, "Why write on interpretation when it appears as though evangelicals and particularly reformed individuals have met with fairly comprehensive doctrinal and exegetical agreement?" Or "Why write on interpretation when the lines among evangelical disagreement are clearly outlined down to the Scripture verse?" Hermeneutics is still a relevant topic among other reasons because: (1) although we may have agreement, we may be arriving at agreement in different ways, or from different paths; (2) interpretation is rooted in how the exegete views God, revelation and himself both conceptually and in relation to each other; hence exegetical rationale is often subtle and can provide insight when examined; (3) the exegete is a work in progress (not merely because he is sinful but because he was created to interpret and learn; the human exercises of interpreting and learning are not the result, effect or extension of humanity's sinfulness) and hence must continually insist on increasing his awareness and sensitivity to relationships within interpretation; (4) although there is a fairly mutual understanding on biblical themes, motifs and doctrines, the way in which themes, motifs and doctrines are applied to other areas of Scripture may be distinct; (5) within the framework of a conversation, language exchange or point of agreement, often that which is critical goes unstated due to assumption or pre-understanding; such pre-understanding is not only remains unexpressed but it may or may not completely overlap between language participants; (6) exegesis not only involves our usage of particular study books but really our entire personhood; (7) often exegesis is inordinately weighted toward individual and private study and the collective and communal aspects involving interpretation are limited and often remain unutilized.

The evangelical Kevin Vanhoozer provides an astute comment, "...the canon provides an interpretive framework by which the past can illumine the present. The canon generates not an absolute, unchanging static tradition but rather a dynamic tradition of critical reinterpretation."<sup>1</sup> Another evangelical John Frame also provides insight:

"We gain a rational understanding of Scripture in the same way we gain a rational understanding of anything else: by correlating Scripture, world and self; by receiving from the Holy Spirit the grace to understand; by recognizing the richness of scriptural pedagogy and the corresponding richness of the response demanded (a response of the whole person, involving all his capacities)."<sup>2</sup>

Calvin's approach and conception of interpretation is a springboard but only a beginning on which to find support for an evangelical interpretive framework and pursue further discussion regarding interpretation. In certain ways, Calvin's method provides the foundation of our interpretive exercises. Once we confirm that which we do know, we can extend to and confront that which is less certain or not overt in appearance. As we increase our understanding of the interpretive framework, we are better suited to adjust and apply the "dynamic tradition of critical interpretation" of the canon to our hearts and lives.

### ***The Human Being and the Act of Interpretation***

We interpret to the extent that we live, breath and experience life and all its complexities. Interpretation is as much an activity of the human being as any other aspect of life. Vanhoozer writes, "Hermeneutics is relevant not only to the interpretation of the Bible, but to all of life, insofar as everything from a Brahms symphony to a baby's cry is a "text," that is, an expression of human life that calls for interpretation."<sup>3</sup> As humans interpret, they engage the complexities and depth of their humanity and being. All interpretation, whether biblical or otherwise, is a

most in-depth engagement involving one's personality, existence and divine revelation; interpretation flows from the inherent livelihood and vitality of God's image, man, and is an innate and distinctive expression bestowed to humanity.

It is vital to understand the reality of the interpretive process, i.e. that which we are doing and how it influences us, etc. Exegetical method is a decision, a choice to approach the text in a certain fashion. Also, as we study the text, we exposit with ourselves in mind, i.e. exegesis is not an out of body experience but we interpret with consciousness, awareness, desire and pre-understanding. Therefore exposition is an intensely personal and revealing experience that in turn communicates much about us.

Undoubtedly our discussion on Calvin's method will aid in confirming an evangelical foundation for further study. From this base, we can then realize that the interaction between one's personhood and the multitude of complexities involved in human existence and one's striving for understanding in Scripture, indeed give way to a dynamic interpretive framework. But perhaps, before entering into such discussion, let us attempt to become more conscious of the interpretive process from Vanhoozer's brief questioning. As he questions us, lets us question ourselves.

"Can we read in such a way as to avoid seeing ourselves-that is, those images that we project-in the mirror of the text? Can we by reading find out God? What exactly is reading? What is the point of this optical exercise of moving one's eyes from left to right down one page after another? How is it that black marks on white paper can inform us (e.g., make us more knowledgeable) and move us (e.g., to laugh, to cry or to go and sell all our goods and give the proceeds to the poor)? Why is there something rather than nothing in the texts? Is there a wrong way to read a book?"<sup>4</sup>

Writing is a form of communication; communication is interpretation. Interpretation is the essence of expression. The relation between the interpreted (author) and the interpreter (reader) is the text. The Bible is a text and thereby an expression of something or someone, from one to another.

Interpretive expression is the material and substance of the Biblical text. For example, the author's previous careers and other aspects of their background, their beliefs before and at the time of writing and the cultural and spiritual context of their situations are influential factors and conduits for communication. Authors selectively omit or include certain information based on context in order to enhance communication. The presentations of the Gospels illustrate many of the same events but are communicated in 4 distinct ways or paths, arriving at the same truths. Similarly, two preachers will expound the same text arriving at the same truth but by differing paths. As preachers *interpret* the text, so were the biblical author's *interpreting* information (events, actions, etc.) in ways suitable to them, understandable to their audience and according to God's intention.

## **Methodology and Exposition**

### ***The Question of Method***

The question of method is a question of trajectory, or a path or course one takes to meaning. Method is not merely an inquiry into what rules and principles are used in study or which commentaries are browsed; method involves all the aspects of the exegete's existence. Hence, method is a shallow stream flowing into an ocean. Method and interpretation are not merely defined by what one studies at his desk, but also by one's life and experiences. Because the Bible does not delineate an explicit method of exegesis or a hermeneutical system, our method of exegesis is developed from human existence, an aspect of which is bible study. The multiple aspects of our life are interrelated but are our exegetical method and interpretation exempt or disconnected from the other aspects of our existence?

What methodology is evident in Calvin's exposition and how is his method similar to our expositions today? Again, this work will focus primarily on points at which Calvin and the evangelical exegete meet, in order to provide a stable foundation for further study on interpretation. The broadness of this question is implicit in its asking, but nonetheless of fundamental importance.

### ***The Exegetical Environment in Calvin's Day***

Hunter comments on the general nature of interpretation in Calvin's day, "The field of the Bible had come to be treated too much as a playground for ingenuities of interpretation or as an area rich in deposits of hidden treasures of mystery. Exposition was an exercise in fanciful conjecture and the excavation of meanings juggled in and then triumphantly unearthed."<sup>1</sup> Hunter articulates Calvin's environment, "...medieval commentators reveled in discoveries which dishonored the Bible...Calvin rescued faith from a precarious condition of extreme vulnerability to the new renaissance spirit which looked at things immemorially sacred with shrewd, searching eyes..."<sup>2</sup> How did this environment affect Calvin's approach to Scripture?

### ***Calvin and Humanism***

In what was Calvin trained that greatly impacted his expository method? Calvin had been trained in humanism. Richard Pratt writes, "This shift [from allegorical to a more literal approach to Scripture] was deeply influenced by Renaissance studies of newly discovered classical Greek and Latin texts. As techniques for interpreting these classical documents grew, scholars rejected allegorical methods in favor of meticulous philological and historical methods."<sup>3</sup> Vanhoozer writes, "Calvin's concern for the literal sense [as opposed to the allegorical sense] was partly a product of his training as a Renaissance humanist. Fifteenth century humanists shared a passion for recovering the language and literature of Greece and Rome. The humanists worked to arrive at the original and genuine meaning of classical literature, which meant recovering the mind of the author."<sup>4</sup> This is in part, as we will see later, why Calvin diligently sought the meaning as intended by the biblical author and gave particular notice to the context of the author's writing. In this manner, some of the principles of humanism were transferable to biblical study. Calvin's method and exegesis is in large part therefore shaped by humanism.

Humanist training did not produce in Calvin a "flat" or "wooden literalism", or a reading of the text that negates particular genre, symbolism or ignores the nature of redemptive history. However humanism prioritized aspects of interpretation that were at that time uncharacteristic and insignificant facets of exegesis and its focus, authorial intention, meaning and context.

### ***Calvin and Method***

Calvin's method was rooted in finding the textual meaning for edification of the audience and glorification of God. Gamble quotes Battles: "He [Calvin] saw the task of the theologian no longer as speculative, primarily philosophical, but rather as pastoral, pedagogical and making large if guarded use of the rhetorical discipline."<sup>5</sup> Hence, Calvin's exegetical method is characterized by instructive not speculative thought, persuasion rather than demonstration and clarity rather than verbosity.

Alister McGrath writes, "Reformers such as Luther and Calvin had relatively little interest in questions of method. For them, theology was primarily concerned with the exposition of Scripture."<sup>6</sup> For this reason, Calvin's method is relatively unsophisticated and straightforwardly summarized. John Leith writes, "For the Reformers, generally, method grew out of the reality of what they were doing." He then associates Bullinger's statements on method as being reticent in Calvin's hermeneutical principles, "His principles were (1) the rule of faith;

(2) love of God and neighbor; (3) the historical situation; (4) scripture interpreted in the context of scripture; (5) a heart that loves God and continually prays to God for his Holy Spirit.”<sup>7</sup>

### ***Method as Brevitas et Facilitas***

Calvin did have a basic approach to Scripture which is oft described as *brevitas et facilitas* (i.e. in derivative form-brevitas-to be brief and relevant and *facilitas*-to be simple or easily understood), *brevitas* for short. *Brevitas* is an assent to clear and concise interpretation. Even though the Latin terminology may paint Calvin’s approach as irrelevant or archaic, the heart of this method is the basis of evangelical interpretation today. Richard Gamble writes of *brevitas*, “[it] may be understood as an attempt to communicate the message of the biblical author in as concise, clear, and accurate a manner as possible....”<sup>8</sup> “That *brevitas et facilitas*...is a good summary of Calvin’s exegetical methodology is hardly disputed; Battles, Kraus, Higman, Steinmetz, Girardin, Ganoczy/Scheld, and Parker among others have written recently about it.”<sup>9</sup> *Brevitas* describes Calvin’s prevailing disposition toward interpretation.

### ***Method and Calvin’s Commentaries***

Richard Muller rightly notes that *brevitas* tended to describe more Calvin’s commentaries than his sermons. This point is well taken and suggests even more convincingly that *brevitas* characterizes Calvin’s approach to exegesis as he discerns biblical meaning in his study, apart from oratorical influence. Calvin was more apt to say less when writing than when speaking. Muller writes, “...whereas the commentaries held to the model of *brevitas*, the sermons tended toward a more amplificatory model of oratory, often reaching three or four times the length of the comment on the same text....”<sup>10</sup>

But less we assume that Calvin victimized the text or at least his interpretations by verbalizing in excess of textual warrant or study, Muller notes that during oratory he was, “drawing on more collateral texts for the sake of broader hortatory, topical, and polemical development.”<sup>11</sup> It is a lesson to the exegete that the Holy Spirit does not dispense textual understanding only in our study rooms, but that he gives us textual understanding, even when we are without material aid.

### ***Brevitas and Authorial Intention, Meaning and Context***

Calvin’s method is similar to the evangelical’s disposition today fundamentally in its utmost concern for authorial intention, inherent meaning and context. Calvin held that authorial intention was the primary way to Scriptural meaning and that Scripture had a particular and determined meaning; he also asserted that the author’s contextual situation had to be discerned in order for meaning to be reached. McKim writes that the humanist studies, “gave them a direct understanding of the intentions and meanings of the legal text. Calvin applied a similar concern for context to his work with Scripture.”<sup>12</sup> Calvin states, “Let us know, then, that the true meaning of Scripture is the natural and obvious meaning; and let us embrace and abide by it resolutely. Let us not neglect as doubtful, but boldly set aside as deadly corruptions, those pretended expositions which lead us away from the intended meaning.”<sup>13</sup> Broadus writes of Calvin, “Such careful and continued exposition of the Bible, based in the main upon sound exegesis...could not fail of great results, especially at a time when direct and exact knowledge of Scripture was a most attractive and refreshing novelty.”<sup>14</sup> One of the earliest translators of Calvin’s day stated, “none had dealt more sincerely in expounding the Holy Scriptures, and more faithfully in drawing forth the *true sense* (emphasis mine) of deep mysteries than Mr. Calvin.”<sup>15</sup> Hunter articulates Calvin’s aim in the commentaries, “His [Calvin] whole business is to show forth the mind of the writer....”<sup>16</sup> Calvin states regarding context, “In order to understand correctly, it is necessary to understand the occasion which prompted Him to speak as He did.”<sup>17</sup>

### ***Method and Subtle Discussion***

In Calvin's attempt to discern textual meaning, he did strive to limit "subtle discussion" or allegory and verbosity and thereby embrace brevitas, or conciseness and accuracy in textual explanation. He writes, "To treat the subject with more length, would not be consistent with the brevity at which I aim."<sup>18</sup> And "It would be superfluous...to enter into subtle discussion...for he [the author] did no intend to occupy us with such *cunning* (emphasis mine)'.<sup>19</sup> Again, these quotes concerning verbosity and superfluous speech pertain to that which Calvin attempted to limit in his interpretive style and method. His method was to form suppositions that adhered to the authorial intent and text, not speculative or philosophical conjecture. Brevitas, Calvin thought, was the safest and most responsible way to meaning.

Rightly, the exegete does attempt to paraphrase and explain the text and base interpretations largely on those paraphrases. To the extent that this is practiced, irrelevant discussion may be limited. This is reasonable in its aim however larger issues arise.

### ***Accuracy and Limitation in Interpretation***

The difficulty with attempts at brevity or briefness, conciseness and correctness in interpretation lie in our desires to (1) be accurate in evaluating and articulating textual meaning and (2) limit our textual deductions to that which we think is relevant to the text. In other words, the exegete makes decisions regarding what he thinks is accurate in relation to the meaning of the text and he also decides how and where to limit interpretations based on the text.

If another exegete, claiming to "see more or less" in the text (lesser or greater fulfillment or significance, more applicability, more relevance, etc.) makes assertions which stop short or extend beyond another's interpretive limitation, that exegete's interpretation may be perceived as insufficient or excessive, i.e. falling short or going beyond the bounds of textual warrant. And hence, both exegetes, who may be both reformed, may consider one another's interpretations inaccurate due to their own personal conception of textual accuracy and their own system of limitation. This situation is widespread and common and in many instances not particularly disparaging; it is often okay to agree to disagree.

Fortunately, most exegetes understand and admit that their own interpretations are limited in scope and discernment and recognize the possibility of additional meaningful aspects involving the text than meet their mind's eye. Difficulty arises when exegetes refuse to make this admission or even worse, do not recognize its possibility. Discernment in interpretation is made more likely for various reasons one of which being that the exegete's interpretive system may allow for greater Scriptural relevance and meaningfulness and not seek to affirm absolute limitations on textual illumination. However, often, discernment is measured not as much by one's interpretive system but by the character and intent of their work

### ***A Working Definition of Interpretation***

Importantly, attempts at accuracy and limitation in interpretation are judgment calls, personal decisions, based in some way on the biblical text encountered. Evangelicals believe in accurate interpretation, i.e. interpretation that agrees with the author's intentions, but do some embrace precise interpretation? *Biblical interpretation can be defined as the endeavor to understand the aspects and relevance of Scriptural truth.* That which is critical to remember is not merely that one's interpretation can be right or wrong, but that one's interpretation is just that, one's interpretation; interpretations can and must be continually modified and enhanced due to the insights of others and the revelation of God in every aspect of life. God does not desire that we understand the Bible perfectly or completely but that we learn and therefore glorify Him. Vanhoozer writes, "What we are after as readers is not an interpretation that *perfectly*

*corresponds* to the text (whatever that might mean), but rather an interpretation that *adequately responds* to it.”<sup>20</sup>

Also, the in-depth and comprehensive nature of revelation and biblical knowledge do not align with a concept of interpretation that is absolute and precise in nature. What part do revelation, redemptive history, interpretive systems and the nature of meaning and interpretation and a multiplicity of other aspects of interpretation play within the framework of our exegesis?

### ***Method and Allegory***

Let us establish the evangelical view of allegory and examine *brevitas* in relation to it. Calvin’s judgment on allegory is the basis of the evangelical’s view. Note again Calvin’s statement: “...It would be superfluous here to enter into subtle discussion...for he did no intend to occupy us with such cunning.”<sup>21</sup> He is addressing allegory. For Calvin, allegory denies the unity of Scriptural meaning. He writes,

“I know of the plausible nature of allegories, but when we reverently weigh the teachings of the Holy Spirit, those speculations which at first sight pleased us exceedingly, vanish from our view. But I am not captivated by such enticements myself...We ought never to fetch from a distance a subtle explanation, for the true sense will...flow naturally from a passage when it is weighed with deliberation.”<sup>22</sup>

Allegory is opposite of *brevitas* in its attempts at speculation resulting in unfounded interpretations. Allegory elevates “the sign” above “the Signified”, God. In allegory, the expositor is captivated by the sign but fails to reveal the Signified. Calvin affirms the literal meaning of Scripture in stating regarding Galatians 4:22,

“Scripture, they say, is fertile and thus bears multiple meanings. I acknowledge that Scripture is the most rich and exhaustible fount of all wisdom: but I deny that its fertility consists in the various meanings that anyone may fasten to it at his pleasure. Therefore let us know that the true meaning of Scripture is the genuine and simple one, and let us embrace and hold it tightly. Let us not merely neglect as doubtful, but boldly set aside as deadly corruptions, those fictitious expositions which lead us away from the literal sense.”<sup>23</sup>

Allegory was antithetical to *brevitas*, which sought the original sense of the passage. Allegory fails to recognize the meaning extending from the passage and the necessary and resulting application.

### ***The Origin of Brevitas***

Interestingly, as stated at the beginning, the exegetical environment surrounding Calvin influenced his exegetical method. The basic elements involved in evangelical interpretation stem from the Reformers’ rejection of allegorical interpretation....” Richard Pratt writes, “This shift [from allegorical to a literal approach to Scripture] was deeply influenced by Renaissance studies of newly discovered classical Greek and Latin texts. As techniques for interpreting these classical documents grew, scholars rejected allegorical methods in favor of meticulous philological and historical methods.”<sup>24</sup> Calvin’s humanistic training did rightly lead him to focus on the text’s authorial intention, meaning and context, as opposed to fanciful gestures.

### ***The Influence of Brevitas***

This heightened emphasis on the text per se also did lead to a focus on the etymology, syntax and grammar of the text. *Brevitas* birthed an intensely rational and methodic approach to Scripture. *Brevitas* is the foundation for an interpretive framework that attempts to apply intense hermeneutic rationality and objectivism. Logical and factual aspects of the text were emphasized and joined to form observations, hypotheses and objective knowledge. Although interpretation was stabilized in certain ways by *brevitas*, it deemphasized certain critical aspects of interpretation. Unfortunately, *brevitas* influenced interpretation in that it dictated a prescriptive analysis of the text, i.e. informing people on how they should read, and deemphasized descriptive

analysis, i.e. describing and informing people on what happens as they read texts; both are needed.

### **Conclusion**

I have broadly assessed the nature of interpretation and provided an evangelical foundation for further study. Brevitas, Calvin's fundamental method and disposition, is in many ways the foundation of evangelical Bible study. Because interpretation is innate to us and is done with the frequency with which one takes breath, it is as delicate as it is meaningful. Again, our interpretations do not need to be modified and enhanced merely because of a dichotomy between the infallible and fallible. This existing dichotomy is not being addressed. Interpretation needs to be examined, among other reasons, due *to its nature, the nature of meaning and the nature of knowledge*. The following works will (1) weigh the present-day influences of brevitas in light of the nature of interpretation and literary knowledge and (2) provide assessment where possible in the extensive area of interpretation.

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