

his voice is obvious. But Rashi's quiet presence has spoken much louder over the centuries than Ibn Ezra's noise.

The commentators in *The Commentators' Bible* wrote in Hebrew about a Hebrew text; I had to insinuate myself in such a way that the commentator could write in English about a text his readers would primarily encounter in English translation.

With regard to the Torah itself, the way to make the translation vanish was, paradoxically, to make it more visible. This I did by including two English translations, rather than one, and by having the commentators criticize one or both translations when necessary. This forces readers to be aware that it's the Hebrew text that is Torah, not the English. (Visit shma.com for an example.)

Standing in between the readers and the commentators is trickier. It involves a certain amount of mimicry and quite a lot of *chutzpah*. As the English-language literary agent of Nahmanides, I have often had to tell him, "Interesting! But the readers I'm introducing to you aren't ready to learn that." The commentators in *The Commentators' Bible*, therefore, are not the commentators themselves — they are being impersonated by me, just as Cervantes was impersonated by Edith Grossman.

Stated baldly, this sounds outrageous. So it's worth remembering that the prophets, too, (according to Ibn Ezra and Abarbanel) were not simply channeling God's message, but rather impersonating Him. The medium shapes the message, and that is as true for Torah as for anything else.

Rabbinic Literature: An Electronic Genre Map

The Rabbinic Literature Genre Map is a graphical way of describing the major documents of the rabbinic library, their structures, their literary relationships, and their (rough) periodization. The Web-based English and Hebrew versions provide more detail along with links to additional online resources. Produced by Jeffrey Spitzer, chair of Rabbinics at Gann Academy: The New Jewish High School in Waltham, MA, the genre map is one tool in an ongoing effort to expose students to the breadth of rabbinic literature.

<https://fc.gannacademy.org/gannopedia/genremap/rlgenremap.html>

