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Theological Interpretation and Isaiah 53:

A Study of Bernhard Duhm, Brevard Childs, and Alec Motyer

Charles E. Shepherd

Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Theology and Religion

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ABSTRACT

Theological Interpretation and Isa 53:
A Study of Bernhard Duhm, Brevard Childs, and Alec Motyer

Charles E. Shepherd

Ph.D. Dissertation

Submitted to Durham University, 2012

This dissertation brings together the hermeneutical approaches of three Old Testament scholars, specifically as they pertain to the interpretation of Isaiah 52.13-53.12 in the framework of Christian theology. Contemporary discourse and hermeneutical discussions have led to the development of a point of confusion in theological hermeneutics, focusing on what relationship older frames of reference may have with those more recent.

Bernhard Duhm is presented as a history-of-religions scholar who does not easily abide by popular understandings of that school. This results in a theologically attuned reading of Isa 53. Brevard Childs moves outward from particular historical judgments regarding the nature of redaction and form criticism, attempting to arrive at a proximately theological reading of the poem. Alec Motyer's evangelical commitments represent a large constituency of contemporary theological readership, and a popular understanding of Isa 53.

Following a summary and critical engagement of each interpreter on his own terms, the study proceeds to analyze the use of rhetoric behind the readings of Isa 53 outlined here. As each interpreter positions his hermeneutical location in opposition to perceived opponents, it bears revisiting to see in what ways these moves of rhetorical distancing are, and are not, appropriate. Whilst commonality is found between the three in substantial ways, certain irresolvable problems arise. An outcome of this commonality-problematic relationship is that contemporary rhetorical categorizations of 'pre-critical', 'critical', and 'post-critical' do not accurately represent the highly involved nature of the task of interpreting the Old Testament – and Isaiah 53 – as Christian Scripture.

DECLARATION

This work has been submitted to Durham University in accordance with the regulations for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It is my own work, and no part of it has been previously submitted to the Durham University or in any other university for a degree.

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For Helen,
whose love, patience, and kindness have both inspired and sustained.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABC	Anchor Bible Commentary Series
AJL	Philip H. Lown Institute of Advanced Judaic Studies, Brandeis University
AJS	Philip W. Lown Institute of Advanced Jewish Studies
AJSLL	<i>The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures</i>
ANETS	Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament
BAR	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
BET	Beiträge zur biblischen Exegese und Theologie
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BDB	Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs (eds.), <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1907)
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
BibS	Biblische Studien
BHHW	<i>Biblich-Historisches Handwörterbuch</i> , ed. L. Rost and B. Reicke (Göttingen; Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962-79)
BHS	K. Elliger, W. Rudolph, et al. (eds.), <i>Biblica Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i> (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1990 ⁴)
BJS	Biblical and Judaic Studies
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar: Altes Testament
BLS	Bible and Literature Series (Almond Press), imprint of Sheffield Academic Press
BRMT	Blackwell Readings in Modern Theology
BSS	Barth Studies Series (Farnham: Ashgate)
BST	The Bible Speaks Today Series
BTAT	Beiträge zur Theologie des Alten Testaments
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZ	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur <i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CC	Calvin's Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Baker)
CD	Karl Barth, <i>Church Dogmatics</i> . 13 vols. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936-1969. Ed. G.W. Bromiley, T.F. Torrance
CSRT	Columbia Series in Reformed Theology
CSCD	Cambridge Studies in Christian Doctrine
CTC	Christian Theology in Context Series
CTHP	Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy
CTM	<i>Concordia Theological Monthly</i>
CTQ	<i>Concordia Theological Quarterly</i>
CWIK	Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
EA	<i>Erbe und Auftrag</i> (bedediktinische Monatschrift; Beuron: Beuronischer Kunstverlag)
ECCA	Early Christianity in the Context of Antiquity
EHS	Europäische Hochschulsschriften
ET	<i>Expository Times</i>

<i>ETL</i>	<i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i>
<i>EvQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
<i>ExpT</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FB	Forschung zur Bibel
FP	Florilegium Patristicum
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GKC	W. Gesenius (E. Kautzsch and A.E. Cowley [eds.]), <i>Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar</i> (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990 ²⁰)
HBS	Herders Biblische Studien
Herm	Hermeneia Commentary Series
HKAT	Handkommentar zum Alten Testament
<i>HPQ</i>	<i>History of Philosophy Quarterly</i>
<i>HT</i>	<i>History and Theory</i>
HT	Horizons in Theology
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
IB	Interpreter's Bible
ICC	International Critical Commentary Series
Int	Interpretation Series (Louisville: WJK)
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>IJST</i>	<i>International Journal of Systematic Theology</i>
JAR	<i>Journal of Anthropological Research</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JBTh	Jahrbuch für biblische Theologie
JC	Judaica et Christiana
<i>JDTh</i>	<i>Jahrbücher für Deutsche Theologie</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JR	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
JSSM	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies, Monographs</i>
<i>JTI</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Interpretation</i>
JTIS	Journal of Theological Interpretation Supplement
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KHAT	Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament
LBC	Layman's Bible Commentary
LCC	Library of Christian Classics
LTPM	Louvain Theological and Pastoral Monographs
LUÅ	Lunds universitets årsskrift
MLBS	Mercer Library of Biblical Studies
<i>MT</i>	<i>Modern Theology</i>
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NIB	New Interpreter's Bible
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
<i>NLH</i>	<i>New Literary History</i>
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NSKAT	<i>Neuer Stuttgarter Kommentar: Altes Testament</i> (ed. Christoph Dohmen)
<i>NTT</i>	<i>Norsk teologisk tidsskrift</i>

NW	<i>The New World: A Quarterly Review of Religion, Ethics and Theology</i> (1892-)
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
OSHT	Oxford Studies in Historical Theology
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTM	Oxford Theological Monographs
PB	Philosophische Bibliothek
PE	<i>Pro Ecclesia</i>
PPS	Popular Patristics Series
PrIrB	Proceedings of the Irish Bíblica Association
PTM	Princeton Theological Monograph Series
PTR	<i>Princeton Theological Review</i>
RB	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
RGG ⁴	H.D. Betz, et al. (eds.), <i>Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Vierte Auflage</i> (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000)
RHPR	<i>Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses</i>
RSQ	<i>Rhetoric Society Quarterly</i>
RchScR	<i>Recherches de science religieuse</i>
SABH	Studies in American Biblical Hermeneutics
SBEC	Studies in Bible and Early Christianity
SBLDS	Society for Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLSS	Society for Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SFSHJ	South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism
SHS	Scripture and Hermeneutics Series
SJT	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SJOT	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
SMHVL	Scripta minora. Studier utgivna av Kungl. Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfunnet i Lund
SOTS	Society for Old Testament Study Series
StPB	Studia Post-Biblica
SSN	Studia Semitica Neerlandica
STI	Studies in Theological Interpretation Series
SVT	Supplements to <i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
TB	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
TEH	Theologische Existenz Heute
ThB	Theologische Bücherei
TEH	Theologische Existence Heute
ThBl	<i>Theologische Blätter</i>
ThLZ	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
ThL	<i>Theologischer Literaturbericht</i>
ThZ	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
ThViat	<i>Theologia Viatorum</i>
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentary Series
TRE	<i>Theologische Realenzyklopädie</i>
TS	<i>Theologische Studien</i> (Zollikon-Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag)
TT	<i>Theology Today</i>
TVZ	Theologische Verlag Zürich
TZT	<i>Tübinger Zeitschrift für Theologie</i>
UF	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i>

VIEG	Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Europäische Geschichte
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTS	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i> Supplement
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary Series
WBibC	Westminster Bible Companion
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WO	<i>Die Welt des Orients</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZABR	<i>Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte</i>
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZthK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

Introduction

Credo unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam ecclesiam; und wenn es mir ernst ist, einen Theologen der Vorzeit, heie er nun Schleiermacher oder Ritschl oder wie er wolle, zu hren, dann mu es mir mit diesem *credo*, wenn ich nicht durch individuelle Inspiration des Gegenteils davon dispensiert bin, konkreter Ernst sein, d.h. dann habe ich diese Leute, all meiner tausend Grnde ungeachtet, zur christlichen Kirche zu rechnen und, eingedenk dessen, da ich selber samt meiner theologischen Arbeit nur auf Grund von Vergebung in der christlichen Kirche bin, ihnen das, da es ihnen wie mir im Grunde um den christlichen Glauben gegangen sei, weder abzustreiten, noch auch nur es anzuzweifeln.

Karl Barth¹

The present dissertation is a comparative study of three Old Testament scholars who seek to interpret Isaiah 52.13-53.12 within a theological frame of reference: Bernhard Duhm, Brevard Childs, and Alec Motyer. The dissertation aims to explore the formation and application of theological hermeneutics; as such, it aims toward a deeper self-understanding, and more robust practice, of the hermeneutics of theological interpretation of the Old Testament.

I. *Theological Interpretation and 'Historie'*

Space prohibits a rehearsal of the contemporary debates about 'theological interpretation'. In brief, theological reading of the Old Testament is part of a wider move to return to a collection of practices and sensitivities largely identified with a pre-modern frame of reference.² The movement takes its lead in no small measure from a 'postliberal' context, for which theological reading did not seek a re-pristination of patristic or scholastic approaches, but the recovery of a 'second naiveté', in which the interpreter presses through the kind of distancing afforded by critical historical and philosophical work, to recover insights of that earlier stage.³ Theological interpretation thus seeks to embody certain pre-modern sensitivities, within a context that exists 'downwind of modernity'.⁴

Taking this framing into account, there is still plenty of theological interpretive rhetoric that seeks consciously to distance itself from modernity, either without a nuanced conceptual framing, or without a nuanced

¹ Barth, *Protestant Theologie*, 14.

² A move away from this frame of reference is presented in Frei, *Eclipse*.

³ Watson, 'Historical Criticism', has challenged the notion of the 'pre-critical' as suggesting a lack of critical historical awareness. I return to this in the conclusion.

⁴ Moberly, *Prophecy and Discernment*, 36.

understanding of the operations of 'modern' biblical exegesis itself. The rhetorical and hermeneutical framing of theological interpretive practice does not always reflect a careful and patient attending to the *theological* concerns of 18th, 19th, and 20th century biblical interpretation, or to the reality of theological reading as existing along a historical spectrum – Frei's 'pre-critical', 'critical', and 'post-critical' are provisional categories that do not clearly reflect the porous nature of the development of interpretive practice. As such, 'modernity' easily becomes a target for theological rhetoric, in much the same way that patristic and scholastic reading often became the target of 19th century interpretive rhetoric.

A question that comes into focus is to what degree – or in what ways – theological reading stands in relation to those readings situated within a 'modern' frame of reference. It is perhaps the question of the relationship between confessional (i.e. proximately theological) reading, and what is often called (for better or worse) 'historical criticism'.⁵ The question pertains to both Old and New Testament hermeneutics, though the former presents a unique challenge, insofar as it predates (and thus does not presuppose in the same sense) the Christian kerygma. The hermeneutical question of the Old Testament presents a distinctive set of problems that concern the theological question of the unity of God in both testaments, as well as the historical question of the value of the text's historical particularity as 'pre-Christian' literature. Together, these issues present the question of the Old Testament as paramount for Christian theology and faith.⁶

II. *Why Isaiah 53?*

Isaiah 53 has been chosen as the text from which to approach differing interpretive practices. It is a text that has consistently attracted the attention of a Christian readership, and so has become, in many ways, the *locus classicus* of Old Testament theological interpretation from a Christian frame of reference.⁷ In certain respects this renders the chapter an 'easy target'. Yet for at least two reasons Isa 53 remains a valuable text for the present discussion. First, a growing sophistication in historical awareness has more thoroughly located

⁵ The term is not entirely helpful, though I employ it in the study for reasons of convenience.

⁶ Gunneweg, *Old Testament*, 2; Anderson, 'Old Testament', 1.

⁷ Loewe, 'Prolegomenon', 8.

Isa 53 in antiquity (in whichever century), making the move from an ancient, to a Christian, theological context an involved undertaking. A critical distanciation of Isa 53 now attends theological reading, presenting the interpreter with a set of complex questions to address. Second, the present dissertation is not concerned with ‘the right’ interpretation of Isa 53, as such, in part because that kind of work has already been applied to the chapter extensively – apologetically, historically, and theologically. Rather, the focus resides upon the moves made by the interpreters themselves, and the theological and philosophical commitments from which those moves spring. In this light, Isa 53 presents one of the clearest demonstrations of theological hermeneutics in Old Testament interpretation.

III. *The Three Interpreters: Duhm, Childs, and Motyer*

Duhm, Childs, and Motyer represent, in large measure, distinctive hermeneutical approaches to the Old Testament and Isa 53, that bring particular sets of concerns and questions to the text. Duhm stands, to some degree, within the ‘religionsgeschichtliche Schule’ of 19th century liberal Protestantism. As such, he belongs to a collection of Old Testament interpreters often regarded to be concerned chiefly with ‘wie es eigentlich gewesen’.⁸ In reality, his practice is more nuanced than this simple designation leads one to expect (largely in terms of a neo-Kantian appreciation of history’s dialectics). Brevard Childs represents an approach that does not wish to dispense with the critical historical questions of Old Testament interpretation, but to recalibrate/recontextualize those questions within an explicitly theological frame of reference. Childs presents numerous dialectical relationships in his approach, pertaining to history past and present, history and theology, and text and reader. These are regarded, however, to stem from the nature of the text itself, as part of the theological framework of ‘canon’. Finally, Motyer represents an evangelical constituency of those who read the Old Testament without recourse to critical questions of distanciation; rather, core theological and doctrinal convictions shape the interpretive task *ab initio*, a reality that distinguishes him from Duhm and Childs.

⁸ Though we would expect the auxiliary ‘ist’ to close the phrase, I use the original wording of von Ranke throughout (closing with ‘gewesen’). The shorter version is less common than the longer. See von Ranke, *Geschichte*, vii.

Taken together, the three represent facets of a robust theological interpretation. In certain respects (though this is not always borne out in practice), theological interpretation represents facets of a ‘canonical approach’.⁹ In a commemorative obituary for Childs in 2007, Chapman notes the connection between the former’s canonical approach and ‘theological interpretation’:

The recent lively discussions of “theological interpretation,” the multiplication of a new commentary series with an explicitly theological focus, the intensity of interest in the history of biblical interpretation—all of these developments have their origin in Childs’s courageous early scholarship.¹⁰

As this dissertation is interested in outlining the facets of a robust self-understanding for the interpretation of the Old Testament as Scripture, Childs may provisionally set the terms: what is of importance is history, theology, and a responsible co-existence of these in relation to the *text itself*. Childs writes:

Usually books on biblical theology have been relegated to a special subdiscipline, and thought to relate only to larger hermeneutical and theological concerns without any close relation to exegesis. Those engaged in biblical theology are often dismissed as ‘theologians’, and not biblical interpreters. For my part, I have always considered biblical theology to be only an ancillary discipline that better serves in equipping the exegete for the real task of interpreting the biblical text itself.¹¹

Duhm, Childs, and Motyer represent different angles on the task of relating biblical theology, exegesis, and history, in a way that employs a theological vocabulary for the service of interpreting the text of Isa 53.

IV. *The Shape of the Dissertation*

The study will present each interpreter’s hermeneutical location, and will subsequently apply this location to their respective readings of Isa 53. Chapters One, Three, and Five present Duhm, Childs, and Motyer in their respective hermeneutical contexts, in such a way as to highlight the concerns that come to bear upon their interpretation of Isa 53. The goal of the presentation is to let each speak for themselves, and so evaluative judgments are reserved. Each is taken seriously as an interpreter working within the

⁹ Cf. Seitz, ‘Canonical Approach’.

¹⁰ Chapman, ‘Brevard Childs’, 9.

¹¹ Childs, *Isaiah*, xii.

context of Christian faith and practice,¹² and so is presented as providing a significant model on their own terms.¹³ Given the complex questions that Duhm and Childs feel compelled to address, their treatments are substantially longer than that given to Motyer, for whom questions of critical historical reconstruction are not theologically proper to the literature itself.

Chapters Two, Four, and Six then address each reading of Isa 53 in light of each hermeneutical proposal. Historical, literary, and theological contexts affect the readings. The evaluative content of the study appears only substantially in a conclusion (Chapter Seven), and seeks to draw out certain implications of the interpretation of Isa 53 as Christian Scripture, for wider hermeneutical and rhetorical purposes.

¹² Barth, *Protestant Theologie*, 14.

¹³ Cf. Barth ('Bultmann', 113) on Bultmann, 'Unless you can appreciate how attractive this all is, and feel it in your very bones, unless you can see how everything tips the scales in favour of Bultmann and his existentialism, you are not qualified to dispute with him. Rhetorical denunciations of his negative tendencies, his elimination of this or that article in the Bible or creed will get you nowhere. Bultmann's positive appeal is too strong for that'.

Chapter 1

Bernhard Duhm, Theological Hermeneutics and Isaiah

‘Daß in den letzten acht Jahren ein Jesaiakommentar vergriffen werden konnte, ist ein Zeichen, daß die alten Propheten noch leben. Die alten und jungen Theologen, die in dieser erbärmlichen Zeit zu den Propheten hinsitzen, werden als Mitarbeiter an der Gesundung der Menschheit sich davon erheben’.

Bernhard Duhm¹

The present dissertation is interested in taking up three divergent voices in the conversation over what it means to read Isaiah 53 as part of the Christian canon – scripturally and theologically. The first voice to be considered is that of Bernhard Duhm. Duhm leads the discussion not because he is chronologically prior to Childs and Motyer, but because he possesses a set of concerns towards which both Childs and Motyer are (in differing ways) reacting. Duhm was, on any reckoning, a ‘religionsgeschichtliche Wissenschaftler’ of the first order.² It is true that to coalesce Duhm’s many publications into a unity would be somewhat forced and artificial – he developed over time as much as any scholar.³ Nevertheless, he represents in many ways an identifiable approach to interpreting the Old Testament as

¹ Duhm, *Jesaia*, ‘Vorwort zu vierten Auflage’, 5. All references to this work will simply appear as ‘*Jesaia*’, assuming the fifth edition of 1968. Where other versions are compared, I note in superscripted form the different publications (e.g. *Jesaia*¹, *Jesaia*², etc.). Publication information for the differing versions appears in the bibliography.

² In addition to what follows, Duhm clearly states at the outset of his *Jesaia* that it is only through ‘kultur- und religionsgeschichtliche Kritik’ that the goal of connecting with the living personalities of biblical authors (and thus their particular, diachronic contributions to interpretation) is accomplished (3).

Space restricts a contextualization of Duhm in relation to the two largest figures in the development of the ‘religionsgeschichtliche Schule’, Johann Gottfried Herder and Ernst Troeltsch. I would, however, fully acknowledge Barth’s appreciation of the impact of both scholars on the movement, ‘Ohne Herder unmöglich das spezifische Pathos der theologischen Historik des 19. Jahrhunderts. Ohne Herder keine Erlanger und keine religionsgeschichtliche Schule. Ohne Herder auch kein Troeltsch’. See Barth, *Protestantische Theologie*, 282. Cf. Herder, *Ebräischen Poesie*; Troeltsch, *Glaubenslehre*.

³ Smend, *Astruc to Zimmerli*, 115-16.

Christian Scripture in the context of a 'religionsgeschichtliche Schule'.⁴ To appreciate the context of Duhm as situated within this scholarly community, as well as within the Church, we might consider a small, mostly overlooked lecture of his, *Die Gottgeweihten in der alttestamentlichen Religion*.⁵

Duhm was perhaps slightly idiosyncratic in his particular construal of the place of religion and theology in the university setting, as he was no great supporter of construing Old Testament theology as a supposedly 'objective', scientific discipline. Nevertheless, religion and theology stood alongside the natural sciences under the general rubric of 'Wissenschaft',⁶ with the particular scholarly edge coming from a comparison of Israel's religious development in relation to its neighbors in antiquity and world religions at present (Indian philosophy features often in Duhm's works).⁷

It comes as no surprise, then, when in a 1905 lecture at Basel Duhm outlines his general interest in the Old Testament in a scholarly setting, as a striving above all else, 'eine sachliche Kenntnis der wirklichen Religionen zu gewinnen'.⁸ The relation of religion to theology is clearly spelled out:

Auch jetzt noch bemerkt man vielerorts ein leises Mißtrauen gegen die Religionswissenschaft, als ob sie aus seiner gewissen Abkehr vom Christentum entsprungen sei und als ob die intime Beschäftigung mit dieser oder jener fremden Religion die Anhänglichkeit an die eigene beeinträchtigen könne. Aber die Religionswissenschaft hat gar nicht die Absicht, in das eigentliche Leben der Religion einzugreifen und etwa die christliche Religion durch fremde Weisheit zu verbessern. Sie will nicht unserer Religion, sondern nur unserer Theologie einen festeren Boden geben, indem sie die ganze Familie der Religionen kennen zu lernen sucht, deren vornehmste Tochter und Königin das Christentum ist.⁹

The division between 'Religion' and 'Theology' could not be conceptually sharper – 'Religion' is an eternal reality, a prophetic experience and partaking

⁴ Lamentably, few engage Duhm substantially as a theological interpreter. For some, he is a convenient *entrée* only (MacDonald 'Monotheism', 43; Quinn-Miscall, *Reading Isaiah*, 2, 187); for others, he is simply a child of his 19th century times (McGinnis and Tull, 'Remembering the Former Things', 1-2, 26); for others still, he is responsible for the present confusion concerning the book of Isaiah's (textual) unity (Childs, *Isaiah*; Melugin, 'Form Criticism', 263-2; Orlinsky, *Studies*, 17).

⁵ Duhm, *Gottgeweihten*.

⁶ Cf. Duhm, *Kosmologie und Religion*.

⁷ Duhm, *Propheten*, vi, 8. This was/is a significant differentiation between Duhm and Wellhausen; where Wellhausen was more confined to pursue historical development *within* Israel, Duhm pursued the relation of this phenomenon to world history (if only *in nuce*). See Duhm, *Propheten*, 1-12; for a more succinct summary of the prophet's 'gigantischen Unternehmen', see Duhm, *Propheten*, 458-65 (esp. 458). Cf. Lessing, *Geschichte*, 280. The move has much to do with the binding force of spirituality as a shared phenomenon amongst world religions. Cf. Duhm, *Reich Gottes*, 4.

⁸ Duhm, *Gottgeweihten*, 4.

⁹ Duhm, *Gottgeweihten*, 3 (emph. added).

of the divine nature,¹⁰ while 'Theologie' is, *mutatis mutandis*, the scientific (historical) investigation that deepens the church's spiritual experience of its prophetic calling, primarily through means of comparative world religions.¹¹ For Duhm, 'Religionswissenschaft' could not give religion itself a firmer ground than that which it eternally possessed, since it is, 'nur einmal durch und durch "mystisch"'.¹² In one particularly striking section of a lecture concerning 'wissenschaftliche Theologie' (particularly within 'Protestantismus'), Duhm comments:

Wenn diese Theologie sich dazu entschliessen könnte ein größeres Zutrauen zu der eigene Kraft der Religion, zu ihrer Unabhängigkeit von menschlichen Einsichten und Ansichten zu fassen, wenn sie ihre eigene Lehre von der Wirksamkeit des heiligen Geistes unter den Menschen herzhaft glauben wollte, so würde sie dazu kommen können, die Religion aus der Vormundschaft der Theologie zu entlassen.¹³

Theology would have to give up 'Religion' in order to have her back. In so relinquishing religion from its 'Vormundschaft', theology would not only acknowledge the universal nature of Christianity's belief in the Holy Spirit – it would also allow itself to serve the role of *ancilla* to religion. The scholarly theologian, Duhm notes, 'die Religion und seine eigene Religion von der Theologie unabhängig weiss.'¹⁴

Any reader of Duhm will quickly pick up on his language of 'objektiv Wissenschaft', applied to theology as a kind of 19th century analogue to Luther's 'sola scriptura'; theology is a realm of scholarship within which relative certainty can be obtained in the essential historical matters, which, in turn, are adapted for theological ends (though in a dialectical manner; see below). A simple glance at the radically different proposals for the

¹⁰ F. Watson summarizes the split as paradigmatic, '... "religion" represents the divine-human relationship in its most elemental form, and the human partner in this relationship is in a certain sense dehistoricized by it... *Religion* is a matter of the soul, and externalities are tangential to it'. See Watson, *Text and Truth*, 187. As noted below, Duhm's conviction on this point has a good deal to do with his Romantic leanings. Most notable in this regard are his comments in his *Geheimnis*. It should be said that while Watson's comments are perhaps true for a section of 19th century Old Testament theologians, Duhm is an exception to this; for, 'Religion' and 'Kritik' exist in a dialectical relationship.

¹¹ Duhm, *Theologie*, 24-29.

¹² Duhm, *Reich Gottes*, 8.

¹³ Duhm, *Über Ziel*, 23.

¹⁴ Duhm, *Über Ziel*, 31.

'Entstehung des Alten Testaments' between Duhm and Childs is enough to display Duhm's overall interests.¹⁵

This difference notwithstanding, Duhm's 'objektiv' work consistently resulted in the triumph of Christianity, described above as both daughter and queen in religious research. There is something, then, that is probably not *entirely* objective in the apologetic of his work (below, and in the conclusion, we will see in sharper relief the kind of epistemology under which Duhm subsumes this privileging). A short section from the close of the Basel lecture above is telling. After covering one of his hallmark topics, the fossilization of true (prophetic) religion into cultic legislation,¹⁶ Duhm reaches forward to the Christ-event as a recovery of true religion. Suddenly, out of the 'armen Boden Galiläas', a person appears, 'der nicht redet wie die Schriftgelehrten, sondern wie einer, der Vollmacht hat'.¹⁷ With this person, 'Die alten Wunder erstehen wieder'; significantly, these ancient wonders are now carried out, 'wie einst Jahwe tut'.¹⁸

Lest Christ appear at this point to be a mere recapitulation or improvement of the 'old days', Duhm makes the rupture of the Christ-event explicit:

Er bringt auch mehr als die Wiedererneuerung der alten Gottesfülle, er bringt eine neue Schöpfung; er wird das Reich Gottes bringen, wo Gott selber unter den Menschen wohnt. Auch für seine Jünger liegt, wie für die großen Propheten, der Schwerpunkt der Religion in der Zukunft...Sie hören das Seufzen der Kreatur unter der Endlichkeit; die Erlösung von diesem Dasein steht bevor, dann ein Reich die Unsichtbaren und die Menschen vereinen und wird das Vergängliche vergangen sein.¹⁹

Christ exceeds what Duhm finds in the Old Testament's prospective glance; as such, the life and ministry of Christ, the beginning of a new creation seen in his work, and the guarantee of this work for the future hope of the early (and ongoing) Church, does not merely recover, but ruptures: Christ presents a definitive break with what came before. Duhm closes the lecture with the observation that in post-biblical Christendom similar processes continued to appear.

¹⁵ Duhm, *Entstehung*; Childs, 'Biblische Theologie', where section IV (18-21) concerns 'Die Entstehung der christlichen Bibel'.

¹⁶ Cf. Duhm, *Reich Gottes*, 8. Cf. *idem.*, *Theologie*, 27, where Duhm observes 'einen tiefgreifende inner Gegensatz zwischen der prophetischen und der im Gesetz...'

¹⁷ Duhm, *Gottgeweihten*, 34.

¹⁸ Duhm, *Gottgeweihten*, 34. Also, *ibid.*, 'wer ihn sieht, sieht den himmlischen Vater'.

¹⁹ Duhm, *Gottgeweihten*, 34.

The point of this juxtaposition of ‘objektiv’, ‘wissenschaftliche’ theology with the ministry of Jesus and the Church is already somewhat self-evident: Duhm saw his own work as oriented towards the *telos* of the Church and Christian theology. Though his lectures often address his audience as ‘Docenten und Studenten’,²⁰ Duhm did not feel any great differentiation between work in the University and ‘Berufsarbeit in Gottes Dienst’.²¹ Even his *Jesaia*, while littered with specialist debate and extensive text-critical emendation not for the faint-hearted, is commended both to the interest ‘des Anfänger’²² as well as that reader who ‘an der Wahrheit und an der Religion gelegen ist’.²³ In a distinctive way, which will need to be explored at length, Duhm stands alongside Motyer and Childs as a reader of the Old Testament, Isaiah, and Isaiah 53 as texts that possess Christ and the Church as their *telos*. What this looks like in specifics demands, as with the other two interpreters, a substantial contextualizing of Duhm and his work.

I. Duhm’s Heritage

In his ‘biographischen Geleitwort’ to the fifth edition of Bernhard Duhm’s *Jesaia*, Walter Baumgartner noted that as much as Duhm *qua* maverick was not to be followed in all interpretive and methodological decisions, he also could not be neglected in handlings of the prophets. This may particularly be the case with respect to the book of Isaiah. Duhm’s contributions to Isaiah research have been such that contemporary handlings of the book typically begin with his commentary – whether he is viewed positively or negatively. This is obviously not owing to a lack of historical-critical study of the book prior to 1894. On the contrary, Duhm was situated within a strong line of historical-critical study of the book’s origins and development: one needs only to think of Vitringa,²⁴ Lowth,²⁵ and Gesenius,²⁶ as representative of this

²⁰ Cf. Duhm, ‘Entstehung’, 1.

²¹ Duhm, *Propheten*, 343-4.

²² Duhm, *Jesaia*, 5 (‘Vorwort zur dritten Auflage’).

²³ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 4 (‘Vorwort [zur ersten Auflage]’). Additionally, Duhm’s closing paragraph to his Basel lecture quoted above asks in what way the ‘newness’ of Christ remains such in a world of Christendom that appears to fall back into ‘priestly’ tendencies. ‘Darauf kann die Wissenschaft kein Antwort geben’, Duhm admits; nevertheless, any response must ultimately come from within the Church, ‘Aber der Christ glaubt, daß seine Religion, daß vielmehr sein Gott der Kräfte genug habe, die die Welt immer wieder verjüngen können: das Gras verdorrt, die Blume welkt, doch Gottes Wort bleibt in Ewigkeit’. See Duhm, *Gottgeweihten*, 34.

²⁴ Vitringa, *Jesajae*. Childs’s reflections on Vitringa are a helpful situating of the commentator. See his, ‘Vitringa’.

far-reaching interest in Isaiah. Also within his contemporary setting was there a flourishing interest in the critical issues surrounding the book's interpretation.²⁷

With perhaps the exception of one aspect of his commentary on Jeremiah,²⁸ Duhm's most abiding contributions lay in the book of Isaiah. The work, which had nearly twenty years to develop before its publication (1875-1894), possesses a legacy similar that of Lowth's commentary on the book, which occupied the bishop for twenty-eight years before its publication.²⁹ Duhm's legacy is further witnessed to by the fact that though the work remains untranslated in its dense, terse German style, it is nevertheless still engaged in the English-speaking world (and, to some extent,³⁰ in the German speaking world as well). That is to say, Duhm remains a compelling dialogue partner.³¹

The lack of an English translation of *Jesaja* may be indicative of differing scholarly interests between the German and English speaking theological worlds.³² Yet German circles have not always received the scholar amicably: Duhm's methods had been referred to as 'original, impudent, in no way inhibited by any reverence for tradition' (perhaps not an entirely negative assessment in German higher criticism);³³ Diestel called Duhm's *Theologie* 'half-baked';³⁴ Wellhausen judged the work, 'Duhm hat die Bedeutung der Propheten gewaltig übertrieben';³⁵ and even with reference to

²⁵ Lowth, *Isaiah*. For a summary, see Stansell, 'The Poet's Prophet'.

²⁶ Gesenius, *Jesaja* (2 vols., 1821). General introductions to Gesenius are harder to come by than those of Vittinghoff and Lowth. One may consult Smend, *Astruc to Zimmerli*, 57-75; Sweeney, 'On the Road to Duhm', 248ff.

²⁷ Cf. the commentaries produced in both the English- and German-speaking worlds by Cheyne, *Prophecies of Isaiah* (2 vols.); Driver, *Isaiah: His Life and Times*; Delitzsch, *Prophecies of Isaiah* (2 vols.); Dillman, *Der Prophet Jesaja*; Skinner, *Prophet Isaiah*; Marti, *Das Buch Jesaja*; Condamin, *Isaïe*; Whitehouse, *Isaiah I-XXXIX*.

²⁸ Smend notes the heavy impact of the work, which was both loved and loathed (*Astruc to Zimmerli*, 113-14). Despite the criticisms, however, Duhm's "supplementary hypothesis" increasingly emerged as the most fruitful approach for grasping the development history of this difficult book' (114).

²⁹ Stansell, 'Poet's Prophet', 227.

³⁰ See Höffken, 'Beobachtungen'.

³¹ For a sampling, one may note Williamson *Book Called Isaiah*, 1ff.; Sweeney, 'On the Road to Duhm', 243ff.; Seitz, *Zion's Final Destiny*, 1-35.

³² Williamson notes the differing English- and German-speaking contexts vis-à-vis Deutero-Isaiah ('Recent Issues', 35).

³³ Oettli, review of Duhm, 17. The citations here are noted in Smend, *Astruc to Zimmerli*, 106, 108, 114.

³⁴ Diestel, review of Duhm, 183-4. Diestel's criticism is bookended by high praise for the work. The criticism relates to the work's 'Gedanken-brouillons' and 'unausgereiften Ansätze zur Entwicklung einer Idee' (184).

³⁵ Wellhausen, review of Duhm, 157. Wellhausen closes his review, 'Ich glaube nicht'.

the widely-read *Das Buch Jeremia*, Baumgartner judged that Duhm's handlings of specific texts often incited an unneeded irritation and opposition. With reference to Jer 23.1-8, Baumgartner observes, 'Schon die Beschränkung auf das eine Metrum reizt zum Widerspruch und seine Viererstrophen sind manchmal wie mit der Axt zurechtgehauen'.³⁶ In sum, Duhm possesses a legacy of controversial, though no less rigorous, scholarship.³⁷ Baumgartner notes:

So ist Duhm ein genialer Einzelgänger, dem man nicht blindlings folgen kann und soll, der aber aus der Geschichte dieser Forschung nicht mehr wegzudenken ist, solange man sich überhaupt mit den Propheten befasst. Freilich wer Duhm nur aus seinen Büchern kennt, kennt ihn auch im besten Fall nur halb. Die andere Hälfte, seine originale Persönlichkeit und seine tiefe Wirkung, geht einem erst auf dem Boden Basels auf, wo auch heute noch, fast vierzig Jahre nach seinem Tode, die Erinnerung an ihn so lebendige ist.³⁸

If this is indeed the case – that to rightly become familiar with Duhm demands more sensitivity than a mere acquaintance with his books supplies, it would be essential to give sufficient space to locating his hermeneutical underpinnings, and the exegetical outworking of these in relation to Isaiah and Isa 53.

II. *Locating Duhm's Hermeneutics*

Duhm's earliest interests were located primarily in the inner 'Entwicklungsgeschichte' of Israel's religion; nevertheless, he engaged from an early point in the question of the New Testament's relationship to the Old. Two years prior to his *Theologie der Propheten*, Duhm submitted a dissertation, curiously enough, on Paul.³⁹ The emphasis of the work, like his subsequent publication, was primarily aimed at locating Israel's inner religious developments, and concluded with an interpretation of Paul's statement on the purpose of the Law in Romans 5.20. Duhm's reading would be given a

³⁶ Baumgartner, 'Geleitwort', viii.

³⁷ Even Barth (*Einführung*, 83-4) admits an early fascination ('Bewunderung') with Duhm's centralizing of the life of Israel in the prophets.

³⁸ Baumgartner, 'Geleitwort', xiii.

³⁹ Duhm, *Pauli Apostoli*.

similar interpretation and central place by Wellhausen only a few years later.⁴⁰

The emphasis on the prophets as standing in some opposition to cultic legislation was key for Duhm, and was not foreign to his intellectual milieu. Duhm, 'vor allem der bedeutenden Wellhausenschüler',⁴¹ would follow his teacher's lead – who had followed Ewald – in bringing the prophets to the fore as the pioneers of Israel's true religion.⁴² In fact, Ewald's *Die Propheten des alten Bundes* (1841) was the first theological book Duhm owned.⁴³ This is perhaps part of the reason he was so deeply impressed with the prophets as holding particular import for theological reading.

Inspired by Graf's hypothesis, this prioritizing of the prophets has perhaps yet to find a response as excited as that of the late 19th century.⁴⁴ Duhm was himself inspired by Graf, so much so that he could write, 'Es liegt auf der Hand, dass die Grafische Hypothese eine vollständige Revolution auf dem Gebiet der alttestamentlichen Theologie und Religionsgeschichte hervorbringen muss.'⁴⁵

The 'clarity' that Duhm assumes in Graf's hypothesis testifies to the degree to which he was impressed with his intellectual forerunner; and it was undoubtedly within the 'Wirkungsgeschichte' of Graf and Wellhausen that Duhm would commence his work on the prophets, giving a further, much desired, articulation to what had only just been started by his teachers.⁴⁶

Baumgartner notes Duhm's specific location:

In der Zeit, da Duhm sich dem Studium der Theologie zuwandte, befand sich die alttestamentliche Forschung in einer ihrer schwersten Krisen: War 'P', die Priesterschrift, die bisher als die Grundschrift des Pentateuch gegolten, nicht vielmehr die jüngste, und die bisherige Formel 'Gesetz und Propheten' in 'Propheten und Gesetz' umzukehren? Reuß, Graf und Kuenen waren bereits zu diesem Ergebnis gekommen; Wellhausens Arbeiten dazu lagen noch nicht vor. Da griff Duhm in die Diskussion ein mit seiner 'Theologie der

⁴⁰ Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, 81, 363. The original was published in 1878 under the title, *Geschichte Israels*, and curiously skips over Duhm's use of Romans 5.20, citing Vatke (1835) instead.

⁴¹ Lessing, *Geschichte*, 155.

⁴² Lessing, *Geschichte*, 280.

⁴³ Duhm, 'Vorwort', in his *Zwölf Propheten*, iii.

⁴⁴ Duhm, *Theologie*, 6. Cf. Duhm's comment on the 'despotism' of the Law, from which the spirit is freed by the prophetic 'Stoff' (*Theologie*, 33). This would make a later appearance in his *Propheten*, 117, where Duhm notes that the late growth of cultic practices in Israel resulted in 'ein Herabsinken der Jahwereligion in die Kultreligion...'.
⁴⁵ Duhm, *Theologie*, 18.

⁴⁶ See Gunkel's extremely high praise of Duhm's later *Propheten* in his *Die Propheten*, 1ff.

Propheten' (1875), die bei dem kaum Dreißigjährigen schon eine souveräne Beherrschung des ganzen Alten Testaments verrät und zugleich das Gebiet betrifft, das ihm zeitlebens am meisten am Herzen liegen sollte.⁴⁷

Duhm's contribution was indicative of a personal interest – one which would last throughout his ensuing career – that the Prophets stand as a challenge to Israel's debasement of a pure 'Jahwereligion' into a 'Kultreligion'.⁴⁸ It is, for Duhm, only by highlighting this historical situation that the prophetic impulse will best be heard and appreciated, as von Rad described the approach, '[A]t one fell swoop the prophets were brought out of their position in the shadows where their distinctive characteristics could never possibly be realized'.⁴⁹ There was always the danger of over-emphasizing the place and role of the prophets in Israel's 'spiritual' development, and Duhm perhaps was guilty of just this. Duhm could not fathom how the magisterial works of the prophets could follow after the Law and its external institutions, so consequently regarded the prophets to be the starting point for true Israelite 'religion'.

As Reventlow has read Duhm, the matter was not so much that of source criticism and the dating of texts, as it was of the self-evident(?) principle that 'a religion's interiority cannot have developed from forms that are determined by external rules and laws'.⁵⁰ Here we are getting at something much more general than what a purely 'religionsgeschichtliche' approach would take up: Duhm's interest in Israel's religion was a historical interest, but it was not purely historical. Duhm manifests a Romantic interest in the originary place of the prophetic impulse, present as much in Israel's religion as in Buddhism, as much in prophets as in poets.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Baumgartner, 'Geleitwort', vi.

⁴⁸ See Reventlow, 'Die Prophetie'.

⁴⁹ Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* II:4. Von Rad finds Duhm to be problematic, though, and will stress the centrality of '[die] überaus starke überlieferungsgebundenheit der prophetischen Botschaften', rather than the prophet's ecstatic experience. The concern of von Rad stands in some contrast to earlier comments in his volume I of his *Theology*, that 'what has existed till now is broken off' (I:128). Cf. Rendtorff, *Canon and Theology*, 59.

⁵⁰ Reventlow, *Biblical Interpretation*, 329.

⁵¹ Duhm, *Gottgeweihten*, 4; idem., *Über Ziel*, 7. Curiously, Duhm does not mention Lowth in this regard. With the exception of four occurrences throughout his *Jesaia* commentary (on my reading, at least), Lowth does not feature. See Duhm, *Jesaia*, 54 (on Isa 5.1-7), 460 (on 62.5), 472 (on 64.4), and 486 (on 66.15). On Lowth's close association of prophecy and poetry, based on the assertion that both share a common source (the Holy Spirit), see his *Lectures* (1829; spec. 'Lecture XVII', 150-1). For Lowth on Romantic trends generally, see Kugel, *Poetry and Prophecy*, 21. That Lowth was known and received in Germany (*via Michaelis*) is noted in Stansell, 'The Poet's Prophet', 227ff. In England, cf. William's Blake's *All Religions are One*,

The legacy of Herder played no small role in this development. Bishop Lowth's early-Romantic *Praelectiones de sacra Poesi Hebraeorum* (1753)⁵² would form the backdrop for Herder's more explicitly philosophical project in his (similarly titled) *Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie* (1782-1783). Lowth's *Praelectiones*, in fact, features in Herder's preliminary outline of the work, and are noted to be both 'schönes und allgepriesenes'.⁵³ Both Lowth and Herder assume the value, importance, and necessity of returning to the original situation to recover the *ipsissima verba* of the prophets themselves, for here divine speech is found in its most pure form. And for Lowth, Herder and Duhm, poetic discourse was the earliest, purest, and most 'divine' medium for this. One may simply note Duhm's tidy maxim, 'Die poetische Sprache ist die Sprache der Götter, diese reden durch die Poeten und Propheten'.⁵⁴ Stowe's translation of Lowth's 'Lecture V' bears quoting, '[H]e who would perceive and feel the peculiar elegancies of the Hebrew poetry, must imagine himself exactly situated as the persons for whom it was written, or even as the writers themselves; he must not attend to the ideas which on a cursory reading certain words would obtrude upon his mind; he is to feel them as a Hebrew, hearing or delivering the same words at the same time, and in the same country... This indeed in many cases will not be easy to do; in some it will be impossible; in all, however, it ought to be regarded...'.⁵⁵

It was perhaps this culture of intellectual excitement that did not allow Duhm to develop his views as he later wished he had. His *Theologie der Propheten*, as groundbreaking as it was in 1875, would later be set aside by Duhm.⁵⁶ While it had been praised by many, the book had also been received as 'one-sided', 'doctrinaire', and 'morally idealist'.⁵⁷ The book certainly assumes many of the opinions *du jour* as accepted, perhaps even uncontested, facts. But there may be a real lasting significance in its rather ambivalent 'Wirkungsgeschichte': it demonstrates, in succinct form, the position of much German higher criticism at the close of the 19th century, and yet stands outside of this association in important ways.

Much more accepted was Duhm's last full publication on the prophets, *Israels Propheten*. Though many features of (what was then) traditional higher criticism are still present and discussed at length, one immediately notices a change in style – Duhm's writing becomes clearer, less polemical, and

principle 5, 'The Religions of all Nations are derived from each Nations [sic] different reception of the Poetic Genius which is every where call'd the Spirit of Prophecy'. See Erdman, *Blake*, 1.

⁵² Lowth, *Lectures*.

⁵³ Herder, *Ebräischen Poesie*, 3-6 ('Entwurf des Buchs'), 15ff. (*Vom Geist*).

⁵⁴ Duhm, *Propheten*, 95.

⁵⁵ Lowth, *Lectures*, 48.

⁵⁶ Quoted in Smend, *Astruc to Zimmerli*, 112. Perhaps Duhm had taken on board Diestel's criticism. Though Diestel critiqued the *Theologie*, he noted that Duhm could 'sehr scharf und klar schreiben', and that all that was needed to improve the work was a sober self-criticism of the author, 'Bei fortgesetzter strenger Selbstkritik lassen die bedeutenden Fähigkeiten des Verfassers sehr Tüchtiges erwarten' (186).

⁵⁷ Clements, *Century*, 53, 56. This is not an unfair statement, and for one who openly praised the contribution of Hegel to modern theology, one could imagine Duhm to be flattered. Cf. Duhm, *Propheten*, 142, for whom the main thrust of the prophets was 'die Religion von der Sinnlichkeit zu befreien, in die sie der Kult mit seiner Förderung des Triebens und seinen magischen und mantischen Anhängseln hinabgezogen hatte, und sie auf die Höhe des sittlichen Verkehrs zwischen freien Persönlichkeiten zu erheben'.

engages the reader from the first page. Throughout the book, we find the common grammatical refrain, 'Heute wir haben... ', wherein Duhm relates some phenomenon in the prophets to his contemporary setting. The change in tone may have to do with the aim of the book series (*Lebensfragen*), but may also have simply been the result of prolonged reflection on the conclusions taken for granted forty years earlier, and on the significance of the prophets for those interested 'in truth and religion'.⁵⁸

As a last note on Duhm's intellectual setting, it is worth considering an association often taken to be a criticism. The depiction of the prophetic message as standing in sharp contrast with its later 'denigration' into priestly Torah (and as the prophetic message itself often reflected 19th century moral idealism), Duhm, his contemporaries, and their *modus operandi* generally, have been seen to reflect the historical categories of Hegelian philosophy.⁵⁹

Barton, in a short treatment of Wellhausen's intellectual setting, has sought to distance the scholar from a residual Hegelian influence within late 19th century Old Testament scholarship.⁶⁰ 'Hegelian', here as elsewhere, is to be read as a negative descriptor, the kind that suggests one's historical postulation is guided more by philosophical presuppositions than by the objective, empirical, on-the-ground phenomena of Israel's history. Thus it makes sense that Barton, as one interested in maintaining the source-critical endeavor as a worthwhile venture,⁶¹ should distance this pursuit from Hegelianism:

Hegelianism was scarcely a viable intellectual option by the 1870s, and indeed was more or less already dead when Wellhausen was born. Vatke was a kind of throwback to earlier times, and for that very reason was more or less ignored by the scholarly community when he published his history of Israel...to suggest that Wellhausen's thinking in the 1870s was Hegelian is thus a hopeless anachronism.⁶²

The strength of Barton's comments makes sense in light of Bloom's contention, that 'all' 19th century source-critical work on the Old Testament

⁵⁸ Cf. Duhm, *Jesaia*, 4.

⁵⁹ Note Kegel's synopsis, 'Hegel begat Vatke, Vatke begat Wellhausen', in his *Los von Wellhausen!*, 10 (cited in Barton, *Old Testament*, 171). See also Albright's criticism of Wellhausen in this way, in his *Stone Age*; cf. Childs, 'Wellhausen in English', 86.

⁶⁰ Wellhausen's comment on a sort of Hegelian 'Satz', 'Gegensatz', 'Vermittelung' in the book of Judges (*Prolegomena*, 231) is commented upon by Barton in his *Old Testament*, 172. Banks, *Writing*, 59ff., gives the most helpful statement on the relationship here. See also Reventlow, *Biblical Interpretation*, 323.

⁶¹ Cf. Davies, 'Introduction', 15, who attempts to deflect these charges from Wellhausen.

⁶² Barton, *Old Testament*, 172.

was indelibly marked with a Hegelianism that did not bode well for either 'Historie' or the Jews.⁶³ After mentioning in brief what Graf, Vatke and Wellhausen each sought to accomplish, Bloom remarks:

Unfortunately, these grand savants were all Hegelians, and like Hegel, they saw Israelite faith as a primitive preparation for the sublimities of the true religion, high-minded Christianity, a properly Germanic belief purged of gross Jewish vulgarities and superstitions. The idealist anti-Semitism of this biblical Hegelianism is almost enough to explain the strong resistance of normative Jewish scholars to the Documentary Hypothesis.⁶⁴

Bloom's assessment of this stream of thought is only loose and general, however, and without the caution to articulate the specific ways in which Hegel was, and was not, an influence on Old Testament study. Both Barton and Bloom are far too quick to assess a term ('Hegelian') that requires substantial, technical handling.

The chief problem with the rhetoric of these assessments is that it strikes with a blunt instrument. In reality, *contra* Barton, Hegel's influence was massively important and formative for 19th century biblical theology.⁶⁵ Likewise, *contra* Bloom, Hegelian influence does not need to eclipse real, serious historical analysis. Indeed, it was probably an interest in Hegel that led Duhm to formulate Israel's history in terms of 'Weltgeschichte' as differentiated to Wellhausen's 'innere Entwicklungsgeschichte'.⁶⁶

To address Barton and Bloom, then, I simply supply a section of Duhm's inaugural address at Basel, in 1889, which, taken alongside other comments from that lecture, challenges the simplicity of the above associations:

⁶³ While it may not *need* to lead to anti-Judaistic readings, Duhm's source-/religio-historical interpretations often, sadly, do. His commentary on the Psalms is particularly bad on this account. Psalm 1, for example, presents a dichotomy between Greek-friendly Jews who emulated a convivial Greek sociability, and Jewish 'schools', wherein 'die Thoragelehrten sich darüber den Kopf zerbrachen, ob man ein am Sabbath gelegtes Ei essen dürfe oder nicht'). Part of this kind of reading is the re-pointing of תורה in v.2 to find some non-cultic alternative. Duhm chose, following de Lagarde, to read יראה. See Duhm, *Die Psalmen*, 2-3. Further, that Johannes Hempel could honor Duhm through a dedicatory letter in *ZAW*, while not necessarily troubling (he did this for many *ZAW* contributors), nonetheless signals that many of Duhm's emphases were in fact amenable to German anti-semitism in the 1920s and 30s. See Hempel, 'Bernhard Duhm'.

⁶⁴ Bloom, *Book of J*, 20.

⁶⁵ Cf. Baur's Hegelian structuring in his 'Die Christuspartei in der korinthischen Gemeinde' (1831). On the Baur-Ritschl-Duhm relationship, cf. Troeltsch, *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, 692.

⁶⁶ Lessing, *Geschichte*, 280-1. 'Innere Entwicklungsgeschichte' is obviously taken from Duhm's *Theologie*, though there Duhm possessed only an incipient interest in 'Weltgeschichte'.

Der Gedanke der Entwicklung, der Glaube an die Möglichkeit, Gesetze der Entwicklung zu entdecken, zuerst aufgekeimt im Geist unserer grossen Dichter, dann mit kühner Ideologie durchgeführt in den Konstruktionen Hegels, endlich ergriffen und mit besonderem Erfolg verwertet von der Naturwissenschaft, hat unter den Theologen den einen erschreckt, den andern mächtig angezogen und manchem die Entscheidung schwer gemacht wegen der praktischen Konsequenzen, die sich aus ihm zu ergeben scheinen. Ist etwa auch die christliche Religion der Entwicklung fähig oder gar bedürftig? Kann sie noch die 'vollkommene' Religion sein, wenn sie sich entwickelt?⁶⁷

Duhm here attempts to bring his 19th century theological setting to this decisive question. To answer it with a 'yes' or 'no', as if it were an 'either-or' decision, is fundamentally to misconstrue the nature of theology and hermeneutics. History may 'evolve', undergo a Hegelian 'Entwicklung', but to assume that this is an observation that takes place apart from the philosophical ('theological') presuppositions of the theologian is a naivety that betrays an understanding of theology along lines far too scientific in nature.⁶⁸ For, 'Wissenschaftliche Forschung ist vor allen Dingen sachgemässe Forschung; Klarheit und Einigkeit über ihre Aufgaben kann unter den Theologen nicht möglich sein, wenn nicht die Sache selber in ihrem Wesen einigermaßen sicher erkannt ist'.⁶⁹ Duhm is not optimistic about this, as 'Der Theologe ist nicht in der glücklichen Lage des Mathematikers, dem sein Stoff selber mit der Klarheit und Notwendigkeit der Logik die richtige Methode vorzeichnet'.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, as will be seen below, it is the task of the Old Testament theologian to keep in check the ever-present potential to rationalize on grounds of theology's *unscientific* nature.

Duhm's praise of Hegel, in whom one finds the chief categories by which theology and history are related, is not unique to Duhm. Eissfeldt, fifty years after Duhm's lectures – and a century after the completion of Hegel's lectures on world history⁷¹ – would relate 'Hegel-Kritik und Pentateuch-Kritik' as coordinate ventures both seeking to relate 'Analyse und Synthese' in a dialectical manner – two aspects which, up to Luther and often after,

⁶⁷ Duhm, *Über Ziel*, 4-5 (emph. added).

⁶⁸ Duhm's struggle to find a middle-ground between the dynamic and static natures of, respectively, on-the-ground-history and immutable universal law, is present throughout his *Theologie* (1875), especially at his critique of Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason*, where fundamental morality, in terms of categorical imperatives, is immune from development. Duhm, *Theologie*, 107.

⁶⁹ Duhm, *Über Ziel*, 6.

⁷⁰ Duhm, *Über Ziel*, 6.

⁷¹ Reprinted under Nisbet's translation as *Lectures*.

experienced a ‘eine unüberbrückbare Kluft’ similar to Lessing’s ditch.⁷² While one might be hesitant to ascribe such a heroic triumph to Luther, Eissfeldt nevertheless maintains that the intellectual (and *theological*) pursuit of historical-critical analysis, like that of philosophical history, ultimately seeks a coherent picture.⁷³ In this respect, following Eissfeldt, Duhm can hardly be faulted for his own attempt, within the Hegelian terminology of late 19th century scholarship, to bridge history and theology under the same categories of ‘Analyse und Synthese’.⁷⁴

In sum, while Duhm praises the accomplishments of Hegel for understanding the nature of history (as a discipline), he is cautious in his praise.⁷⁵ Duhm, alongside his contemporaries, was aware of the problem inherent in construing history philosophically and teleologically. His attempt to check this potentially endless rationalization will adopt a specific *modus operandi*, below.⁷⁶

II.1 *The Hermeneutics of Theologie der Propheten*

To locate Duhm methodologically, it will be helpful to note the similarities between his *Theologie* and his *Propheten*. Among the numerous strands that run through both works, there is a consistent hermeneutical emphasis, that to keep the prophetic phenomenon in Israel’s history as something distinct from later New Testament or dogmatic appropriations of this phenomenon, its historical particularity cannot be marginalized or eclipsed by Christian theology; a ‘depth-dimension’⁷⁷ must be highlighted, as much as legitimately possible. To show this in sharper relief, it will be helpful to highlight the

⁷² Eissfeldt, ‘Hegel-Kritik’.

⁷³ Eissfeldt, ‘Hegel-Kritik’, 39-40. Given Eissfeldt’s philosophical appreciation of Hegel, we would do well to question whether he ever viewed his task as severely dissociated from the ‘synthetic’ task as Eichrodt would lead us to believe. See Eichrodt, ‘Alttestamentliche Theologie’, 84, 88.

⁷⁴ As Eissfeldt, Duhm praised Luther as the ‘deutsche Prophet’, who made ‘die freie Persönlichkeit zum Subjekt der Religion’. On this ground, Luther’s work is ‘der vornehmste Beitrag, den die germanischen Völker zur Geistesgeschichte der Menschheit geliefert haben’. See Duhm, *Über Ziel*, 21.

⁷⁵ Blenkinsopp has suggested that while ‘the influence of Hegel on nineteenth-century biblical scholarship has no doubt been exaggerated’, nevertheless ‘its impact was surely felt’ (he cites J.F.L. George, W. Vatke and J. Wellhausen as examples). See his *The Pentateuch*, 8-9.

⁷⁶ See below, as concerns Duhm’s adjustment of Schiller’s ‘Universalgeschichte’.

⁷⁷ The interest in a depth-dimension, or a proper appreciation of the diachronic, belongs to historical-critics as much as to canonical interpreters. See Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 216-17; idem, *Isaiah*, 217; Provan, ‘Brevard Childs’, 4ff.

theme in his *Theologie der Propheten* (1875), and to show how the seeds sown there came to full bloom in his later *Israels Propheten* (1916).

We are gifted, early on in Duhm's *Theologie*, with a comment on his own general hermeneutical approach to the relationship between history and theology. The respective disciplines of historical-criticism, on the one hand, and dogmatic theology, on the other, stand at a stalemate, unable to either entice or force the other across the 'party lines' on the battlefield:

Auf Grund der Thatsache, dass selten theologische Gegensätze rein objectiver und theoretischer Art sind, behaupten sich in der Gegenwart grundverschiedene Parteirichtungen auf dem Kampfplatz, ohne dass die eine die andere zu verdrängen oder zu sich herüberzuziehen vermag.⁷⁸

The solution to this standstill is simply to let the material speak for itself – a solution that will in practice prove to be much more difficult than in articulation:

Um so mehr wird man danach streben müssen, die Entscheidung aus der immer vollkommeneren Erkenntnis des Objects selbst zu gewinnen, und um so häufiger deshalb auch den Versuch erneuern, mit Aufgebung selbst berechtigter und bewährter Voraussetzungen den Gegenstand für sich selbst reden zu lassen. Denn wie das historische Recht, so bedarf auch die theologische Tradition der steten Verjüngung durch die Opposition, die ihr der noch nicht völlig überwundene Stoff entgegengesetzt, bedarf auch die traditionelle Methode der beständigen Kritik durch eine voraussetzungslose Induction.⁷⁹

The material with which the theologian has to reckon must be allowed to speak for itself.⁸⁰ As knowledge of the object grows, the theologian must strive to know what to do with this knowledge of the raw (historical) material; central to this response is the aim of renewing the critical opposition between theological material, and that which theology *proper* has yet to subsume under dogmatic categories. In other words, that which will keep theological tradition alive and rejuvenated, is the pressure it feels from the historical-critical endeavor. And it is precisely the fact that this endeavor is 'voraussetzungslose' that will allow it to exert its rejuvenating force against theological tradition.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Duhm, *Theologie*, 1-2.

⁷⁹ Duhm, *Theologie*, 2.

⁸⁰ See Duhm's inaugural lecture at Basel, *Über Ziel*.

⁸¹ The resonances of Hegel's progressions of *Geist* (in terms of 'Opposition') may reside in the background of this statement. A notable difference, however, is that for Duhm,

The opponents to Duhm's methodological proposal are those who advocate a 'supranaturalistische Theologie' of the prophets, by mis-assigning their teleological aims to the Christ-event. On the other side of the coin, a purely naturalist reading of the prophets presents too sharp an eclipse of the prophetic element, and loses touch with their eschatological vision.

In his *Theologie der Propheten*, the 'supernaturalist' reading of the prophets that Duhm engages is a particular type of reading that can have only a 'negative interest' in the prophets, as the prophetic message is seen to contain only those elements that point toward something in the future, something *teleological*. Their practical, 'pragmatische' content – most notably seen in their relationship to their respective *Sitze im Leben* – is consequently left by the wayside. To approach the problem, Duhm begins with a lecture of Schiller delivered nearly a century earlier, a summary of which will help to highlight Duhm's concerns.

In 'Was heißt und zu welchem Ende studiert man Universalgeschichte?',⁸² which Schiller delivered at Jena University, he expounds two related themes, which form the lecture's two halves. In the first half, we find the differentiation between 'Brodgelehrten' (who constrict the circle of their academic involvement, so as to exude an air of erudition),⁸³ and the scholars who, aware of the vast expanse of knowledge before them, are thereby intellectually paralyzed. The philosopher, however, seeks fundamentally to *unite* disciplines, ignoring the insecurity that intellectual expanse often accompanies, 'Wo der Brodgelehrte trennt, vereinigt der philosophische Geist'.⁸⁴ This is owing to a delight in pursuit of the subject matter as an end in itself, '[S]o hat er die Wahrheit immer mehr geliebt als sein System'.⁸⁵

In the second half of the 'Universalgeschichte', Schiller pursues a line of thought that is rightly alarming. Cataloguing the recent anthropological discoveries of 18th century discoverers, we find a display of 'savage' practices

Christianity represented no resolution within world history, and so need a constant 'Critik' to keep it alive. See Singer, *Hegel*, 14ff.

⁸² The lecture, delivered at Jena University in 1789, was subsequently published in the 'enlightened' German magazine, *Der teutsche Merkur*.

⁸³ 'Universalgeschichte', 108.

⁸⁴ 'Universalgeschichte', 111.

⁸⁵ 'Universalgeschichte', 111. It may not be inappropriate to identify this, in some way, with German Idealism's pursuit of the *Ding an sich*, as Schiller's successor, Hegel, highlighted in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

that confront the reader in an almost biographical sense, 'So waren wir'.⁸⁶ If that is what we were, then *was sind wir jetzt?* We have progressed to 'das Zeitalter der Vernunft', wherein 'alles Licht seines Jahrhunderts kann nunmehr den Geist eines neuern Galilei und Erasmus bescheinen'.⁸⁷ Yet the precise question that Schiller desires to answer is what factors led to this advance, 'Welche Zustände durchwanderte der Mensch, bis er von jenem Aeussersten zu diesem Aeussersten, vom ungeselligen Höhlenbewohner -- zum geistreichen Denker, zum gebildeten Weltmann hinaufstieg? -- Die allgemeine Weltgeschichte giebt Antwort auf diese Frage'.⁸⁸ The answer can be supplied in brief, 'die ganze Weltgeschichte würde wenigstens nöthig seyn, dieses einzige Moment zu erklären'. Schiller expounds:

Daß wir uns als Christen zusammen fanden, mußte diese Religion, durch unzählige Revolutionen vorbereitet, aus dem Judenthum hervorgehen, mußte sie den römischen Staat genau so finden, als sie ihn fand, um sich mit schnellem siegendem Lauf über die Welt zu verbreiten und den Thron der Cäsarn endlich selbst zu besteigen.⁸⁹

The previous world events that have culminated in the 'wir' of 18th century Germany (which Schiller saw as the height of national culture, language, manners, civil benefits, and freedom of conscience) have come about through a series of (logically) necessary universal historical events.⁹⁰ After a sweeping history of the events that have led to the rise of Germany's prosperous, industrial middle class ('Mittelstande'⁹¹), we find that the conspiracies, revolts, wars, advances, and retreats all contributed to the final resting place of world history in 18th century European (and specifically German) culture. Schiller regards his location as having ascended to the heights,⁹² in an age in which Europe had finally been brought 'zu dem Friedensgrundsatz ... welcher allein den Staaten wie den Bürgern vergönnt, ihre Aufmerksamkeit auf sich selbst zu richten, und ihre Kräfte zu einem verständigen Zwecke zu versammeln!'⁹³

⁸⁶ 'Universalgeschichte', 116.

⁸⁷ 'Universalgeschichte', 119, 118.

⁸⁸ 'Universalgeschichte', 120.

⁸⁹ 'Universalgeschichte', 120.

⁹⁰ Historical teleology, whether or not under the rubric of 'Idealism', was no novel thought to Schiller – one may note such a reading in G.B. Vico's 1725 *Scienza Nuova*. See Bergin and Fisch, *The New Science*, 3ff.

⁹¹ 'Universalgeschichte', 123, 'Schöpfer unsrer ganzen Kultur'.

⁹² 'Universalgeschichte', 124.

⁹³ 'Universalgeschichte', 124-5. A dark irony behind the statement is that the *Estates-General* had been called just twenty days prior to Schiller's 'Universalgeschichte'.

Following Schiller's lecture further, the historian must decide which events of this world history to pursue, as world history is essentially a cause-and-effect process, spanning from civilizations not yet possessing formulated speech, to the 'Hochkultur' of modern, enlightened Europe. The vast expanse of history, and the fragmentary nature with which it has come down to us, would seem to require that the 'world historian' be *selective* about which fragments to highlight.

As is often the case, those fragments that get a sustained hearing are precisely those which have had 'einen wesentlichen, unwidersprechlichen und leicht zu verfolgenden Einfluß' upon the contemporary world and its conditions.⁹⁴ Thus the priority of the historian's task is primarily to relate historical facts to the world contemporaneous with the interpreter.⁹⁵ Establishing this direction of events must commence any project on world history; since many world events are only partially historically accessible, the discipline of history ought not to begin in the past, working forward. Rather, it must begin with the present and order its materials retrospectively.

But there is one remaining problem, and that is that such a world history, even if undertaken retrospectively, will undoubtedly result in only a partial re-telling, and will ultimately be no more than 'ein Aggregat von Bruchstücken'.⁹⁶ Such a patchwork history would never deserve 'den Namen einer Wissenschaft'. It is precisely at this point that philosophy comes to the rescue, salvaging the *wissenschaftlich* reputation of world history, by use of Schiller's teleological principle. In short, the principle assumes the 'Gleichförmigkeit und unveränderlichen Einheit der Naturgesetze und des menschlichen Gemüths'.⁹⁷ This interwoven uniformity between the ages explains why history often, as the maxim goes, repeats itself. To affirm and utilize this supposed uniformity is not, technically speaking, *world* history, as it proceeds to link events based on existential and rational (philosophical) bases. It is thus more appropriate to designate the discipline, when approached by philosophers in this manner, a 'Universalgeschichte', as it seeks to locate 'dieser unvergänglichen Kette, die durch alle

⁹⁴ 'Universalgeschichte', 127.

⁹⁵ 'Universalgeschichte', 127.

⁹⁶ 'Universalgeschichte', 129.

⁹⁷ 'Universalgeschichte', 129-30.

Menschengeschlechter sich windet', seeking 'unser fliehendes Daseyn zu befestigen'.⁹⁸

Duhm's dislike of Schiller is not entirely surprising. The latter attempted to overcome the fragmentary nature of world history by linking independent historical events through a process of rationalization according to universal (and hence unchanging) laws. For Schiller, the philosophical mind is driven by an impulse to rationalize, '[Es wird] neuer Trieb...der [den philosophische Geist] unwiderstehlich reizt, alles um sich herum seiner eigenen vernünftigen Natur zu assimiliren, und jede ihm vorkommende Erscheinung zu der höchsten Wirkung die er erkennt, zum Gedanken zu erheben'.⁹⁹

The outcome is a rationalized teleological ordering of history, which, while providing some conceptual coherence to world events, would nevertheless threaten to impinge on the integrity of the particularity of the *historical events themselves*. It is this teleological framework that Duhm feared would eclipse the value of serious, critical historical inquiry, 'für [supranaturalistische Theologie] die Volksreligion Israels keine selbständige Bedeutung und deshalb nur ein negatives Interesse hat'.¹⁰⁰ In a sense, this is a negative potentiality that any Idealist frame of reference carries with it. In the lead up to what was just quoted, Duhm situates Schiller within the wider context of teleological appropriation of the prophets:

Die alten und die modernen Vertreter der Orthodoxie unterscheiden sich in der Auffassung des alten Testaments darin, dass jene dahin neigen, altes und neues Testament materiell sich decken zu lassen und erstem die 'explicita et distincta notitia' selbst spezifisch christlicher Dogmen zuzuweisen, diese dagegen sich bemühen, einen teleologischen Zusammenhang zwischen beiden herzustellen. Ich erkenne nicht allein den Fortschritt der letzteren an, sondern behaupte auch, dass ohne einen teleologischen Grundgedanken eine Entwicklungsgeschichte nicht denkbar ist, sei es, dass derselbe schon zur wissenschaftlich gewonnenen Voraussetzung geworden ist, oder dass er das noch zu erstrebende Ziel bezeichnet. Es kann nicht befremden, wenn ich zu Gunsten dieser geschichtstheoretischen Behauptung an die Ausführung eines Mannes erinnere, der unter den Ersten die Geschichte verstehen gelehrt hat. Der philosophische Geist, ist etwa der Gedankengang Schiller's, unfähig, bei dem blossen Stoff lange zu verweilen, und bestrebt, denselben seiner vernünftigen Natur zu assimiliren und jede Erscheinung zum Gedanken zu erheben,¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ 'Universalgeschichte', 135.

⁹⁹ 'Universalgeschichte', 130 (emph. added).

¹⁰⁰ Duhm, *Theologie*, 6.

¹⁰¹ Schiller, 'Universalgeschichte', 130.

werde aufgefördert, das Ineinandergreifen von Ursache und Wirkung vielmehr als die Verbindung von Mittel und Absicht zu behandeln; je schwerer es ihm werde, wieder unter die blinde Herrschaft der Nothwendigkeit zu geben, was in seiner Vorstellung so viel Regelmässigkeit und Absicht angenommen und zu einem übereinstimmenden Ganzen sich geordnet habe, desto lieber verpflanze er diese aus sich herausgenommene Harmonie ausser sich in die Erscheinungen und bringe damit einen vernünftigen Zweck in den Gang der Welt und ein teleologisches Princip in die Geschichte. In der theoretischen Einleitung in die Universalgeschichte ergänzt nun Schiller das teleologische Princip richtig durch seinen inner Gegensatz und sein Correctiv, durch die pragmatische Behandlung des Stoffes und die beständige Critik des angenommenen Zweckgedankens; dagegen wird man nicht leugnen, dass in den uns aufbewahrten Proben seiner Universalgeschichte die philosophische Reflexion die kritisch-pragmatische Fundamentierung vermissen lässt und die Geschichte rationalisirt ist.¹⁰²

Duhm's summary of Schiller is bracketed on the front end by a concern to keep Old and New Testament material (and theology) from uncritically 'overlapping', and on the back end by a perceived proclivity in Idealist circles to do away with a 'critical-pragmatic foundation' for history, whereby history is ultimately rationalized. The brackets are, to be sure, two sides of the same coin for Duhm. The imputation of Christian 'dogma' to historical events marginalizes the significance of historical particularity just as much as Schiller's philosophical 'rescue mission' for the discipline of history:

Die supranaturalistische Theologie wird mit Fug eine materielle Verwandtschaft mit Schiller's Darstellung der biblischen Geschichte ablehnen; aber in der Methode ist sie ihm so nahe verwandt, dass sie wie er rationalisirt. Statt dies an einzelnen Beispielen zu erweisen, wozu sich später Gelegenheiten bieten werden, und statt dies aus der Natur ihrer teleologischen Grundgedanken zu begründen, die weiter unten zur Sprache kommen, ist mir hier die im selben Sinne zu deutende Thatsache wichtiger, dass für sie die Volksreligion Israels keine selbständige Bedeutung und deshalb nur ein negatives Interesse hat.¹⁰³

It is not the most optimistic of statements. Here, 'critical-pragmatic', or perhaps more simply for our purposes, historical-critical, research has no *positive*, constructive place in theological interpretation.

At the other end of the spectrum from 'supranaturalische Theologie' is 'der Naturalismus', equally unhelpful in its interest in *only* the practical, pragmatic situating of the biblical texts at hand . Duhm resists naturalism as a

¹⁰² Duhm, *Theologie*, 5.

¹⁰³ Duhm, *Theologie*, 6.

viable interpretive option, as it would seem to read the phenomenon of prophecy and fulfillment as either a matter of ‘blind chance’ and ‘blind necessity’, or as a matter of events coordinated ‘termini des Dichters zu bedienen’.¹⁰⁴ Naturalism is, for Duhm, ‘generally averse to theology and indifferent to it’.¹⁰⁵

One thinks of Wrede as a particular embodiment of a strictly positivist, and thereby ‘naturalistische’, approach to hermeneutics.¹⁰⁶ Wrede presupposes a ‘strictly historical character of New Testament theology’,¹⁰⁷ substituting even the title ‘New Testament theology’ for the more ‘wissenschaftliche’, ‘history of early Christian religion and theology’.¹⁰⁸ As concerns interpretation of the biblical text, Wrede adopts a strictly demarcated two-step model of interpretation, where initially a presuppositionless historical investigation is carried out, subsequent to which a judgment is passed on the evidence.¹⁰⁹ In a sense, Wrede embodies Gabler’s division in its sharpest expression.¹¹⁰ The interpreter is, first of all, a historian, standing within a ‘purely historical discipline’,¹¹¹ with no indebtedness to prior, philosophical categories for the act of understanding ‘Historie’.¹¹² Duhm resists this kind of position on grounds that it is not proper to the subject-matter of the text itself.¹¹³

A middle ground, however, may be possible under the guiding hand of ‘die historische oder historisch-critische Behandlung der alttestamentlichen Religion’; for, here,

der Begriff der historisch-critischen Methode nicht auch zugleich ein bestimmtes Geschichtsprincip einschliesst, so kann sie sich mehr unbefangen den Eindrücken hingeben, den der Stoff als solcher

¹⁰⁴ Duhm, *Theologie*, 7.

¹⁰⁵ Duhm, *Theologie*, 7.

¹⁰⁶ Wrede, ‘Task’.

¹⁰⁷ Wrede, ‘Task’, 69.

¹⁰⁸ Wrede, ‘Task’, 116.

¹⁰⁹ E.g. Wrede, ‘Task’, 183n.4, ‘...before I can call something revelation, I have to know what this ‘something’ is’ (emph. added).

¹¹⁰ Wrede, ‘Task’, 68, notes Gabler’s (now famous) 1787 lecture, *Oratio de justo discrimine theologiae biblicae et dogmaticae regundisque recte utriusque finibus*. The lecture subsequently appeared in his *Kleinere theologische Schriften*, 179-98, and is often regarded to signal an early interpretive ‘division of labour’; cf. p. 183-4. For a translation and discussion of the lecture, cf. Sandys-Wunsch and Eldredge, ‘Gabler’. A less polemical example of this demarcation of ‘descriptive’ v. ‘hermeneutical’ is seen in Stendahl, ‘Biblical Theology’.

¹¹¹ Wrede, ‘Task’, 69.

¹¹² Wrede, ‘Task’, 69-70.

¹¹³ Cf. Duhm, *Reich Gottes*, which supplies an acutely existential tracing of the prayer of Matt 6.10 (ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου· γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου, ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς) through the Old and New testaments.

hervorbringt.¹¹⁴

Historical criticism, as Duhm understood it, would appear to avoid both extremes of ‘supernatural’ and ‘natural’ frames of reference for appreciating the prophets in a historically engaged, yet theologically sensitive, manner.¹¹⁵ This is able to navigate such a course only insofar as one is willing to accept a terms such as ‘dialectic’;¹¹⁶ for, both extremes outlined by Duhm represent the same relapse into the problems of Rationalism and Materialism.¹¹⁷ Historical criticism (again, as Duhm envisaged the enterprise) was to locate the interpretive task between ‘Äusserlichkeit’ and ‘Innerlichkeit’.¹¹⁸

While space prohibits a longer explication of Duhm’s reliance upon Kantian epistemology, we may at least note that Duhm’s is self-consciously reliant upon those *necessary* presuppositions to the interpretive task that enable ‘Apperzeption’.¹¹⁹ History is not an objective discipline approached positivistically or materialistically, neither *simply* teleologically, but it is construed only in light of a necessary and unavoidable *a priori* judgment – in this case the ‘religious *a priori*’ of 19th century biblical theology.¹²⁰

There are more specific reasons to draw the parallel. Duhm’s language in his *Theologie* is marked by Kantian terminology:

je schwerer es ihm werde, wieder unter die blinde Herrschaft der Nothwendigkeit zu geben, was in seiner Vorstellung so viel Regelmässigkeit und Absicht angenommen und zu einem übereinstimmenden Ganzen sich geordnet habe, desto lieber verpflanze er diese aus sich herausgenommene Harmonie ausser sich in die Erscheinungen und bringe damit einen vernünftigen Zweck in den Gang der Welt und ein teleologisches Princip in die Geschichte.¹²¹

The language is drawn straight from two selections of Kant, notably Part II of his third Critique (*Critique of Judgment*) and his particular construal of a ‘Universalgeschichte’.¹²² The key phrases of ‘aus sich herausgenommene Harmonie’, and ‘ein teleologisches Princip in die Geschichte’, alongside the somewhat uncommon plural ‘Erscheinungen’ signal Kant’s teleological reading of ‘Universalgeschichte’ and engagement of natural teleology as the

¹¹⁴ Duhm, *Theologie*, 7. Elsewhere in his *Theologie*, Duhm attempts to avoid an objective-subjective, or outer-inner, dichotomy in the preaching of the prophets. See his treatment of ‘Jahve spricht es’, in *Theologie*, 88. Here, as elsewhere, we find a subversion of a perceived objectivity in history (à la Kant). McKane, *Late Harvest*, 87ff., is aware of this discussion of Duhm, but nevertheless embodies a resurrected form of the dichotomy (cf. viii-ix, 23-42, 151-2). For a critique of McKane in this score, see Moberly, *Prophecy and Discernment*, 25ff.

¹¹⁵ The ‘middle ground’ can be seen as early as Duhm’s 1871 ‘De inspiratione prophetarum’, 219, ‘Quodsi nec a metaphysicis nec a physicis comperire possum, quid sit prophetia, jam aliunde quaeram, quid fuerit prophetia. Quam ob rem vetus ipsum tempus adeamus veteresque prophetas, ut qui fuerint indicent nobis’.

¹¹⁶ Here and throughout I use the term ‘dialectic’ in its hermeneutical context, and not in the scholastic sense of ‘Dialectics’.

¹¹⁷ Cf. Duhm, *Theologie*, 26-28.

¹¹⁸ Duhm, *Theologie*, 26.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, B132.

¹²⁰ Chapman, *Troeltsch*, 111ff. Cf. Watson, *Text and Truth*, 185ff.

¹²¹ One may note the resonances of Lessing in the statement, who famously located the ‘ugly ditch’ between the accidental truths of history, and the necessary truths of reason, ‘Zufällige Geschichtswahrheiten können der Beweis von notwendigen Vernunftwahrheiten nie werden’. See Lessing, ‘Über den Beweis’, 12ff.

¹²² Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, Part II, Div. II §68-78; idem., ‘Universal History’. Duhm also draws heavily upon Kant’s first Critique (*Critique of Pure Reason*) for his conceptual categories. On the relation of natural teleology to historical teleology, cf. Collingwood, *Autobiography*, 79.

general framework for Duhm's dialectical understanding of 'Äusserlichkeit' and 'Innerlichkeit'.¹²³

For Kant, the ordering of history is similar to Schiller, though it stands in critical relation to the empirical chaos of sensory perception; i.e., history, like natural teleology, cannot be simply rationalized.¹²⁴ This finds expression in Kant precisely in terms of the relationship between the *regulative* role of reason ('Vernunft') and the *constitutive* role of the understanding ('Verstand'), seen in the 'Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic'.¹²⁵ What the understanding perceives,¹²⁶ reason synthesizes. Wilkins notes that for Kant, the 'ideas of reason...regulate in some respect our way of looking at or arranging the objects of possible experience...If we consider all the knowledge obtained by the understanding, what is peculiar to reason is its attitude toward this knowledge'. Wilkins continues:

Reason prescribes and seeks the systematization of that knowledge, to exhibit the connection of its parts according to a single principle. Reason presupposes a whole of knowledge, a system connected according to necessary laws so that the knowledge attained by the understanding is not seen as unrelated, contingent bits and pieces. The systematic unity of the knowledge of understanding, as this is prescribed by reason, is a logical principle.¹²⁷

That which reason presupposes – universal laws, or, at least, a general unifying conformity – governs the diversity of the concepts that the understanding recognizes. It is essential in the attempt to 'introduce and secure systematic unity of knowledge'.¹²⁸ Our treatment of what we perceive, then, is ever presupposing a unity, or *telos*, behind our cognitive processes.¹²⁹ Human reason is therefore regarded as 'architectonic';¹³⁰ in relation to this formulation, 'The understanding itself is something more than a power of formulating rules through comparison of appearances ['Erscheinungen']; it is itself the lawgiver of nature'.¹³¹

Kant supplies a sweeping proposal of the basic framework. I have underlined those portions from which Duhm has borrowed his own conceptual language:

All human cognition begins with intuition, proceeds from thence to conceptions, and ends with ideas. Although it possess in relation to all three elements, *a priori* sources of cognition, which seemed to transcend the limits of all experience, a thorough-going criticism demonstrates, that speculative reason can never, by the aid of these elements, pass the bounds of possible experience, and that the proper destination of this highest faculty of cognition, is to employ all methods, and all the principles of these methods, for the purpose of penetrating into the innermost secrets of nature, by the aid of the principles of unity (among all kinds of which teleological unity is the highest), while it ought not to attempt to soar above the

¹²³ Duhm, *Theologie*, 26-27.

¹²⁴ An obvious opponent of Kant on this front was Wolff, *Vernünfftige Gedanken*, II.§8. Cf. Guyer, *Kant*, 335, 410n.

¹²⁵ See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B671. Kant's categories of 'regulative' and 'constitutive' are not without their difficulties. Cf. Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Knowledge*, 188ff.

¹²⁶ On the fusion of understanding and sensibility, see Anderson and Bell, *Kant and Theology*, 14.

¹²⁷ Wilkins, 'Teleology', 177-78.

¹²⁸ Grier, 'Illusion', 1-2.

¹²⁹ Duhm's relation to Kant can be seen further along in his *Theologie*. While the earliest beginnings of Israelite religion were marked by 'die Einfachheit' (*Theologie*, 51), the center of the development embodied the tendency to conceive of God as a 'Persönlichkeit', and to stand 'mit ihm in sittlichem Verkehr' (*Theologie*, 53). However, this 'standing'/association with God is not to be construed as a relation to God in a metaphysical sense. Rather, a particular disposition, as well as a moral fulfillment of obligation, is what marks the relationship, 'Ein Verkehr aber zwischen zwei Persönlichkeiten ist nicht in erster Linie auf Enthüllungen über das Wesen beider gerichtet, sondern auf Bethätigung der Gesinnung, die man gegen einander hegt, und auf Erfüllung der Pflichten, die das Verhältnis jedem der Theilnehmer auflegt'. See Duhm, *Theologie*, 74-5.

The relation is primarily *moral* (à la Kant) in connecting the individual to the 'highest Good'. Kant's *Metaphysics of Morals*, §443, is such one example of the affinity (cf. §409). However, Duhm insisted that morality itself is *not* 'exempt from the laws of development', a claim that would stand in contrast to Kant's *Metaphysics of Morals*. See Duhm, *Theologie*, 107. Cf. Reventlow, *Biblical Interpretation*, op. cit., 329.

¹³⁰ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B502.

¹³¹ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A126.

sphere of experience, beyond which there lies nought for us but the void inane...[In the 'Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic'] it was advisable...to give a full account of the momenta of this dialectical procedure, and to deposit it in the archives of human reason, as a warning to all future metaphysicians to avoid these causes of speculative error.¹³²

The storehouse of Duhm's conceptual vocabulary is easily locatable. 'Thorough-going criticism',¹³³ in a dialectical relation to experience,¹³⁴ supports the act of penetrating into the 'innermost secrets' of the subject-matter,¹³⁵ with 'teleology' being the highest form of construing this unity.¹³⁶ Kant's transcendental dialectic undoubtedly informs Duhm's entire interpretive formulation.

Kant's general concern with teleology is parallel to Duhm's concern with 'supernatural' Christian teleologies.¹³⁷ As the historian moves, along Schillerian lines, to harmonize disparate historical material, to move from the Particular of 'ein planloses Aggregat menschlicher Handlungen' to the Universal of *a priori* universal law,¹³⁸ one must transport a harmonizing philosophical construct from within the interpreter, and place it on events *ad extra*. The danger of so doing is that without a 'critical-pragmatic' foundation for the task (by which Duhm means historical-critical work), one risks 'rationalizing' the whole discipline of history. The relation of history to theology may be realized, or, at least, attempted; but the relation cannot be articulated without a foundation that is fundamentally critical.¹³⁹

Here the problematic in the relationship between history and theology, or perhaps what would later be nuanced as 'Historie' and 'Geschichte', begins to come into focus.¹⁴⁰ On the one hand, from a Christian theological perspective, the historical events in Israel's past stand always in danger of becoming the mere *ancilla* of a later 'fulfillment' in the New Testament, which in turn would relegate their putative historical location to a second-tier importance. This kind of teleology, whether of a Schillerian or a 'supernaturalist' sort, releases the tension between past and present. On the

¹³² Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B730 (emph. added).

¹³³ Duhm, *Theologie*, 2, '...bedarf auch die theologische Tradition der steten Verjüngung durch die Opposition, die ihr der noch nicht völlig überwundene Stoff entgegengesetzt'; 'die beständige Kritik' (5).

¹³⁴ Cf. Duhm, *Theologie*, 5, where the interpreter 'verpflanze...aus sich herausgenommene Harmonie ausser sich in die Erscheinungen', an activity correlated with 'die pragmatische Behandlung des Stoffes'.

¹³⁵ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 3, 'Das beste, was man thun kann, ist versuchen, in die Persönlichkeit des Schriftstellers selber so tief wie möglich einzudringen. Das ist überhaupt auf dem Gebiet der Religion die wichtigsten und dankbarste Aufgabe, denn nirgends mehr als hier steht die lebendige Persönlichkeit hoch über dem blossen Wort'.

¹³⁶ Duhm, *Theologie*, 5, 'ohne einen teleologischen Grundgedanken eine Entwicklungsgeschichte nicht denkbar ist'.

¹³⁷ Cf. Kant, 'Universal History'.

¹³⁸ Cf. Schiller, 'Universalgeschichte', 129, 'ein Aggregat von Bruchstücken'.

¹³⁹ Duhm certainly was not open to the kind of history-dogma dialectical that others (e.g. Childs) retain; the dialectic is much more general than this. Cf. his slight of Anselm, 'Endlich kann nur eine traurige Veräusserlichung der Religion auf den Gedanken gebracht haben, dass es sich wesentlich um Tilgung der Folgen der Sünde handle, dass der Knecht Jahves deshalb nach der bekannten strafrechtlichen Doctrin, die sich seit Anselm an die Stelle der religiös-sittlichen Auffassung zu drängen begann, quantitativ so viel leiden müsse, als dem Volk oder gar der Menschheit zugemessen war, und soweit dies nicht möglich ist, das Deficit durch die höhere Würde seiner Person zu decken habe'. See *Theologie*, 297. Presumably Duhm has in mind Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo?*, e.g., I.11 ('Quid sit peccare et pro peccato satisfacere?'). Cf. Troeltsch, *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, 692.

¹⁴⁰ Lessing, *Geschichte*, 280-81, describes the realms as standing in a 'Korrespondenzverhältnis'.

other hand, there resides a danger inherent in what Duhm calls 'naturalism' – a posture toward history that has no real interest or ability to speak in relation to Christian theology, or any kind of teleology.¹⁴¹ To create a sphere within which this tension could be sustained, Duhm directed his efforts toward the 'innere Entwicklungsgeschichte' of Israel,¹⁴² as an area of engagement that could stand in the gap 'zwischen beiden Extremen'.¹⁴³

Within the gap. It is here that Duhm resists any logically 'positive' contributions for theology from his work on the prophets, while assigning a certain theological significance to his own work:

Indem ich von positiven Voraussetzungen absehe, verzichte ich jedoch nicht auf den theologischen Character meiner Arbeit. Ich müsste es freilich, wenn derselbe, wie oft unklar geglaubt wird, von materiellen 'Principien' und nicht vielmehr von dem auf die Arbeit gerichteten theologischen Zweck abhängig wäre. Freilich mag auch das theologische Interesse eine Art von Voraussetzung sein, in wissenschaftlich verwerflichem Sinne aber doch nur, wenn dies Interesse zum Vorurtheil und der Zweck zur Tendenz ausartet.¹⁴⁴

The theological aim is not proximate, as it was for the 'supernaturalists' whom Duhm had in mind. In comparing these interpreters to their historical-critical counterparts, we find that,

Zwischen diesen beiden Grössen aber ist die Scheidelinie nicht eben schwer zu ziehen. Das wissenschaftliche, ideelle Interesse des christlichen Theologen am alten Testament ist genügend so ausgesprochen wie motivirt durch die Anerkennung des historischen Zusammenhangs zwischen der israelitischen und der christlichen Religion und der Zweck alttestamentlicher Arbeit vollkommen umgrenzt durch die Aufhellung dieses Zusammenhangs zu Gunsten besserer Erkenntnis des Christenthums.¹⁴⁵

What differentiates historical-critical work on the Old Testament from those approaches that are theological from start to finish, is that the latter must reckon with the affiliation of the material with 'der christlichen Religion', and must aim always at the question of *how* work on the Old Testament clarifies

¹⁴¹ It is curious that Joachimsen, *Identities*, 15, should present Duhm as representing a 'positivistic point of view'.

¹⁴² Duhm, *Theologie*, 19-24.

¹⁴³ The interest in a middle ground was perhaps owing as well to the strands of Romanticism present in Duhm's theological formulations – the 'prophetic element' was something present, not just in Israel's religion, or in Christianity, but in all world religions. By threatening the prophetic element in one religion, Naturalism was essentially threatening it in all.

¹⁴⁴ *Theologie*, 2.

¹⁴⁵ *Theologie*, 2.

the relationship between Judaism and Christianity.¹⁴⁶ Taking on this task of interpretive, perhaps even theological extension, however, is not simply superfluous for Duhm's interpretive process – it is proximately dangerous, and causes an interpretation to lapse into bias, and thus to lose its 'wissenschaftlich character'. Here the rhetoric is heightened:

Jeder materielle Zusatz über das 'Wie' und 'Warum', der vor der Befragung des Stoffes selbst jenes Interesse stärkt oder schwächt und diesen Zweck verkürzt, ist Vorurtheil und führt zur Tendenz. In diesem Fall aber ist nicht allein der wissenschaftliche Character dahin, sondern auch der theologische verfälscht; und Vorurtheil wie Tendenz, die mit wissenschaftlichen, aus der wenigstens vorläufigen Bearbeitung des Stoffes entspringenden Voraussetzungen nicht zu verwechseln sind, bedingen völlige Unsicherheit der Resultate, obgleich dieselben nicht mit unsicherer Miene aufzutreten pflegen.¹⁴⁷

For Duhm, theological hermeneutics depend fundamentally on material uncertainty, though they may try to hide their uncertainty beneath a steady countenance. What remains, then, as an acceptable hermeneutic, is one which is in no way visibly dependent on an extension of the raw historical materials. In some sense this is a hermeneutic traditionally associated with the 'religionsgeschichtliche Schule' – planted by Ewald, watered by Graf, but given growth through Wellhausen and Duhm – though it will undergo modification in Duhm's thought: this *purely* historical interest shifts just slightly in the case of Isaiah, by highlighting the need to locate and elevate the 'lebendige Persönlichkeit' of the prophet,¹⁴⁸ in a fashion reminiscent of Dilthey's attempt to enter the mind and world of the ancient authors.¹⁴⁹ It is significant to note that even this emphasis on the mind of the author is seen to honor, rather than distract from, the historical particularity of the biblical material.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ This is actually a rather perceptive, nuanced observation by Duhm. The concern has been recently addressed, from a Jewish perspective, by Levenson, in his *Hebrew Bible*. Though elucidating the relationship between Jewish and Christian approaches to the Old Testament is a common thread in the work, chapter four ('Theological Consensus or Historicist Evasion?'; pp. 82-105), is particularly noteworthy in the present instance.

¹⁴⁷ Duhm, *Theologie*, 2.

¹⁴⁸ Duhm, *Jesaia*, iii. See also *Theologie*, 31, where a deepened content and a more reliable ground is gained through ushering ourselves into the thought-circles of the prophets. Yet one may also note the following page, where Duhm notes that the most important ideas in the prophets extend beyond individual personalities, since '[d]em Einzelnen gehört nur die Nuance, das Moment, die individuelle Form, der Epoche gehört die Idee selber'. This is because the ordinary person of the prophet possesses no significance in who he *is*, but simply in what he *has*, and what he testifies *to*. (32) The insight gains sharper focus in *Theologie*, 1.§4, reprinted in Neumann, *Prophetenverständnis*, 91-109. Steck 'Bemerkungen'.

¹⁴⁹ So Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 58ff.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Kraus, *Geschichte*, 280.

The model resists any 'systematischen Schema', by which the theology of the prophets is treated apart from its varied historical situations. These situations, in all their peculiarity and originality (in terms of uniqueness, rather than chronology) must be given a fair, clear hearing:

Aber auch in der zeitlich zusammengeschlossenen Gruppe hat eine voraussetzungslose Untersuchung die Pflicht, ebensowohl der Eigenthümlichkeit und Originalität des einzelnen Schriftstellers, als der ihm übergeordneten Gesamtheit gerecht zu werden.¹⁵¹

This is not to suggest that any prophetic unity is beyond the reach of Old Testament theology. It is simply to acknowledge that the interpretive process takes place at the nexus of the universal and the particular,¹⁵² within the more acute question of *how* these categories relate to one another:

Denn die Aufgabe jeder geschichtlichen Darstellung, das Allgemeine und das Besondere in das richtige Wechselverhältnis zu bringen, nöthigt sich auch uns auf in der Frage, wie sowohl die relative sachliche Einheit des Prophetismus als die relative Selbständigkeit der einzelnen prophetischen Individualität in der Methode zur vollen Geltung gebracht werden können.¹⁵³

Whatever the material outplay of this will look like, one thing will remain certain for Duhm: when dealing with the prophets, one is dealing with living, historical people and ideas, 'Nicht mit Naturwesen, die unfrei sich von der Gottheit oder dem Naturgesetz regieren lassen, haben wir es zu thun, sondern mit Charakteren und mit geschichtlich lebendigen Ideen'.¹⁵⁴ One of the many outcomes of this affirmation is that, hermeneutically speaking, 'jener historischen Realität eine innere Vernunft innewohne'.¹⁵⁵

II.2 *The Hermeneutics of Israel's Prophets*

The foreword to *Israel's Prophets* is suggestive, and introduces Duhm's broader theological hermeneutical concerns. 'If we were to ask an educated man whether he knew something about Socrates or Plato', Duhm muses, 'he would be affronted and answer: Of course one knows the Greek philosophers!' He continues:

¹⁵¹ Duhm, *Theologie*, 29.

¹⁵² Duhm is aware that the prophets themselves may have blurred the historical veracity of their own recountings; even so, this very process is interpretatively significant. Cf. *Theologie*, 31.

¹⁵³ Duhm, *Theologie*, 29.

¹⁵⁴ Duhm, *Theologie*, 34.

¹⁵⁵ Duhm, *Über Ziel*, 28.

Würde man einen Gebildeten fragen, ob er etwas von Sokrates oder Plato wisse, so würde er beleidigt antworten: selbstverständlich kennt man die griechischen Philosophen. Wenn man ihn nach den alttestamentlichen Propheten fragte, so würde er vermutlich sagen, daß dieser Männer die Zukunft vorhergesagt haben sollen, namentlich die Erscheinung Christi mit vielen Einzelheiten seiner Lebensgeschichte, und er würde je nachdem das zu glauben behaupten oder darüber die Achsel zucken. Er würde damit Meinungen wiedergeben, die früher allgemein herrschten, die aber in der wissenschaftlichen Theologie so vollkommen aufgegeben sind, daß sie von ihr nicht einmal mehr wiederlegt werden. Daß die Arbeitsweise und die Ergebnisse der wissenschaftlichen Theologie unseren Gebildeten so gut wie unbekannt sind, könnte man verschmerzen, aber daß der Gegenstand ihrer Arbeit, darunter die alttestamentliche und besonders die prophetische Literatur, darunter zu leiden haben, ist ein großer Schaden. Denn die Kenntnis der alttestamentlichen Religion ist für eine tiefere Einsicht in die Entwicklung der Menschheit mindestens so notwendig wie das Wissen um das, was die Griechen, Römer, Inder für sie geleistet haben.¹⁵⁶

Duhm acknowledges the elevated status of the Old Testament prophets at the popular level – anyone would know the Greek philosophers, and likewise anyone would know at least generally about the Old Testament prophets. Yet while these prophets are popularly assigned a *future*-related vocation, they in fact did no such thing. The belief that the Old Testament prophets foretold specific details and events in the life of Christ is *passé* for Duhm, uprooted by modern, ‘wissenschaftliche’ theology. This is not to say that Duhm allowed for no connection between his project and its wider affiliation and association with a theological (namely, Christian) frame of reference. It is simply to say that he saw no logically *positive* connection between the two.¹⁵⁷ Such a vision aligns with his wider ‘religionsgeschichtliche’ training and interests.

He continues:

Wir halten das Christentum für eine weltgeschichtliche Größe, mit der sich keine andere an Bedeutung für die geistige Geschichte der Menschheit messen läßt. Das muß auch der tun, der ‘kein Unchrist, kein Widerchrist, aber ein dezidierter Nichtchrist’ ist. Wenn aber diese Größe nicht unvorbereitet, aus den Wolken herniedergestiegen ist, dann kann man für ihre richtige Erfassung ihre Vorgeschichte nicht entbehren. Die alttestamentliche Religion ist der Boden, auf dem sie erwachsen ist, die prophetische Religion ist ihre Wurzel. Während man früher nach einer mechanischen Deckung von ‘Weissagung und Erfüllung’ trachtete, sieht sich jetzt die theologische Forschung vor die Aufgabe gestellt, den inneren, geschichtlichen Zusammenhang

¹⁵⁶ Duhm, *Propheten*, v.

¹⁵⁷ As above, see his *Theologie*, 2.

zwischen der Prophetie und der Weltreligion aufzuhellen.¹⁵⁸

Christianity is here set within a context of world religions. For this reason, it must be handled without prejudice, or any kind of bias, akin to Goethe's self-description as 'dezidierter Nichtchrist'.¹⁵⁹ The enterprise is not antithetical to Christianity; indeed, 'Old Testament religion' is its soil, and from within that soil is the rooting phenomenon of prophecy.¹⁶⁰ Prophecy, then, as the purest encasement of Yahweh's Torah, is the foundation upon which all else is built (or again, the root within the soil, from which Christianity grows).

It is curious that for Duhm, Christianity holds an import for understanding the world's 'spiritual' history that no other can.¹⁶¹ The reason for this is never clarified, though it is evident enough; the emphasis upon spiritual world history, and the implied invisibility of the Church, was a relatively commonplace assumption within 19th century German 'Kulturprotestantismus'. This raises what may be a central hermeneutical challenge brought to bear on a kind of generalized, historical, world religions model of interpretation: in what sense can Christianity be for Duhm both a world religion, and yet one to be elevated above other world religions that contain similar prophetic capacities? With reference to the work of the servant in the third song (Isa 50.4-9) Duhm questions:

Muß man nicht eine Religion hochstellen, die eine Gestalt von solcher Berufstreue, solcher Opferfreudigkeit, solcher duldenden Sanftmut gegen die Menschen, die nicht wissen was sie tun, hervorzubringen vermochte?¹⁶² ... und ist es nicht ein herrliches Zeugnis für die geistige Höhe der Prophetie, daß sie einen Menschen mit solchen Idealen erfüllen konnte, einen Menschen, der selber nicht geistig groß, aber sittlich groß, der ein wahrhaft sittlicher Mensch ist?¹⁶³

Certain patterns of Old Testament prophetic representations of God and humanity clearly presented more potential for Duhm than others.

Duhm's methodological prelude closes:

¹⁵⁸ Duhm, *Propheten*, vi.

¹⁵⁹ The quote of Goethe that Duhm uses comes from a letter of the poet in 1789, describing his ultimate indifference to Christianity. See Boyle, *Goethe*, 353.

¹⁶⁰ Duhm, *Theologie*, 24-25.

¹⁶¹ For the older model of viewing ancient Israel as moving 'beyond their ancient Near Eastern contemporaries in terms of a historical perspective on reality', see Gnuse's summary in his, *Heilsgeschichte*, 10-13.

¹⁶² Duhm's words in this last clause ('die nicht wissen was sie tun') are reminiscent of those of Jesus in Luke 23.34, 'Vater, vergib ihnen sie wissen nicht, was sie tun!' (Luther's 1545 translation). The similarity would associate Jesus with the prophetic ideal, brought low by those who failed to recognize the ultimate outcome of his prophetic message.

¹⁶³ Duhm, *Propheten*, 336. See also the sweeping language used on pp. 344-45.

Hoffentlich wird diese geschichtliche Forschung nicht bloß auf die theologischen Kreise beschränkt bleiben. Den Werdegang des menschlichen Geschlechts und damit den Sinn unseres Daseins zu verstehen, muß das Interesse jedes höher Gebildeten sein. Es wird noch einmal dahin kommen, das man die israelitischen Propheten, Poeten und Erzähler ebensogut kennt wie die geistigen Führer der Griechen, Inder, Chinesen und des eigenen Volkes. Auf dies Ziel hinzuarbeiten oder wenigstens hinzuweisen, ist der Zweck dieses Buches. Vielleicht macht es den einen oder anderen auch auf rein literarische Werke aufmerksam, die ihm bisher nicht bekannt waren und über die er sich freut.¹⁶⁴

As noted earlier, the series in which *Propheten* was published aimed at those not initiated into the world of 'höhere Kritik'. While Duhm's writing had to be consonant with this aim, what is noteworthy is that it does not appear foreign to him to situate his historical-critical work in this context. On the contrary, Duhm sees his work as contributing to the common quest to understand human existence in a more holistic, informed sense (at least, from within a framework that finds human existence ('Dasein') most fully explained *via* recourse to world religions).

Here is a crucial liaison between Duhm's *Theologie* and his *Jesaia*. His *Propheten* explains something in his methodology that was not clear beforehand: in his *Theologie*, Duhm's distinction between 'supernaturalist' teleologies and critical-pragmatic study was largely philosophical,¹⁶⁵ and it was not clear what purpose this (neo-Kantian) dialectical relationship was intended to serve. It now comes into focus that Duhm's emphasis on the historical particularity of Israel's history is intended to aid in understanding the development that has taken place between *them* then, and *us* now.¹⁶⁶ It is no surprise, then, that Duhm saw so little continuity between the Old and New Testament 'on the ground':¹⁶⁷ what is highlighted is a progression, and not a continuity; and this is to uphold the Old Testament's diachronicity for biblical theology,¹⁶⁸ as well as correct the popular misconception of a

¹⁶⁴ Duhm, *Propheten*, vi.

¹⁶⁵ Duhm, *Theologie*, 5, 29.

¹⁶⁶ Kähler's historical distinctions are one way to state the differentiation (*Der sogenannte historische Jesus*).

¹⁶⁷ A spiritual continuity is permitted by Duhm, following a Lutheran line of theology, from Abraham to Paul. See Reventlow, 'Die Prophetie', 59-74. Duhm does allow for a historical continuity in a limited sense, in terms of shared eschatological outlooks between late second temple Judaism and the early Church. Cf. Lessing, *Geschichte*, 280-81.

¹⁶⁸ A connection between historical development and diachronicity is noted in Watson, *Text and Truth*, 185.

simplified historical teleology, held even by the 'Gebildete' of Duhm's day.¹⁶⁹ The relation that Duhm feels between discontinuity and particularity is crucial.

III. *Das Buch Jesaia*

Duhm's general overview of the book of Isaiah been reviewed enough in the past to make its recital here superfluous. Further, for Duhm the wider judgments made regarding the book's development and shape have little *integral* bearing on his reading of Isaiah 53 (as they do for Motyer and Childs). A brief recap of his outlook is worthwhile, both in interest of symmetry with subsequent chapters (Motyer and Childs both receive treatment in this regard), as well as the general impression that Isaiah 53 *does* fit into a wider vision of the book, if only in a subsequent fashion.¹⁷⁰

III.1 *The Contribution of Jesaia*

Duhm's reputation in Isaiah studies has centered largely upon two historical conjectures that he, in effect, solidified through his 1892 commentary: the formal isolation of chapters 56-66 as a distinct, post-exilic literary composition of a 'Tritojesaia',¹⁷¹ and his isolation of the *Ebed-Jahve-Lieder* (42.1-4; 49.1-6; 50.4-9; 52.13-53.12) as historically and theologically distinguishable (even isolated) from their wider context.¹⁷²

With reference to 'Tritojesaia', Duhm was not the first to posit the theory. Westermann and Childs have noted the idea in nascent form, in Döderlein (1775) and Eichhorn (1780-83).¹⁷³ Gesenius' landmark 1821 *Jesaja* may have been one of the earliest comprehensive treatments of Isaiah 40-66 as exilic, following the insights of Döderlein and Eichhorn.¹⁷⁴ Sweeney has traced

¹⁶⁹ Duhm, *Propheten*, v.

¹⁷⁰ Cheyne, review of Duhm's *Jesaia*, 296, noted that in his *Jesaia*, Duhm showed a linguistic capacity to match his great philosophical potential in *Theologie*. The result was that 'the critical insight has become immensely deeper'.

¹⁷¹ One may also note, besides this proposal, the solidifying effect that Duhm's *Jesaia* had for the Deutero-Isaianic theses of Döderlein, *Esaias*; and Eichhorn, *Einleitung*.

¹⁷² Duhm, *Jesaia*, 14-15; idem., *Propheten*, 330ff. Ruprecht, *Auslegungsgeschichte*, 130-31; 171n.42, notes the early 19th century use of 'Knecht Gottes' (cited in Joachimsen, *Identities*, 21n.33).

¹⁷³ Childs, *Introduction*, 316; Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 8-9.

¹⁷⁴ So Willey, *Former Things*, 12ff. On Döderlein and Eichhorn (as well as Koppe), see Vincent, *Studien*, 17-21. An exilic situation was certainly assumed in Gesenius' readings. See his *Jesaja: Zweyter Theil* (1821), 1, where the primary interest in the oracles of 40.1ff. was found

the idea further, noting its (inferred) presence in *b.Bab.* 14b-15a, as well as in Ibn Ezra.¹⁷⁵ But as with other significant advances in Old Testament scholarship, the elucidation of a ‘Tritojesaia’ appears to have been forgotten in the excitement of late 19th century discovery (à la Lowth and poetic meter). It was not until Duhm’s 1892 *Jesaia* that something of a solidifying effect took place,¹⁷⁶ and thus even if Duhm did not break new ground, he nevertheless resuscitated a crucial historical awareness for the book’s history and exegetical depth.¹⁷⁷

Equally significant has been Duhm’s isolation of the *Ebed-Lieder-Jahve* (42.1-4; 49.1-6; 50.4-9; 52.13-53.12) as distinct, post-exilic additions to a constantly evolving literary corpus. Though the seeds of the insight would come to full bloom in his 1892 *Jesaia*, they can be seen early in his *Theologie*:

Dass ein Zeitabstand zwischen der Abfassung von c. 40-48 und von c. 49ff. besteht, zeigt sich vor allem an der Idee, die den zweiten Theil beherrscht und im ersten kaum angedeutet war, an der Idee des Knechtes Jahves.¹⁷⁸

The theme of the *Knecht Jahves* hints at a time lapse (‘ein Zeitabstand’) in the Deutero-Isaianic material, one which may imply (though it certainly doesn’t need to imply) an origination of the servant songs from a historical and temporal situation at least minimally distinct to that which came before. The door had, in effect, been opened, which would allow Duhm to put forth the following:

Dem Knecht Jahves sind eine Reihe von Pericopen gewidmet, die sich auch äusserlich nach Stil und Sprache so scharf gegen den übrigen Text abheben, dass man die Vermuthung nicht sogleich von der Hand weisen kann, dieselben gehörten nicht ursprünglich zu dem Plan des ganzen Werkes oder seien wohl gar anderswoher entlehnt.¹⁷⁹

in the insights it gave the reader into the ‘historical, religious and ethical circumstances of the Hebrew people toward the end of the exile’.

¹⁷⁵ Sweeney, ‘On the Road to Duhm’, 244-45. On Ibn Ezra, see Simon, ‘Ibn Ezra’.

¹⁷⁶ See Sellin’s comment on the hypothesis’s reception in his *Kommentar* 9/2, 198, ‘Die abgetrennten Kapitel hat Duhm als Einheit gefaßt, und die Hypothese eines einheitlichen “Tritojesaja” hat bis heute viel Anklang gefunden.’

¹⁷⁷ Recent redactional approaches to the book thus owe part of their original impetus to Duhm’s differentiations in this regard. Cf., e.g., Williamson, *Book Called Isaiah*; Beuken, *Jesaja II-III*; Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40-66*; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*; Seitz, *The Book of Isaiah*; Childs, *Isaiah*.

¹⁷⁸ Duhm, *Theologie*, 288.

¹⁷⁹ Duhm, *Theologie*, 288-89.

That the 'style and language' of the servant songs stands out so sharply will hold for Duhm a particular exegetical import. The difference between the hand of Deutero-Isaiah and that of the servant song poet are, for him, striking.

As with his positing of a *Tritojesaja*, Duhm was not the first to posit an affinity between these passages. Rosenmüller made a parallel observation, if only in nascent form, in 1793,¹⁸⁰ but the (rather romantic) interest in origins of Rosenmüller's day had not yet developed into the sophisticated 'religionsgeschichtliche Schule' of Duhm's.¹⁸¹ In that sense, as much as Duhm may have re-discovered what Rosenmüller had noted a century before, he further articulated what particular historical bearing this held for the material in Isaiah 40-66.

In many respects, the four servant songs are simply a scholarly given. Yet there are others who question the degree to which they are actually *independent* compositions. One may note Orlinky's sweeping assessment of Duhm's hypothesis, in which he questions Duhm's 'quite gratuitous assumption':

Not only is the 'Servant of the Lord' as a technical term (except perhaps for Moses) foreign to the Hebrew Bible, and not only is there no justification for isolating the 'Servant' passages from their preserved contexts, but it will now be seen, further, that the concepts 'Suffering Servant' and the servant as 'Vicarious Sufferer' are likewise post-biblical in origin—actually the product of Christianity in the period subsequent to the death of Jesus.¹⁸²

The rhetoric is strong, but perhaps appropriate in its felt need to push back against the tide of an assumed independent composition of the four servant songs.¹⁸³ Yet while a case could be made, from within Deutero-Isaiah, for an early exegesis of the person of the servant (cf. 50.10-11), as well as from within early rabbinic exegesis (*B.Sanh.* 98b), we should leave the value of isolating the servant songs as a matter to be adjudicated through the final contribution, of such an isolation, to a comprehensive reading.

¹⁸⁰ Rosenmüller, *Iesaiæ Vaticinia Complectens*, III:v, 'Non imprudenter quoque is, qui hunc librum sub Iesaiæ nomine composuit, quaedam inseruit, quae id agunt, ut vati auctoritatem concilient, eumque ut hominem a numine afflatum sistant'; cf. pp. 826ff., 881ff., 891, 904ff.). See also Ruprecht, *Auslegungsgeschichte*, 128-9.

¹⁸¹ Humorously, cf. Barth, *Protestantische Theologie*, 303.

¹⁸² See his *Studies*, 17.

¹⁸³ Orlinky is not alone. Cf. Mettinger, *Farewell*, who regards Israel as the sole referent in the poems. This may find a precedent in Marti's textual emendation of יִשְׂרָאֵל to יִשְׂרָאֵל, in Isa 52.13 (*Jesaja*, 345). Wilcox and Paton-Williams, 'Servant Songs', locate the crux of the problem in the second servant song (49.1-6).

III.2 *The Shape of Jesaia*

Having ‘kaum die letzte Zeile am Buch geschrieben’,¹⁸⁴ Duhm notes those convictions that had cemented in his interpretive practice over the course of writing the commentary. First, he assumes that the writers of the material now in the book of Isaiah were cognizant of what they were about, and intentional in what they wrote. Consequently, something as intrinsic to the prophetic books as poetic meter should be considered as a crucial text-critical aid in exegesis:

...die Herstellung wo nicht des ursprünglichen, so doch eines möglichen Textes. Ich bin dabei von der Voraussetzung ausgegangen, dass die Autoren, bevor nicht das Gegenteil bewiesen ist, als gute Schriftsteller angesehen werden sollen, die nicht radebrechen und stümpfern, sondern richtig und vernünftig reden: eine an sich selbstverständliche Voraussetzung, die aber doch nicht von allen Erklären geteilt wird. Wenn ferner die Autoren sich bestimmter metrischer Masse bedienen, so scheint es mir Pflicht der Exegeten zu sein, dem nachzugehen und die Arbeit am Text nicht eher für beendet zu halten, als bis jene festgestellt sind. Auf diesem Gebiet führen jetzt Schlendrian und Willkür die Herrschaft und treten die abenteuerlichsten Thorheiten zu Tage. Wenn erst die allgemeine Aufmerksamkeit auf diesen Punkt gerichtet sein wird, wird sich zeigen, dass die Metrik ein ebenso wichtiges textkritisches Hilfsmittel ist, wie die Vergleichung der alten Übersetzungen.¹⁸⁵

The comment places Duhm in continuity with his interpretive forerunners: though no mention is made of Lowth in the preface, the importance of ‘Metrischkritik’ is no doubt an inheritance from him.¹⁸⁶ In theory, Duhm will give the benefit of the doubt to the writers and compilers of the book of Isaiah. In reality, the text of Isaiah, while perhaps not speaking ‘brokenly’, nevertheless will appear to need substantial text-critical emendation to make

¹⁸⁴ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 3.

¹⁸⁵ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 3.

¹⁸⁶ Also, Duhm, *Propheten*, 95, ‘Die poetische Sprache ist die Sprache der Götter’. Cf. Lowth, *Lectures*, Lect. XVIII, 145ff.; idem., *Isaiah*, iv; Baumgartner, ‘Geleitwort’, vii; Stansell, ‘Poet’s Prophet’, 239. Around the same time as Duhm’s *Jesaia*, Budde was also advancing notions of poetic meter, particularly in his ‘Hebräische Klagelied’ (1882); idem., ‘Hebräische Klagelied’ (1891) idem., ‘Hebräische Klagelied’ (1892). Cf. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39*, 79. Duhm’s failure to cite Lowth (or Budde) in his preface is perhaps in line with his comment, that he has elided many citations of scholars, since that inevitably produces ‘the kind of examination that everyone does and therefore no one wants to read’ (*Jesaia*, 3, ‘...die jeder selbst macht und darum nicht zu lesen wünscht’). See Duhm on Isa 53.3aß (מְכַאֵב > מְכַאֵבֹת); *Jesaia*, 397).

sense of what is before the reader;¹⁸⁷ this is, perhaps, especially the case with the fourth servant song, laden as it is with text-critical difficulties. Duhm's preface on this front does not bear out in actual exegetical practice.

Nevertheless, it does highlight a concern (below) to regard the authors' own perspectives as capable of contributing to positive theological development. Not all literary layering was deemed secondary, 'unecht', and theologically diminished.¹⁸⁸

The second, 'wichtigste' interpretive emphasis that Duhm regards as central, is the need to bring out the historically particular voice of the individual writers, to bring out 'was die Autoren eigentlich sagen und sagen wollen'.¹⁸⁹ But Duhm is no overly optimistic historical positivist – he plainly realizes that the recovery of the historically particular voice is bound to be only partial, at best:

Diese Aufgabe wird niemals vollkommen erfüllt werden. Auch wenn nicht unser zeitlicher und kulturhistorischer Abstand von den alten Schriftstellern uns beständig Schwierigkeiten machte, so würde schon der stets vorhandene Unterschied zwischen dem objektiven Ausdruck und der Meinung eines Autors das völlige Erfassen der letzteren höchst erschweren. Das beste, was man thun kann, ist versuchen, in die Persönlichkeit des Schriftstellers selber so tief wie möglich einzudringen. Das ist überhaupt auf dem Gebiet der Religion die wichtigsten und dankbarste Aufgabe, denn nirgends mehr als hier steht die lebendige Persönlichkeit hoch über dem blossen Wort. Zu diesem Zweck vor allem triebt man Kritik: diese ist noch mehr eine Pflicht gegen die alten Autoren, als die Vorbedingung für unsere richtige Einsicht in die historische Entwicklung.¹⁹⁰

It is not just that we stand at such a distance from when and where these texts were written; the difficulty of locating an objective theological expression also has much to do with the fact that the authors *themselves* always stood removed from the ability to express theology objectively. Their 'opinion',¹⁹¹ which I take to mean the inevitable socio-historical, or socio-political¹⁹² color which imbues anyone's theological work, reflects more the writer than that which he is writing about.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. Duhm's labeling of the collector of 6.1-9.6 as a 'schlechten Stilisten', given the perceived awkwardness of 7.21ff. (*Jesaia*, 11).

¹⁸⁸ The tendency to disparage a passage as 'unecht' appears more forcefully in his *Jeremiah*.

¹⁸⁹ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 3.

¹⁹⁰ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 3.

¹⁹¹ Or simply 'persuasion', or 'mind'. 'Meinung' as 'opinion' brings out the (pejorative?) differentiation that Duhm is seeking to highlight.

¹⁹² A point made by Blenkinsopp, with reference to the predominance of socio-political concerns in the shaping of the prophetic corpus. See his *Prophecy and Canon*, 140-41.

But while Duhm is not overly optimistic about reaching an authorial originality, neither does he doubt what we may be able to engage, historically speaking. While later textual affiliation of the prophets could blur their distinctiveness,¹⁹³ we may nevertheless do something in the direction of unearthing historical particularity. The means of doing this is to penetrate as profoundly as possible into the character of the authors themselves.¹⁹⁴ Thus Duhm is not hopeless about connecting with the ancient perspective of a writer, though the writers may themselves blur the originary circumstances of their historical precedents. Having established this at the outset, Duhm provides his (now classic) account of the shape of the book of Isaiah.

Generally speaking, the book as we have it begins with the eighth-century prophet, Isaiah of Jerusalem, who brought together his own prophetic speeches and poems, collating them into discrete 'Büchlein'.¹⁹⁵ The original prophetic genius was entrusted to his disciples (8.16),¹⁹⁶ which in turn led to the expansion of the original material to include other 'jesaianische und nichtjesaianische Erzeugnisse', even in pre-exilic contexts.¹⁹⁷ It was the rise of the 'goldenen Zeit' of the Pharisees and Scribes that produces the 'Ktib', an eventual institutionalizing of the Isaianic text that would bring about 'den Untergang aller übrigen Handschriften'. The best aid that could assist the interpreter in pursuing a genuine 'Urtex' was thus lost – no small reason why Duhm felt a general unease about pursuing a pure originary connection with the prophet Isaiah.

Yet we can say something historically, Duhm believes, about the book's development. Two texts affect this significantly. First, II Chr 36.22-23 cites a Deutero-Isaianic promise (cf. Isa 44.28) as Jeremiac, from which Duhm infers that by the time of the Chronicler, Isaiah 40-66 was not yet associated with the eighth century prophet. Consequently, one of Duhm's maxims is formed, 'Das eigentliche Jesaiabuch geht also nur bis c. 39'.¹⁹⁸ This original collection was itself touched up by a 'Hauptredaktor', responsible for the late insertion of chs. 36-39, whose work was in turn touched up by a subsequent

¹⁹³ Cf. Duhm, *Theologie*, 33, on prophetic personalities.

¹⁹⁴ Duhm, *Jesaia*, iii.

¹⁹⁵ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 8.

¹⁹⁶ Duhm notes the process of 8.16 to represent the first impulse 'die schließlich zur Entstehung des A.T.s geführt hat' (*Jesaia*, 17).

¹⁹⁷ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 8.

¹⁹⁸ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 8.

redactor in 38.10-20, 21ff.¹⁹⁹ If this provides some kind of loose *terminus a quo*, we find our *terminus ad quem* in the second text, Sirach 48.17-25, according to which the prophet Isaiah comforts Zion (48.24; cf. Isa 40.1, 9),²⁰⁰ and effects the healing of Hezekiah (48.20; cf. Isa 38.1ff). The assumption to draw is that between the Chronicler and the author of Sirach, the nascent book of Isaiah had 'bedeutende Fortschritte gemacht'.²⁰¹

How did the literature get to this eventual resting place? Duhm proposes that Isa 1-12 has especially to do with chronicled occasions ('zeitgeschichtliche Anlässe'), with a special emphasis upon Judah.²⁰² The chapters are comprised of smaller collections. Chapters 2-4 follow the pattern of first introducing the 'Drohung vom Tage Jahwes', subsequently the motivation for the threat, and finally, the instrumentality of the promise of Yahweh.²⁰³ Isaiah 6.1-9.6 follows the same pattern, 'zuerst die Drohung, zuletzt die Verheissung, in der Mitte die Motivierung der ersteren und die Vorbereitung der letzteren'.²⁰⁴ Partially in line with an Isaianic 'Denkschrift', Duhm affirms that the bulk of the material has come from Isaiah's hand, though it was subsequently 'garbled' and 'augmented' ('verstümmelt...vermehrt'). The collector ('der Sammler') of Isa 1-12 includes 9.7-11.16, which follows the same pattern of 'Drohung'/'Verheißung', as well as chapters 1 and 5, which only partially follow ('...ihnen die Verheißung fehlt').²⁰⁵ Chapter 12 is 'ein Mosaik aus jungen Dichtungen', and, like chapters 24-27, is an extremely late compilation (first century?).

Isaiah 13-23 stems from another source or collector to that of chapters 1-12, for three reasons.²⁰⁶ First, the use of מִשְׁנֵי in the superscription, a word occurring only elsewhere in the book at 30.6 (Duhm regarded 30.6ff. as the product of the collector of 13-23²⁰⁷), suggests an authorial/redactorial

¹⁹⁹ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 9; cf. 279ff.

²⁰⁰ Isa 40.1 and Sirach 48.24 share the use of παρακαλέω.

²⁰¹ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 9.

²⁰² Duhm, *Jesaia*, 9.

²⁰³ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 10.

²⁰⁴ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 11.

²⁰⁵ Isaiah 2-4 and 6.1-9.6, then, present a kind of form-critical structure that is applied to the remaining material in the 'Büchlein', roughly along the lines of threat ('Drohung'), Motivation ('Motivierung') for the threat, preparation ('Vorbereitung') for the promise, and the promise ('Verheißung').

²⁰⁶ For a historical precedent for this division, see Gesenius, *Jesaia, Ersten Theiles*, 21, 447ff.

²⁰⁷ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 9.

vocabulary foreign to the wider book of Isaiah.²⁰⁸ Second, Isaiah is re-introduced as *בן-אמון*, a rather superfluous epithet, given the exact usage at 1.1.²⁰⁹ Third, the smaller pericopes of 14.24-27 and 17.12-18.7 would better fit elsewhere in the book's later stages, and not in their present location.²¹⁰ Simply stated, for the compiler of Isa 13-23, 'das Vorhergehen von c. 1-12 nicht vorausgesetzt wird'.²¹¹

Chapters 24-35 comprise a late book of previously independent, discreet collections (24-27; 28-33; 34; 35); Isa 24-27 does not present itself as Isaianic, but reflects rather the military and apocalyptic setting of Antiochus Sidetes' conquests (Duhm placed Isa 24-27 around 128 BCE). Chapter 28-33 are identified chiefly by use of the six successive occurrences of *הוי* (28.1; 29.1; 29.15; 30.1; 31.1; 33.1; cf., possibly, *הן* in 32.1). Some of the collection appears to have come from Isaiah of Jerusalem,²¹² yet it has been brought together with great freedom by the redactor. Here, interestingly, Duhm comments on 'canon' (which Childs interprets differently): the redactor of 28-33 used previous Isaianic material, and compiled it *not* to promote 'die Entstehung eines Kanons',²¹³ but to serve the practical goal of many apocalyptic writings in and around the second century, 'die Juden durch den Hinweis auf die nahe Wendung aller Dinge zum Ausharren zu ermutigen'.²¹⁴ Chapters 34-35 arise from a similar context, and since Edom is threatened (34.5, 6, 9), the text must have originated prior to John Hyrcanus' subjugation of the Edomites.²¹⁵ Furhter, 34.16 reflects a kind of 'historische Midrasch' found in the 'Geschichtsbüchern', so must post-date the Chronicler's composition and use of that technique (cf. II Chr 13.22; 24.27).²¹⁶

Chapters 36-39, as stated above, stand historically between the Chronicler and Sirach, and further, probably originate with redactor of the 'Königsbücher', only subsequently to be joined to the foregoing Isaianic material. The result was a 'vorläufigen, aber nicht...endgültigen Abschluß des

²⁰⁸ Cf. Jer. 23.33.

²⁰⁹ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 12.

²¹⁰ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 12 (cf. 122-23, 136).

²¹¹ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 112. Duhm placed Isa 13-23 possibly as late as 104-78 BCE, around the time of Alexander Jannæus (*Isaiah*, 13).

²¹² Cf. *Jesaia*, 15-16.

²¹³ Cf. Duhm, *Entstehung*.

²¹⁴ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 13.

²¹⁵ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 14.

²¹⁶ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 14.

Jesaiabuchs'.²¹⁷ Succinctly put, the person who 'den cc. 36-39 ihre jetzige Stelle anwies, nicht darauf gerechnet, daß nachher noch c. 40-66 hinzukommen sollten'.²¹⁸

The joining of Deutero- and Trito-Isaiah to one another, and subsequently to the foregoing literary collections, is a process not entirely clear. At some late stage (post-original composition), Isa 40-66 revolved around three literary collections: chs. 40-48, 49-57, and 58-66. Insofar as 48.22 borrows its language from 57.21, we can infer the former to present a literary break in the corpus.²¹⁹ A subsequent redactor incorporated throughout material of his own creation, or that from another source (cf. 42.5-7; 44.9-20; 46.6-8; 48, *passim*; 49.22-50.3; 50.10ff.; 52.3-6; 58.13ff.; 59.5-8; 66.23ff.). The redactional activity persevered until the first century BCE.

Apart from this redactor, Duhm notes three authors with whom the interpreter must reckon, and here we find his particular novelty in the history of Isaiah studies. The oldest writing of Isa 40-66 is that of Deutero-Isaiah, excepting the 'späteren Einsätze' just mentioned.²²⁰ Writing around 540 BCE, Deutero-Isaiah probably lived somewhere in a Phoenician area of Lebanon. His writings, as seen in the subsequent chapter, are taken to assume a militaristic posture toward the nations amongst whom he is located.²²¹ Subsequent to the Deutero-Isaianic writings are the 'Ebed-Jahweh-Lieder' of 42.1-4; 49.1-6; 50.4-9; and 52.13-53.12.²²² What marks Duhm as significant in this location can be seen in the firmness of his discrete location of the texts. They are,

ohne Zweifel von Einem Dichter abstammen und wohl nur einen Teil seiner Gedichte bilden, mögen die nicht aufgenommenen früh verloren gegangen sein oder sich wegen zu persönlicher Haltung nicht zur Aufnahme in die Prophetenschrift geeignet haben.²²³

A single poet underlies the four discrete compositions, and is on any reckoning, according to Duhm, post-exilic. The servant songs are only slightly older than the subsequent, single, composition of Isa 56-66, which according to form and content betrays itself to be the composition of a single author. The

²¹⁷ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 14.

²¹⁸ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 14.

²¹⁹ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 14. Cf. *ibid.*, 367, 435. This also aligns with Duhm's position on the subsequent 49.1-6 as a late adjoining to the literature (cf. *Jesaia*, 376).

²²⁰ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 14.

²²¹ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 18.

²²² Duhm, *Jesaia*, 19.

²²³ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 14.

work is itself divided into two pieces, according to Duhm: Isa 56-60, and 61-66.²²⁴

If the general interest in this kind of historical fracturing of the book of Isaiah appears somewhat protracted and theologically void to contemporary readers who are more open to holistic readings, it is important to remember Duhm's felt hermeneutical impetus to lend a diachronicity to the Old Testament, primarily in terms of 'eigentliche Geschichte'.²²⁵ When texts are rendered historically disparate, not all is lost: what rises to the surface of the interpretive task are the distinct voices of Israel's variegated theological reflection, now contained in its scriptures. This kind of historical reconstruction is little more than the attempt to lend a 'positive Interesse' to the theological task of interpreting the Old Testament within the Church.²²⁶ In the chapter to follow, the same set of concerns will affect Duhm's contextualizing of Isa 53 within Isa 40-66, and his particular reading of that chapter.

²²⁴ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 15.

²²⁵ Cf., e.g., *Propheten*, 1.

²²⁶ Duhm, *Theologie*, 6.

Chapter 2

Bernhard Duhm and Isaiah 53

'Es zeigt sich darin die innere Verwandtschaft der alttestamentlichen Religion mit dem Christentum, allerdings auch ihre Inferiorität, sofern sie den höchsten Gedanken denken, aber nicht verwirklichen kann'.

Bernhard Duhm¹

Duhm's commentary, as stated above, has had an 'epoch-making' effect on the field.² No small part of this comes from his formal isolation of the 'Ebed-Jahwe-Lieder' (42.1-4; 49.1-6; 50.4-9; 52.13-53.12). Early in his career, Duhm felt little difficulty in ascribing these texts to the hand of Deutero-Isaiah, and read them as reflecting corporate Israel's experience in exile.³ That language that sounds particularly 'individual' is read in light of parallel passages that clearly have the nation in view.⁴ Further, Israel's identity as the 'Knecht Jahves' is contingent upon her reception of Yahweh's transcendent word,⁵ despite her present suffering in exile.⁶ Israel is faced with a decision that will affect her relationship to God – either turning in trust, or losing the privileged status of the 'Jahves Knecht', and with that, an ultimate, promised 'Erhöhung'.⁷ The reading, while in some ways unique, is largely conventional.

¹ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 407.

² Childs, *Introduction*, 318.

³ Duhm, *Theologie*, 287ff.

⁴ For example, the language of Isa 49.1-2, 4ff. is read in relation to 49.3, as well as in light of 41.8-9, 51.16, and 59.21. See *Theologie*, 292-93.

⁵ Duhm, *Theologie*, 289-90, 292.

⁶ Duhm, *Theologie*, 287.

⁷ One may note the similarities to what Bultmann will later hold as an essential paradigm for understanding Paul's proclamation of the Christ-event. A radical decision to understand oneself in light of a new revelation of God is central to Bultmann's existential reading of the Pauline corpus. See, for example, his *Theology of the New Testament*, I:279, 285, 300.

I. Approaching Isaiah 53: The *Knecht Jahwes* after the *Ebed-Lieder-Jahwe*

In Duhm's *Israels Propheten*, unsurprisingly, we find that Deutero-Isaiah features well after the section devoted to the 'historical' Isaiah, a move that casts Duhm's interest into a sharp relief to more recent appreciations of the book's literary structuring.⁸ In his *Propheten*, Duhm begins with a general introduction to the history and traditions behind the prophetic corpus. He then traces the history of prophetic activity in Israel, beginning with Moses, Joshua and Deborah, through the period of Assyrian dominance (Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah [of Jerusalem]), through the Deuteronomic reform in the period of Ezekiel, through the last great prophets (Jeremiah, Deutero-Isaiah and his anonymous prophetic contemporaries), through the prophets of the first century after the return from Exile (Haggai, Zechariah, Obadiah, Malachi and Trito-Isaiah), through the post-exilic 'Volk der Thora' (Ezra, Nehemiah, Joel, Habakkuk, Jonah), and finally to the Maccabean period⁹ of prophecy (Daniel, Deutero- and Trito-Zechariah, Isa 24-27¹⁰).¹¹

Deutero-Isaiah is tucked away with 'die letzten großen Propheten', and the poet of the servant songs with those of the last century after the return from exile (alongside Obadiah and 'das Gedicht von Hiob'). It will be helpful to summarize the placement of the servant songs, historically, as Duhm sees them.

According to Duhm, there was a flourish of literary activity in Israel in the first century after the return from exile – most of the productions are now

⁸ Williamson, *Book Called Isaiah*, notes varying recent approaches to Isaiah that find the present shape of the book a fruitful starting point for historical and theological appreciation. As can be seen from his survey, an interest in the present form of the book of Isaiah does not need to imply a 'canonical' approach as advocated by Childs and Seitz. Contemporary holistic readings probably tend more to follow lines of redaction-criticism than placing an emphasis on what 'voice' this final, redacted form now communicates.

⁹ Duhm had noted the less-than-favorable reception of his Maccabean dating of Isaianic fragments twenty years earlier, 'Some reviewers are quite horrified because I assume that Isaiah includes Maccabean fragments; but they are more cautious in what they say than their predecessors thirty years ago, when the discussion about Maccabean Psalms began. Thirty years ago, anyone who was guilty of anything of the kind almost counted as a rascal, only to be mentioned with indignation... This time it will not be so long before the Maccabean fragments in Isaiah will also count as "secure, objective" results, and the good people will declare that they had known it for long enough – oh well, I hope that by then I shall already be involved in a new heresy...' Quoted in Smend, *Astruc to Zimmerli*, 112.

¹⁰ A 'young' position consistent with his Isaiah introduction, §20.

¹¹ One may note Duhm's legacy in the similarity of more recent proposals that have generally followed his lead. Perhaps the most enduring recent contribution has been Blenkinsopp's *Prophecy in Israel*.

lost, or preserved merely in the form of their (pseudonymous) titles in Chronicles, and in fragments from the wider context of religious literature of the time (now preserved in the older prophets, and in Joshua, Judges, I-II Samuel, I-II Kings). Characteristic of the literature produced at this time was a shaping, even infusion, with prophetic speech, which ‘das Leben von Gottesmännern im Legendenstil beschrieben’, and which treated older historical books in accordance with the theological position of later times, and which ‘wonderfully’ enriched history ‘durch Midrasch’.¹² Though the exact, precise dating of materials from this time is not possible,¹³ we may nevertheless observe, says Duhm, that the four ‘servant songs’ are from a later, ‘nachexilische Zeit’,¹⁴ and that they are indeed some of the most important of productions of late Israelite literature.¹⁵

Yet while there may be real historical intrigue behind the identity and role of the servant of Yahweh, and while it has subsequently come to be situated in the literary and theological context of Deutero-Isaiah,¹⁶ we should not assume that the servant songs have any organic relationship to their literary surroundings;¹⁷ further, the redactor who placed these poems in the book has left behind traces of his own distinct interpretation of the servant:

Dagegen gehören zu den bedeutendsten Hervorbringungen der späteren Zeit die vier Lieder vom Knecht Jahwes, die dem Buch Deuterjesaias beige-schrieben sind und mit ihrer jetzigen Umgebung in keinem Zusammenhang stehen. Es sind die Gedichte Jes. 42, 1-4; 49, 1-6; 50, 4-9 und 52, 13-53, 12. An zwei Stellen hat der Mann, der sie in das Buch setzte, ein paar Sätze hinzugefügt, Kap. 42, 5-7 und 50, 10.11,¹⁸ aus denen seine Auffassung des Gottesknecht erhellt.¹⁹

The distinctiveness of the *Ebed-Jahve-Lieder* is spelled out further, in that they possess a certain style – a quietness – that stands in contrast to the rather loud and confrontational voice of Deutero-Isaiah:

¹² Duhm, *Propheten*, 329. Significantly, Duhm does not here regard midrash in the pejorative sense, à la Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, 237.

¹³ Duhm, *Propheten*, 330, ‘[D]ie genauere Datierung der einzelnen Stücke nicht möglich ist’.

¹⁴ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 19 (§32).

¹⁵ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 220.

¹⁶ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 19 (§32).

¹⁷ Cf. Duhm, *Jesaia*, 311.

¹⁸ Isa 50.10-11 is a rather loaded verse for the interpretation of the servant songs. If Duhm is at least potentially correct in locating these verses as one of the earliest interpretations of the servant (the redactor’s *Auffassung des Gottesknecht*), they should perhaps be incorporated into a more holistic reading, à la Childs’s reading of the servant with reference to 42.1, 49.1ff., 49.3 and 50.4ff. (*Isaiah*, 412).

¹⁹ Duhm, *Propheten*, 330.

Die vier Lieder sind in einer Zeit entstanden, wo die Juden schon wieder im eigenen Lande lebten und auf die Wiederaufrichtung der zwölf Stämme hofften. Es sind Dichtungen im ruhigsten Ton, sehr verschieden von den rauschenden Gedichten des lebhaften Deuterjesaja, zu denen sie in gewissen Sinn ein ergänzendes Gegenstück bilden. Ob der Verfasser dies beabsichtigt hat, läßt sich nicht sagen, ebensowenig, ob noch mehr Lieder dieser Art von ihm gedichtet sind.²⁰

Whereas Deutero-Isaiah is known through his ‘rustling poems’,²¹ our poet notes the servant’s quiet, patient, and unassuming ministry. The former is ‘gern laut’,²² the latter marked by ‘demütige Geduld’.²³ Any interpretive potentiality in the phrase, ‘...zu denen sie in gewissen Sinn ein ergänzendes Gegenstück bilden’ is immediately nullified in Duhm’s earlier comment on the distinctive voice of the suffering servant poet, in his *Jesaia*:

Die Dichtungen vom Ebed-Jahve, 42¹⁻⁴ 49¹⁻⁶ 50⁴⁻⁹ 52¹³⁻⁵³¹², fallen zunächst durch den Stil auf, durch die ruhige Sprache, durch das Ebenmaß der Stichen und Strophen. Sie berühren sich in Wort und Gedanken sehr nahe mit Deuterjes.s Schrift, haben aber zu ihrer Umgebung nur zum Teil einige Beziehung und würden durch ihre Entfernung keine Lücke hinterlassen, was freilich auch von manchen anderen Stücken gesagt werden könnte.²⁴

Were the servant songs to be extracted from Isaiah 40-55, the chapters would suffer no loss in and of themselves (and thus neither would any loss be incurred by the wider context of the book, prophets, etc.). It is not simply a matter of giving priority to an historical *Ursprünglichkeit*, since the statement suggests, or perhaps more modestly, intimates, that the *Ebed-Jahve-Lieder*, in all their distinctiveness, do not have much to do with Deutero-Isaiah’s writing.²⁵ More succinctly, while the four servant songs contribute something *alongside* Deutero-Isaiah’s writings, they contribute nothing *to*, or *into* those writings – they carry no synchronic, affiliating potential.²⁶

²⁰ Duhm, *Propheten*, 331. See also Duhm’s introductory comments to Isa 53.

²¹ The issue is far more complex than perhaps Duhm recognized. One may consult, for example, the excellent article of Crouch, ‘Cosmological Tradition’, which demonstrates the ways in which the pre-exilic militaristic traditions were re-interpreted to accommodate an exilic setting, where a Judahite king no longer mediated Yahweh *qua* warrior (esp. 265ff.).

²² Duhm, *Jesaia*, 311.

²³ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 400.

²⁴ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 311.

²⁵ Cf. Duhm, *Jesaia*, 407, where Duhm comments on 54.1-6, ‘[Es] nimmt nicht die geringste Notiz von der Dichtung c. 52¹³—53¹²... Zion ist gemeint, wird aber nicht genannt, offenbar deshalb, weil das Gedicht 51 c. 51¹⁷—52¹² unmittelbar vorherging’.

²⁶ It is perhaps the strength of this rhetoric that brought Duhm’s observation (previously made by Rosemüller) on the individuality of the servant songs, to the fore of Isaiah studies.

Stylistically speaking, the disparate styles are evinced in their handlings of a similar theme, the 'Gottesknecht':

Bei [Deutero-Isaiah, God's servant] ist Israel, so wie es ist, der Knecht Jahwes, von Jahwe erwählt, geschützt und für eine herrliche Zukunft bestimmt, aber gegenwärtig blind und taub, gefangen und geplündert, ein Wurm, verachtet von den Heiden, voller Sünden. Dagegen ist der Held dieser Dichtungen dem Volk gegenübergestellt, ist unschuldig, Jahwes Jünger und von ihm tagtäglich erleuchtet, berufen zur Mission am Volk und an den Heiden und seinem Berufe in aller Stille nachgehend.²⁷

The differentiation is nuanced and persuasive. Further, it holds historical import for the setting of the composition of the texts:

Der Verf. dieser stillen, tiefen, wenig blendenden Gedichte, der schon von Temperaments wegen nicht mit dem rauschenden beweglichen Dtjes. identisch sein kann, scheint nach dem B. Hiob und vor dem B. Maleachi geschrieben zu haben, jedenfalls nicht im Exil. Ob die Gedichte einmal als besonderes Buch existiert haben oder nur zu dem Buch Dtjes. hinzugedichtet wurden, darüber kann man streiten, aber wegen gewisser Zusätze (cf. 42⁵⁻⁷; 50¹⁰⁻¹¹) ist die erstere Annahme viel wahrscheinlicher; diese Zusätze scheinen von dem Schriftsteller herzurühren, der jene Gedichte in Dtjes.'s Schrift einschob, wo ein genügend freier Raum am Rande oder zwischen Absätzen oder Papierlagen vorhanden war, ohne auf den dtjesaian. Zusammenhang Rücksicht zu nehmen.²⁸

That the author of the poems simply inserted his work into Deutero-Isaiah's writing, wherever space was available, is overly simplistic and cannot be sustained in light of contemporary redaction-critical studies.²⁹ What it represents, however, as an attempt to historically reckon with the disparity of style, is not only admirable but necessary for contemporary exegesis (i.e. such redaction-critical work).

In any case, the four songs manifest a similarity in style and voice. The first song, 42.1-4, familiarizes the reader in a general way 'mit der Stellung des Knechts zu Jahwe, seiner Aufgabe und der Art, wie er sie erfüllt'.³⁰ The servant carries, in some sense, a representative role,³¹ and stands in contrast to Deutero-Isaiah, insofar as for the poet, 'Das "Recht" ist ein kurzer Ausdruck für Religion, die als sittlich religiöse Ordnung und als Verfassung der

²⁷ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 311.

²⁸ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 311.

²⁹ E.g. Williamson, *Book Called Isaiah*; idem., *Interpreting Isaiah*.

³⁰ Duhm, *Propheten*, 331.

³¹ Duhm, *Propheten*, 332.

menschlichen Gesellschaft gedacht wird'.³² The short use of the phrase 'Recht', rather than 'Jahwes Recht'³³ (cf. Jer. 5.4, 5) shows that for the poet there was no other conceivable religion – no other pagan gods with whom to polemicize. Duhm continues, '...müssen es die Völker kennen lernen...die Welt muß Jahwes Religion annehmen'.³⁴

The pattern of the second servant song (49.1-6) was later adopted, 'nicht mit Unrecht', by the editor of Jeremiah, who applied the pattern of call-objection in Jer. 1.4ff. Whether this is to be taken as a firm case of later jeremianic use of the passage is open to question.³⁵ But Duhm is quick to shift the emphasis to the fact that in the prophetic tradition, God is interested only in those whom he has called from birth (or prior to birth); in fact, he notes, in our own world we have a category for this kind of phenomenon – it is precisely what we mean when we say that someone is 'gifted from birth' with this or that 'inspired'.³⁶

In the third servant song (50.4-9) we see a long-suffering patience, confident that that which will assuage both personal and cosmic brokenness is the intervention of Yahweh, not a personal acting out that takes matters into one's own hands. Duhm notes that the suffering brought about by contemporary 'doubters' of God's plans finds resonance in the book of Malachi,³⁷ where resistance to these plans, even of an indirect nature (Mal. 1.2-5), is a futile undertaking. There, as in the third poem, what remains the 'Hauptsache' is the prophetic confidence that the poet is himself a 'Beauftragten Gottes', who has a self-awareness of his 'heilbringenden Aufgabe', and who is fully convinced of the 'Sieg seines Ideals'.³⁸

Finally, the fourth servant song (52.13-53.12). The poet spends the bulk of the poem reflecting on the person of the servant, with whom the poet was acquainted – at first glance not understanding the role and significance of the

³² Duhm, *Propheten*, 332.

³³ Cf. משפט in Isa 42.4, and דרך יהוה / משפט אלהיהם in Jer 5.4, 5.

³⁴ Duhm, *Propheten*, 332.

³⁵ One may note the absence of the connection in Sommer's insightful 'Allusions and Illusions'.

³⁶ Duhm, *Propheten*, 334. For Duhm-the-Romantic, prophecy is not something relegated to the past, but very present in the Romantic tradition, as Lowth showed us, and Blake reminded us. Cf. Blake's inversion of Lowth's prophet-as-poet, into the poet-as-prophet. See, for example, Blake's *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. Likewise, Blake opens his *All Religions are One* with the epithet, 'The Voice of one crying in the Wilderness'. Erdman, *Blake*, 1.

³⁷ Duhm, *Propheten*, 335.

³⁸ Duhm, *Propheten*, 335-6.

servant, but later coming to recognize with new eyes.³⁹ Duhm elaborates:

Hier überkommt uns, mehr noch als im dritten Liede, mächtig das Gefühl, daß der Dichter nicht eine reine Idealgestalt schaffen wollte, sondern *daß sein Held wirklich gelebt hat*. Aber indem er sich anschickt, seinen Lebensgang darzustellen, ist er sich bewußt, daß ihn wenige, daß ihn nur die ganz verstehen werden, die Gott selbst erleuchtet.⁴⁰

It is from this new perspective that we see the cause of the suffering, and from this cause, the purpose behind the suffering. Whereas in earlier poems the servant exposed himself to the blows of his contemporaries (e.g. 50.6), here he needs not to expose himself, for his suffering is inevitable – it is caused by God himself. It is from this vantage point that Duhm can affirm that the suffering was both on behalf of the community, as well as on behalf of individuals.⁴¹

While the servant suffered abuse of a particularly *external* manner in 50.4-9, in the fourth poem the servant has done ‘noch mehr, viel mehr’.⁴² The introduction to the poem, opening with a statement of exaltation (52.13), followed by a shocking description of an opposite state to this exaltation (52.14-15), presses the reader forward in dramatic fashion.⁴³ the victory that he secures, he will experience,⁴⁴ and it will be a victory that centers around his convincing, his winning over of the ‘the many’.⁴⁵

There is nothing mechanical about how this comes about – it is not, for Duhm, as in later theological systems, a sort of transaction, or leveling of the scales, akin to some kind of vicariousness ‘Stellvertretung’ (as is perennially debated with reference to 53.10, as well as the verse’s relation to 53.5-6):⁴⁶

Daß der Dichter nicht an eine mechanische Strafübertragung, durch die Gottes Schuldenforderung getilgt wurde, gedacht hat, daß der Knecht Jahwes eine sittliche, persönliche Leistung vollbringt, zeigt sich in der

³⁹ Duhm, *Propheten*, 336.

⁴⁰ Duhm, *Propheten*, 336 (emph. added).

⁴¹ Duhm, *Propheten*, 338, ‘da blutet nicht bloß der Einzelne freudig für die Gemeinschaft, sondern weiß auch der, der selber verschont bleibt, daß der andere für ihn geblutet hat’.

⁴² Duhm, *Propheten*, 336.

⁴³ Duhm, *Propheten*, 340.

⁴⁴ Duhm, *Propheten*, 337.

⁴⁵ Duhm, *Propheten*, 340, ‘Der Gottesknecht aber kämpft nicht bloß für die Anerkennung seines persönlichen Rechts, sondern vielmehr für die Gewinnung der “Vielen”. Und dies Ziel wird er erreichen, es ist ja das Ziel der Aufgabe, die ihm Jahwe von seiner Geburt an gestellt hat’.

⁴⁶ The German ‘Stellvertretung’ is extremely difficult to render in English, though occasionally I use the translation ‘vicariousness’. I am aware of the inadequacy of the translation, and would defer to the influential studies of Janowski, ‘He Bore Our Sins’; idem., *Ecce Homo*. With reference to the servant of Isa 40ff., cf. Steck, ‘Aspekte’, 389; Hägglund, *Homecoming*, 11ff.

Art, wie er sein Leiden trägt.⁴⁷

Duhm is here referring to 53.7, wherein the servant remains silent, despite oppression, affliction, and the presence of those inflicting these. In fact, it is on the basis of his silence that the servant ‘spiritualizes’ the suffering. To lean on a notion of ‘Stellvertretung’ is a ‘sad externalization of Religion’, which should be, especially in the prophetic mind, a radical renunciation of the external.⁴⁸

In similar fashion, Duhm notes both Moses (presumably from Exodus 32.32-33) and Paul (presumably from Romans 9.1-5) as others who wished that they could have taken this kind of national guilt upon themselves.⁴⁹ But whereas Moses and Paul were unable to do so, the servant would succeed by virtue of God’s (pre-)ordination. As Paul is arguably drawing on Ex. 32.32 in Rom. 9.3,⁵⁰ one may justifiably read the inability of Paul to offer himself on behalf of his ‘kinsfolk’ as mirroring Moses’s inability to do so in Exodus. The rationale given by God in Exodus 32 for this inability is that such forgiveness is the sole prerogative of Yahweh. By his reference to Moses and Paul, then, Duhm has thrown the fourth servant song into even sharper relief against the backdrop of similar self-sacrificial passages in the Christian Bible, as it was the will of Yahweh to make the servant such an offering.

To narrate the ‘event’ that motivates the poet to compose the fourth servant song, the poet must begin with the servant’s death, ‘geschieden aus dem Lande der Lebenden’.⁵¹ The לָמוֹ of 53.8a is read as denoting a movement from one place to another – thus to be ‘taken away’ from oppression and judgment is, quite simply, to die, ‘Aus Druck und Gericht entrückt – Wer denkt es aus, woe er weilt? Geschieden vom Land des Lebens, Um des Volkes Schuld getötet!’⁵²

Taken away from his people, somewhere ‘an einen geheimnisvollen Ort am Weltrand’, his reputation will be redeemed in the eyes of those who have the perspective needed to ‘see and understand’ the divine will behind

⁴⁷ Duhm, *Propheten*, 339.

⁴⁸ Duhm, *Theologie*, 297.

⁴⁹ Duhm, *Propheten*, 339. See also *Jesaja*, 369.

⁵⁰ An observation made both by Jewett, *Romans*, 560, and Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 525.

⁵¹ Duhm, *Propheten*, 341.

⁵² Duhm, *Propheten*, 340. Duhm notes לָקַח as denoting death in Gen 5.24; 2 Kgs 2.1-10; Ps 49.16 (MT); Ps 73.24. As seen in *Jesaja* (400-401), the decision to reading לָקַח as resulting in death informs Duhm’s decision to emend לָמוֹ in 53.8b to לָמוֹת (cf. LXX).

the visible suffering, '[E]r hat beschlossen, ihn zu reinigen, ihn von seinem Übel, das ihn in den Augen der Menschen zum Sünder gemacht hat, zu rechtfertigen'.⁵³ Yahweh had to let him die, so that a deliverance from his plague, along with the gift of a new life, could be bestowed.

Duhm notes that, as with the close of Job, where God grants long life to Job and an extended, miraculous progeny in his wake, we find in Isa 53 the similar theme of leprosy overcome by God's miraculous working (at least, according to the future hope of 53.10b-12). Duhm notes, as he does in his *Jesaia*, the LXX's addition of Job's resurrection from the dead. Curiously enough, there is something of an intertextual move made by Duhm, whereby he will read the servant's postmortem exaltation as a type of resurrection, even if distanced from 'resurrection' as a knowable category.⁵⁴

The process behind the transition present in 53.10b-12 is not entirely clear, but an attempt to outline it is nevertheless undertaken. In the 'Ebed-Lieder-Jahwe' the servant will again raise Israel up, establish justice on the earth, prevail as an arbiter, administer Torah, and stand as the highest authority over the earth. *Only then*, notes Duhm, will the title 'Knecht Jahwes' come its full application: he will be 'der höchste Beamte Gottes', the 'der Ausrichter seiner Verordnungen, sein Stellvertreter auf der Erde'.⁵⁵

Finally, Duhm notes that the extensive attention to detail highlights the individuality of the servant, and from this he expounds, in captivating fashion, the perspective of the poet:

Der Dichter hat die Gestalt des Gottesknechtes in den beiden letzten Dichtungen mit so vielen individuellen Zügen ausgestattet, daß man nicht umhin kann zu glauben, er habe eine wirkliche Person vor Augen gehabt, einen Mann, dessen begeisterter Jünger er wurde, als er ihn näher kennen und verstehen lernte, und den er nicht aufgeben konnte, als er ihn hatte sterben und begraben werden sehen. Über dem Grabe des Meisters wird er selber zum Propheten: dieser Knecht Gottes ist nicht tot, sondern nur von Jahwe entrückt und verborgen, er wird wiederkommen und Jahwes Anliegen zu Ende führen, ohne ferner mühselig arbeiten und leiden zu müssen. Das wird das Wunder aller Wunder sein, es wird sein Volk von Sünde und Strafe befreien und die

⁵³ Duhm, *Propheten*, 341.

⁵⁴ Duhm, *Propheten*, 343. One may note the subtle difference in wording between the versions of Duhm's *Jesaia*: in his *Jesaia*⁵ (407) we find the sentence, 'Er wird...sondern persönlich lebendig gemacht'. But in the original 1892 *Jesaia*¹ (378), we find, 'Er wird...sondern persönlich *wieder* lebendig gemacht' (emph. added). The omission of 'wieder' in the following editions highlights the growing conviction that a bodily resurrection was not in view.

⁵⁵ Duhm, *Propheten*, 342.

wahre Religion über die ganze Welt ausbreiten.⁵⁶

The language is moving. The image of the poet standing at the grave of the master, assuming a prophetic role by virtue of his new perspective is a very personal image indeed. It is in part imagined, aesthetic, and historical. Duhm is basing his emphasis on 'particularity' on the historical reality of this servant, and on the historical relationship that the poet had with him.⁵⁷

We might close Duhm's handling of 52.13-53.12 in *Israels Propheten* with his more synthetic 'reading' of the text. It strikes the contemporary interpreter as curious that Duhm should do such a thing as 'reading' a text, rather than simply exegeting it. He writes:

Aber hier wird die Wendung durch eine Gottestat herbeigeführt. Aber wie sehr verschieden ist diese von denen, die Deuterojesaia erwartet. Hier werden keine Völker zertrümmert und keine Könige dem Schwert des Welteroberers ausgeliefert. Die stille unverdrossene Arbeit des Gottesknechtes, vollbracht mit der Gabe des Wortes und dem Mitleid des Herzens, sein stellvertretendes Leiden und seine Auferstehung vom Tode wird Israel wiederherstellen, die Heiden erleuchten und Völker und Könige dem wahren Gott gewinnen.⁵⁸ Weltgeschichtliche Weite hat auch dieser Gedanke, aber er nimmt einen anderen Weg in Aussicht als Deuterojesaias stürmende Begeisterung; er rechnet mit geistigen Mitteln, denn auch die Wirkung der göttlichen Machttat, der Auferweckung, ist geistiger Art. Darum steht hier im Mittelpunkt der neuen Welt nicht der König aus dem Davidenhause, sondern der aus 'dürrem Erdreich' entsprossene Schriftgelehrte, Seelsorger, Missionar, Rechtslehrer. Die Gestalt und die Tätigkeit des Gottesknechts tritt nicht in feindlichen Gegensatz zu den Erwartungen anderer Propheten, ist vielmehr eine notwendige Ergänzung der sogenannten messianischen Hoffnungen; sie weist auf den geistigen Weg zur Wiederherstellung Israels und Gewinnung der Welt für Jahwe hin und stellt neben die dramatische Weltkatastrophe die innerlich wirkende Ethik der Berufarbeit in Gottes Dienst, ohne daß der Dichter vergißt, daß die entscheidende Wendung im Geist der Menschheit erst eine unerhörte Gottestat bringen kann.⁵⁹

The tone is more 'evangelical' than one would expect from Duhm.⁶⁰ Further, here we get much more of a picture of what Duhm means by the transformation of the spirit, the bringing of a new ethic, a new religion – he would appear to have in mind something very much like a 'conversion' to see

⁵⁶ Duhm, *Propheten*, 342-43.

⁵⁷ More generally, Duhm observes, 'Sein Held, ein Thoralehrer und Seelsorger, ein umkommender Gerechter...scheint eine historische Persönlichkeit gewesen zu sein' (*Jesaia*, 19; §32).

⁵⁸ This foreshadows Levenson's recent *Resurrection*.

⁵⁹ Duhm, *Propheten*, 343-4.

⁶⁰ Cf. Childs, *Old Testament Theology*, 28-29, who similarly employs confessional language in the first-person voice (surprising, even for Childs).

what God has done in a new dispensation, and to believe that the God who now speaks and acts is the same God that did so previously.

One may note the direction here. The servant does not reach his realization in Christianity, because the servant does not represent any new or novel thoughts. He represents, on the one hand, Yahweh's pure, non-culturally-debased Torah, and on the other, a distinct contrast to Deutero-Isaiah's militaristic imagery. The assumption behind the statement is that Christ does indeed represent a new dispensation: not a renewal of Torah as such, but something that will stand above it. Here, however, we run into something of a problem in stressing the historical particularity of the servant's sufferings and redemption, as present in historical-critical work from a Christian perspective (Duhm), or as in more dogmatic readings of the servant's relationship to the triune God (Childs): how could there have been such a sweeping, corporately-atoning act, initiated by God and seen through by his providence, holding import for both Jews and Gentiles, that would have still necessitated the salvation traditionally read in the Christ-event? For Duhm, Isaiah 52.13-53.12 has a 'weltgeschichtliche Größe', in that Israel, kings and nations will have to reckon with 'diese unerhörte Gottestat'; this is, according to Duhm, the belief from which Christianity emerged.⁶¹

The prophets are bringers of a 'neue Ideal', which is in a very real sense nothing new at all, but simply a recovery of the message of Torah which had since been lost.⁶² As such, they represent that which lay at the root of Israel's religion, yet also that which will be superseded at the coming of Christ. They are a pure recovery of what lay behind Israel's 'Despotismus';⁶³ yet, insofar as

⁶¹ Duhm, *Propheten*, 344.

⁶² Duhm, *Theologie*, 187. The prophets' contribution of a higher ethic was in fact a recovery operation, standing at odds with the legal strata of Torah. As with others of his day, Duhm saw this best exemplified in the preaching of Amos and Micah:

Wir beobachten hier die Verwandtschaft zwischen Amos und Mica, die beide von der Anschauung ausgehen, dass das sittliche-Gute auch das Natürlich-Menschliche sei, eine Anschauung, die von ihrer ganzen Zeit freilich, in gewisser Weise sogar vom Deuteronomiker (c. 30, 11ff.), getheilt wird, die aber eben in der vorwiegend sittlichen Anschauung jener beiden Propheten am Meisten zum Geltung kommt. Sind die Forderungen Jahves leicht zu wissen, so sind sie auch leicht zu erfüllen...Die Forderungen sind nun: thue recht, habe Lust an der Güte, wandle demüthig mit deinem Gott (187).

For a more general situating, one may note pp. 73-91, as well as Wellhausen's statement on Micah 6.8, 'It is no new matter, but a thing well known, that sacrifices are not what the Torah of the Lord contains' (*Prolegomena*, 58).

⁶³ Duhm, *Theologie*, 33.

they are also a 'shadow', they fall short of what will be revealed in the New Testament.⁶⁴

We find this point further elaborated in Duhm's comment on what the 'Gottestat' will enable at the *telos* of the poet's proclamation. The passage is lengthy, but worth quoting in full:

Das Weltreligion des Christentums ist aus dem Glauben hervorgegangen, daß diese unerhörte Gottestat geschehen sei. Für sie ist auch der Bringer des Heils zuerst der Lehrer und Seelsorger, der Helfer der Armen und Mühseligen, der Anwalt der Sünder, dann der stellvertretende Leidende und Sterbende, endlich der über alle Menschen Erhabene. *Dennoch werden die Lieder vom Knecht Jahwes im Neuen Testament nicht übermäßig viel benutzt. Man muß auch zugestehen, daß das Ideal des Dichters nicht an die Verwirklichung im Christentum hinanreicht. Der Knecht Jahwes vertritt keine neuen Gedanken, er verbreitet nur das Überkommene unter den Menschen.* Man darf wohl annehmen, daß der Dichter bei dem 'Recht' hauptsächlich an dessen sittlich-menschliche Seite gedacht hat, da es das zerbrochene Rohr aufrichtet; aber er sagt nichts vom Inhalt und Geist des Rechts und hätte das doch tun müssen, wenn er etwas Höheres darüber zu sagen gewußt hätte. Was wären für uns die Evangelien, wenn sie nicht das Wort von der wahren Gerechtigkeit, von der Sorge um die Seele, vom schmalen Wege, von der köstlichen Perle, von der unbedingten Bruderliebe, vom bergeversetzenden Glauben hätten. Das Ziel, das der Dichter vor Augen hat, ist die Wohlfahrt der Menschen; selbst der Gottesknecht wird mit langem Leben, Freude an den Nachkommen, hohen Ehren unter den Völkern belohnt, nicht mit einem Lohn, der ewigen Wert hätte. Obwohl er den Tod übersteht, läuft doch all seine Arbeit auf die Herbeiführung eines glücklichen Diesseits hinaus; sie wäre nicht nötig, wenn es kein Unglück und keine Schuld gäbe. Das Christentum ist keineswegs bloß die Erlösung von der Sünde und ihre bösen Folgen, es ist die Erlösung von dieser sinnlichen Welt und die Erhebung in die göttliche; es wäre das, was es ist, auch wenn die Menschen nicht sündigten und sich in dieser Welt wohl fühlten. An die Armen, Unglücklichen, die Sünder, an die Kinderseelen wendet es sich nicht aus sentimentaler Menschenfreundlichkeit, sondern weil sie am meisten für die höhere Welt empfänglich sind und am wenigsten gebunden durch die Güter und Freuden dieser Welt. Selbstverständlich machen wir dem Dichter keinen Vorwurf, wenn er noch nicht den Sinn der Religion in der Rettung der unsterblichen Seele und ihrem ewigen Fortschreiten von einer Verklärung zur andern gefunden hat; nur kann man ihn nicht den Männern des Neuen Testaments und seinen Meister ihrem Meister gleichstellen. *Er ist trotzdem seiner Zeit weit vorausgeeilt, und seine Dichtungen gehören zu den prophetischen Schriften, denn sie erwarten das*

⁶⁴ Cf. Duhm, *Jesaia*, 407. We should be careful to avoid regarding Duhm as embodying too sharp a Lutheran dichotomy between 'law' and 'gospel'. While he generally accepts 'die Unterscheidung von Gesetz und Evangelium in der lutherischen Dogmatik' as an interpretive center of gravity ('Kronzeugen'), this is nuanced. Indeed, he can even critique the Apostle. See Reventlow, 'Prophetie', 259-60.

*Beste von der Zukunft und halten damit den teleologischen Charakter der prophetischen Religion fest.*⁶⁵

The value of the 'Ebed-Lieder-Jahwe' poems, and the enduring significance of the viewpoint of their author, is the teleological (eschatological) view they hold out, and how this view both coincides with that envisaged by prophetic 'religion', and yet differs markedly in how history's *telos* will come about.⁶⁶ The prophetic *telos* in view is one in which world will be transformed, ethically, so that there will be no poor, downtrodden, or heavy-laden. The poet does not have in mind anything 'eternal', or 'immortal', says Duhm – and this is witnessed to by the fact that he does not spell out what justice should specifically look like.

The traditional, common nature of the servant's work, the this-worldliness woven throughout his vision of salvation, and his lack of a New Testament understanding of the eternality, and with this presumably other-worldliness, of salvation, all contribute to a historical particularity that Duhm stresses so as to avoid a flattening reading of the Old Testament.⁶⁷ That which was envisaged by the poet was nothing more than the hope of 'eines glücklichen Diesseits'. Just *how* to relate this to the traditional Christian reading of the poem becomes the problem.⁶⁸ In fact, as will be seen below, Duhm will simply state that it cannot be so related; the two moments in history are irreconcilable.

Ultimately, as has been noted, Duhm has left quite a mess for those who seek to interpret Old Testament Scriptures in connection with those in the New. Such is a rather necessary outcome of his hermeneutic. But whatever misgivings a contemporary interpreter may hold toward the reading, it must be acknowledged as consistent, given a particular understanding of the nature of history, theology, religion, and the Church.

⁶⁵ Duhm, *Propheten*, 344-45 (emph. added). Cf. the specific shape of Isaiah's 'teleologische Charakter', in *Theologie*, 175-78.

⁶⁶ Significant here is Duhm's view of the relation of Deutero-Isaiah to the gospels in his *Theologie*, 300-301. Surprisingly, one finds a similar relation to Duhm in Barth, *CD IV.3*, 49.

⁶⁷ There is the possibility, of course, that Duhm's language is an attempt to articulate common ground with more popular understandings of the relation of prophets to Christ.

⁶⁸ Duhm, *Reich Gottes*, 10 (cf. 15).

II. Isaiah 53: 'Die vierte Dichtung über den Knecht Jahwes'

When we approach the fourth servant song, the first thing we may note is that it differs from its predecessors. Whereas in 49.1ff. and 50.4ff. the speaker is the servant, and in 42.1ff. the speaker is Yahweh himself, our passage, 52.13ff., retains primarily the vantage point of the poet.⁶⁹ That we are reading from this perspective will only further differentiate our passage from its Deutero-Isaianic neighborhood; Duhm's earlier assessment of Deutero-Isaiah as a prophet, over against a poet, sharpens the relief.⁷⁰ It was not that Deutero-Isaiah was void of poetry (note again Duhm's primacy of 'meter', *Vorwort*, iii), but that the material which bears his name cannot be separated from the prophetic vocation, and all that this implies historically. Nor does this distinction need to imply that the poet of 52.13-53.12 may act prophetically, by extension. But this effect will be owing to the inherent power of the poet's words, rather than to any prophetic vocation, properly speaking. The point is simply that our poet stands, for various reasons, in a differentiated position from his wider context. This will perhaps be seen most clearly in the differentiation between the two eschatological hopes present in Isaiah 40-55.

Moreover, we may note Duhm's strong words concerning the individuality of the servant. The corporate v. singular debate was well worn at the time of Duhm's commentary,⁷¹ and he feels obliged to state his position at the outset, 'Der Knecht Jahwes wird hier noch individueller behandelt als in den übrigen Liedern, und die Deutung seiner Person auf das wirkliche oder das "wahre" Israel ist hier vollends absurd'.⁷² Further, the particularity of this character will become for Duhm the central focus of his exegesis; his

⁶⁹ Cf. *Jesaia*, 311.

⁷⁰ See Duhm's 'De inspiratione prophetarum', 225-228. See also Duhm, *Theologie*, 288, '[W]ir in Wahrheit in ihm einen Propheten, nicht bloß einen Dichter, geschweige einen Schwärmer zu sehen haben'. Cf. Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, 403-4. Following Sommer and Begrich, we might note that the simple formulas אָמַר יְהוָה or כִּהֵן יְהוָה suggest something more directly involved in speaking on God's behalf. See Sommer, *Prophet Reads Scripture*, 176-77; Begrich, *Studien*, 153. Cf. also Auld, 'Poetry, Prophecy, Hermeneutic'.

⁷¹ Cf. Cheyne, *Prophecies of Isaiah*, I:263ff. According to Dafni, from the time of Mowinckel's 1921 'Der Knecht Jahwäs' to the present day, one is left with essentially two options. Either one must read the servant as an individual personage (either an 'eschatological-messianic' Christ, Messiah, a future Moses, a mysterious, suffering and dying God; or as a historical person of the times: a Zerubbabel, Jehoiachin, Jeremiah, Nehemiah, Deutero-Isaiah, the martyr Eleazar, an unknown, suffering teacher of Torah [cf. Duhm], i.a.), or as a 'prophetisch-poetische Personifikation einer Mehrheit' (i.e. as something along the lines of Israel, the prophets, the pious, the teachers of the Law). See Dafni, 'Ebed-Jahwe-Lieder', 187-88.

⁷² Duhm, *Jesaia*, 393. Cf. Duhm, *Jesaia*¹, *Jesaia*², '...vollends unmöglich'.

exegesis of Isaiah 52.13-53.12 seeks to locate this servant historically, through the kind of methodology spelled out in his *Theologie*, his *Propheten*, and his foreword to his commentary. Thus with reference to 52.15, Duhm writes:

Das ganze Distichon soll aber nicht bloß das vorhergehende motivieren, sondern zugleich den Leser auf die Fortsetzung spannen: was ist denn eigentlich geschehen? Oder vielmehr: was wird denn mit dem Gottesknecht geschehen?⁷³

One certainly notices a break from his teacher Wellhausen,⁷⁴ and as has been seen in *Israels Propheten*, this is not insignificant for his exegesis; in his reading of Isaiah 52.13ff., Duhm's interpretative emphasis will fall primarily on the servant of God. Setting the servant within exilic Israel, Duhm will draw attention primarily to the questions of who it was that suffered, how he suffered, and why he suffered: all aim to elevate a historical particularity. Thus, given the guiding question of what actually happened to the servant, and given the wider hermeneutical context of this concern, we will seek to keep our engagement of Duhm particularly relevant to this concern. (Un)fortunately, this will necessarily entail a rather selective handling. Yet in an attempt to highlight the author in the best possible light, he hopefully would not object too strongly.

As a cautionary note in this regard, it should not be forgotten that even the most minute textual handlings of Duhm served his greater aim of bringing about the 'lebendige Persönlichkeit' of the authors. In a letter to Carl Ruprecht, three years prior to the publication of the commentary, Duhm expressed surprise that he should have been invited to write a commentary, as 'I have always said that commentaries make one stupid'. Nevertheless, he agreed to write *Jesaia*, contributing his own translation to the book, since 'without that I cannot bring out the living impression of the original texts as seems to me necessary'.⁷⁵ A proper translation, which involves a careful evaluation of every 'Buchstabe und Tüffel', is the means of bringing the liveliness of the text (or perhaps the historical referent behind the text) to the fore.⁷⁶

⁷³ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 395. The echo of von Ranke's 'wie es eigentlich gewesen' is clear, as seen in his *Geschichte*, vii. Cf. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 202.

⁷⁴ In his *Prolegomena* (401n.1; cf. 400) Wellhausen's point is nuanced, but definite nonetheless.

⁷⁵ Quoted in Smend, *Astruc to Zimmerli*, 111.

⁷⁶ Having said this, Duhm himself acknowledges that his commentary is not as literal a translation as one may like (*Jesaia*, 3-4).

Even so, in the case of Isaiah 52.13-53.12, Duhm's largest continuous discussion does not centre upon text-criticism as an end in itself: the bulk of his comments are largely directed toward the rubric of debasedness and exaltation – the servant's unassuming lowliness, and his future 'Höhe'. This is not an abstraction of a historical event, but for Duhm highlights the central exegetical, *historical* question at hand, 'was wird denn mit dem Gottesknecht geschehen?'⁷⁷ Again, the contrast of depth and height, while being central for Duhm, are not any less historical than the various textual designations of what this depth and height look like; thus close textual engagement (admittedly, often textual conjecture!) serves to highlight this theme and thus a real historical particularity. To best honor Duhm's interests, then, it will be appropriate to follow this theme through his handling of the poem.

To begin with, noting the literary and theological differences between Deutero-Isaiah and the poet (as seen above in his *Propheten*), Duhm quickly passes through 52.13, questioning first any connection of יִשְׁכִּיל in 52.13a to בִּרְעוּתוֹ in 53.11,⁷⁸ and rejecting the suggestion of Budde and Marti, that יִשְׁכִּיל is a corruption of יִשְׂרָאֵל.⁷⁹ Such a suggestion is not welcome for the kind of high individuality that Duhm here seeks to highlight. With this aside, Duhm moves on to what is perhaps the most difficult section, textually speaking, to interpret.

Having designated 52.14-15a an 'abscheuliche Periode', Duhm has no difficulty in noting that the text at hand is not correct, since it is not the composition of the poet.⁸⁰ The rather awkward progression of כֵּן...כֵּן...כֵּן must be resolved for Duhm. To create a parenthetical clause, wherein the outstanding distich is an aside, is problematic.⁸¹ If they are to remain side by side, the two particles of כֵּן must be read in connection, not simply with each other, but in relation to the leading כֵּן of 52.14a. But Duhm's issue here is that it is not clear what it means to have a parenthetical statement act as a

⁷⁷ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 395.

⁷⁸ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 394.

⁷⁹ See Marti, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 345.

⁸⁰ A point drawn from Jerome (*Jesaia*, 394).

⁸¹ Within more critical discussions, the jury is still out on whether the verses are acceptable or not as they stand. One may even note Gesenius, who found no problem in creating a parenthetical clause, coordinating כֵּן with the כֵּן of 52.15a. See Gesenius, *Jesaia*, *Zweyter Theil*, 172.

subordinate clause,⁸² when following the parenthesis is a comparative כן. Buttressed further by the observation that the ancient translations did not always resort to parentheses,⁸³ Duhm will opt to follow Marti's replacement⁸⁴ of 52.14b (כִּן־מִשְׁחַח מְאִישׁ מִרְאֵהוּ וְתֹארוֹ מִבְּנֵי אָדָם) to after 53.2.⁸⁵ The result is the grouping of:

*Wie über ihn sich viele entsetzten,
So wird er erglänzen vor vielen (52.14)...
...Keine Gestalt hatte er noch Hoheit
Und kein Aussehen, dass wir ihn liebten;
So unmenschlich entstellt war sein Aussehen
Und sein Gestalt den Menschen nicht mehr ähnlich (53.2ff.)...*

The move is supposed to highlight the servant's debasedness, rather than to detract from it. Perhaps it is a matter of literary style and taste, as Childs has preferred to leave the clause where it is for purposes of 'shock value'. But it is worth noting that Duhm's underlying interest is not different from that of Childs. Only, to highlight the lowliness of the servant, we must group those stanzas that best portray his humiliation, creating something of a cumulative, overwhelming effect on the reader. To leave 52.14b where it stands, interrupting the flow and pattern of רַבִּים in 14a and 15a, would only serve to detract from the overall emphasis otherwise had.

The point here has been to shape the opening of the poem in such a way as to highlight, rather than obscure, the contrast between the servant's debasement and exaltation.⁸⁶ As the obscurity in 52.14ff. is owing to a later editorial blunder, this kind of textual work seeks to get back to what may have originally been the poet's structuring, and thus 'in die Persönlichkeit des Schriftstellers selber so tief wie möglich einzudringen'.⁸⁷ Here, a hallmark of the 'living personality' of the author is the inherent contrast. Duhm's realignment is intended to serve just this end.

One further contextualizing note, with reference to the setting of the event recounted here. The reference to 'kings' and 'nations' no doubt serves to

⁸² Duhm, *Jesaia*, 394, 'nur das zweite [כן] jener Vergleichungspartikel [כִּאֲשֶׁר] korrespondiert.' The statement is surely circular within his emendations here, placing v.14b after 53.2. But the logic makes sense nevertheless: the first כן interrupts and confuses the comparative connection between v.14a and v.15a.

⁸³ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 394.

⁸⁴ See Marti, *Jesaia*, 345. Cf. Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, 169.

⁸⁵ So BHS notes, 'frit tr ad fin 53,2'.

⁸⁶ Cf. Melugin, *Formation of Isaiah*, 168.

⁸⁷ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 3.

highlight the ‘weltreligiös’ relevance of Israel’s religious history.⁸⁸ The relevance is sharpened by Duhm’s preference to remove לִהְיוֹת from 52.15b, creating both a better poetic meter, as well as a verse that resonates on a more ‘weltgeschichtliche’ level.⁸⁹ By removing the preposition, that which ‘has never been seen’, and that which ‘has never been heard’ is not confined to the sphere of the ‘listeners’, so to speak. Removing לִהְיוֹת makes v.15b something much more universal, and hence novel – something which has never, in any setting, been seen or heard.⁹⁰ Not merely what has not been recounted *to them*, but simply that which has never been recounted, ‘sie sehen etwas so Wunderbares, daß sie von etwas Ähnlichem niemals aus Geschichte und Sage oder solchen Märchen, wie sie im Altertum von Weitgereisten oder auch von Volkssängern erzählt werden, gehört...’⁹¹ As a result of whatever ‘Gottestat’ this will be, ‘Die Völker geraten in staunende Unruhe, die Könige schweigen ehrfurchtsvoll...vor der wunderbaren Erscheinung des Gottesknecht, denn sie erleben etwas, dergleichen sie noch nie gehört haben...’⁹²

The opening of the proclamation of the news, namely, 53.1, brings to the fore ‘was in dieser Dichtung die Hauptsache ist’. It is not the phenomena of suffering and death in the servant (infused at these are with theological significance); rather, it focuses upon the servant’s ‘wunderbare Wiederherstellung’ and the hope that springs from this.⁹³ It is this announcement that gives the poem its prophetic character.⁹⁴ That which will be new, and which will cause kings and nations to put their hands over their mouths⁹⁵ is not the suffering of the servant, but the manner in which he shall

⁸⁸ See *Propheten*, v-vi, 344-45.

⁸⁹ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 394-95. The global scale of the servant’s efficaciousness is only a subsequent outcome of his later proclamation, however. The life and death of the servant is a *local* phenomenon.

⁹⁰ While his aims are admirable, Duhm’s argument for a deletion of לִהְיוֹת, based on poetic meter, is highly questionable. The emendation does not feature in any major works on the book or chapter: Lowth (*Isaiah*, 363), Marti (*Jesaia*, 345), Westermann (*Jesaia*, 209-210), or Clines (*I, He, We & They*, 14-15) do not even cite the possibility.

⁹¹ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 395.

⁹² Duhm, *Jesaia*, 394. The reading differs markedly from Childs’s (/Beuken’s) intertextual proposal (*Isaiah*, 413).

⁹³ Cf. Duhm, *Reich Gottes*, 7 (and 37), ‘Worauf ist das Christentum gegründet worden? Auf eine Hoffnung!’

⁹⁴ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 395-6 (emph. added). I have added emphasis here to highlight what for Duhm is the central differentiation between the poet of Isa 53 and the later Christian gospel writers; central to the distinction is the fact that the poet here (as well as Deutero-Isaiah) reflect prospectively, and the gospel writers retrospectively. Cf. Duhm, *Theologie*, 300-301.

⁹⁵ So Snaith, in Orlinsky and Snaith, *Studies*, 161, who references Job 29.8ff as a parallel. Cf. Clines, *I, He, We & They*, 14-15.

be exalted. The exaltation is yet in the future, thus giving the poet a truly prophetic word for Israel.⁹⁶

Duhm notes the similarity in language to Num 24.4 (Balaam's third oracle), noting that the question of 53.1 does not envisage a 'yes or no' response, but is a rhetorical statement on the quality of the 'sight' of those who have the perspective necessary to understand the servant's work. Numbers 24.4, itself a statement that God's works are seen by those who have 'eyes to see', highlights that God's arm is only revealed to those who are looking, 'gibt es nicht Menschen mit geöffnetem Auge... denen er sich zeigt? die ihn schon jetzt erblicken, wie er im Begriff ist, das mir geoffenbarte Wunder zu vollbringen?'⁹⁷ For Duhm, the 'arm of Yahweh' is recognized, quite simply, by those who are looking for it (though how this relates to kings and nations is not clear).

Thus, having set out the theme of the poem, Duhm begins to elaborate on the nature of the servant's *debasement*. Undoubtedly, he notes, the servant's life was one of humble origins: setting the servant 'im *temp. hist.*, mit leisem Anklang an 11.1', he cites 'seine Aufwachsen in armseliger, unbeachteter Niedrigkeit'.⁹⁸ Duhm's appeal to 11.1 is suggestive,⁹⁹ but rather than entertaining what theological potential this connection could have, he stays focused on his wider interest, 'Man hat schon hier das Gefühl, daß *eine ganz bestimmte historische Persönlichkeit geschildert wird*'.¹⁰⁰ This is owing to the fact that the description is not generalizing about difficult corporate circumstances (which anyone would expect in an exilic or post-exilic setting); the description is, rather, highly attentive to detail, '...sei es, daß mit diesem Wort [i.e. מְאֲרֵץ צִידָה] die arme, unangesehene Familie oder die ungünstigen Lebensbedingungen angedeutet werden sollen. Aus äußerlich war er unansehnlich und keineswegs anziehend'.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ The connection between foretelling and the prophetic office is elsewhere made in Duhm's *Theologie*, 301.

⁹⁷ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 395.

⁹⁸ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 396.

⁹⁹ Resonances of 11.1ff. throughout the book of Isaiah are striking (e.g. 6.13; 9.1-6; 42.1-4; 53.2; 60.17-61.1). One may note Wagner, *Gottes Herrschaft*, 241; Sommer, *Prophet Reads Scripture*, 86ff.

¹⁰⁰ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 396 (emph. added).

¹⁰¹ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 396. This does not eclipse saying something vaguely theological: Duhm curiously retains the singular ending in לְפִנֵּי, viewing the plural לְפִנֵּי of Ewald or the alternative לְפִנֵּי as 'superfluous'. With God's eye on him (I Sam 3.1), and 'reziprok mit dem Auge auf Gott...[v]on Gott erwählt, im Bewußtsein seiner Bestimmung (49.1)' (396).

The description of the servant becomes more detailed. *ידוע* and *חָדַל* are two side to the same coin: one pushes away, one draws near; while the latter is metaphorical ('being known by sickness'), we do not have the least reason, says Duhm, '[d]ie Krankheit und den Schmerz anders als wörtlich zu verstehen';¹⁰² those who rejected the servant stood at a distance, and did not keep company with him (cf. Job 19.14).¹⁰³ The reason is twofold. On the one hand, Duhm contends, if we are to understand the suffering as literal, then the most plausible explanation is that this individual suffered from leprosy.¹⁰⁴ Surely the resonances with the book of Job play no small part in this association,¹⁰⁵ where Job's afflictions are read as leprosy. On the other hand, his 'Sonderstellung' kept him from engaging in 'harmloser Geselligkeit' (cf. Jer 15.17).

The specific reading of leprosy takes its lead in no small measure from similar language used elsewhere in the Old Testament. The noun *גָּנַע*, in Lev 13.22, 33 (MT), is used with specific reference to a skin disease of a leprosy sort,¹⁰⁶ and II Kgs 15.5 makes the explicit connection between the act of *גָּנַע* and the resulting *גָּנַע*. To be 'stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted' is not to be taken in a spiritual, analogical fashion,¹⁰⁷ but as a divine action through human agency, thus keeping us close to the historical person of the servant.

In 53.5, Duhm notes, the passive (*נִרְפָּא-לְנִי*) is used because it is not in fact the servant who heals, but God – a distinction that will appear below with reference to the justification referenced in v.11b. Here we find another manifestation of the difference between the theological vision of the poet and that of Deutero-Isaiah. Whereas the latter envisages the nations as being given

¹⁰² Duhm, *Jesaia*, 397.

¹⁰³ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 396-7.

¹⁰⁴ Lowth made the decision to read it as such (*Isaiah*, 364), citing a precedent in the Vulgate ('leprosum'), Symmachus (ἐν ἀφῆ ὄντα), Aquila (ἀφημενον), and various Jewish commentators. For the latter, one may consult *Bab. Sanh.* 98b which, on the question of what the Messiah's name will be, cites 'the Rabbis' as naming him 'the leper-scholar' (Isa 53.4 is quoted as a basis). Cf. Mowinckel would later make the connection of lament to leprosy in many of the lament Psalms (in his reprinted *Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 2:1ff.).

¹⁰⁵ Job is cited throughout. Passages referenced are: 5.17; 6.27; 10.7; 12.4, 8; 14.13; 15.9ff.; 16.17; 18.2ff.; 19.14, 16, 19; 29.14; 42.11, 12ff., 16, 18. Cheyne supplied an illuminating essay contemporary with Duhm's commentary on Isaiah, 'Job and the Second Part of Isaiah', in his *Prophecies of Isaiah*, 235ff.

¹⁰⁶ There, the cognate *גָּנַע*. See also Lev 13.3, 9; II Kings 15.6. The language is used of non-leprosy diseases (I Sam. 6.9), but, Duhm notes, the disease mentioned here must be a kind of illness that 'langsam zum Tode führt und unheilbar ist, den Betroffenen widerwärtig macht und aus der Gemeinschaft der Menschen verbant' (*Jesaia*, 398).

¹⁰⁷ Duhm attributes Wellhausen's confused reading of the chapter to reading the suffering as metaphorical.

up for the sake of ‘das keineswegs unschuldige Israel’ (cf. Isa 43.3ff), the former ‘läßt den unschuldigen Gottesknecht für die schuldigen Volksgenossen leiden und sterben’.¹⁰⁸ Thus in 53.6, while ‘das letzte Distichon ist metrisch etwas unbefriedigend,’ the thrust is nevertheless plain enough; using the passive, Duhm renders הפניע in light of פניע, ‘Jahve ließ auf ihn stoßen die Schuld von uns allen’.¹⁰⁹

If the servant’s sufferings are not immediately at the hands of his contemporaries, and are rather the result of a leprous suffering, then 53.7 does not portray the servant as a victim, unfairly, of a society’s persecution. Thus, וְלֹא יִפְתַּח־פִּי is a statement of the servant’s quiet, patient bearing of his leprous condition. He does not open his mouth and lament his lot in life – he was ‘Gequält’, but even so he remained silent (cf. Ex 10.3). The concessive וְ, then, is translated as a simple adversative.¹¹⁰ The point is significant, as was the emphasis on the spiritualizing effect that a silent, patient struggle has for the community.¹¹¹ The theme finds a rich resonance elsewhere in the servant material (Isa 50.7ff.; 42.2).

The release from this struggle only came about at the death of the servant. As mentioned in his *Propheten*,¹¹² מִן is read simply as ‘from’, denoting the movement from one place (this world) to another (somewhere unknown; cf. v.8a). In this light, לִקְחָהּ is taken to imply death (cf. II Kgs 23.5, 10; Gen 5.24; Ps. 49; 73), and thus necessitates a textual emendation in 53.8b, from לְמוֹתָ לְמוֹתָ. Nothing here is other than what one expects in any critical handling of Isaiah 53: from 53.8 onwards, emendations and conjectures are commonplace, regardless of what commitments one brings to the text to begin with.

The nature of what is meant by ‘taken away’ is given further shape in Duhm’s reading of the difficult וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־רִשְׁעֵיהֶם קִבְרוֹ וְאֶת־עֲשִׂירֵי בְמֹתָיָו. Opting to follow what text we may assume the LXX author had at hand, Duhm will read בְּמֹתָיָו as בְּמֹתָו,¹¹³ though re-pointing the word to read ‘his hill’ (‘seinen

¹⁰⁸ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 399. As noted in my critiques of Duhm in the Conclusion, this differentiation is only superficially satisfying.

¹⁰⁹ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 400.

¹¹⁰ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 400.

¹¹¹ Duhm, *Propheten*, 339.

¹¹² Duhm, *Propheten*, 340-41.

¹¹³ The LXX reads: ‘καὶ δώσω τοὺς ποιητοὺς ἀντὶ τῆς ταφῆς αὐτοῦ καὶ τοὺς πλουσιοὺς ἀντὶ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ’. Duhm writes, ‘In בְּמֹתָיָו hat die LXX das ״ nicht gelesen. Man wird בְּמֹתָו sprechen müssen, obgleich die künstliche בְּמֹתָ sonst nicht als Grabhügel, sondern nur als Heiligtum vorkommt’ (*Jesaia*, 402.). But perhaps a solution here is possible.

Hügel'), rather than 'in his death':

...so muß es doch als möglich erscheinen, daß in der nachexilischen Zeit, wo die Juden keine Bamoth mehr duldeten, sie lieber durch Totenknochen entweihten, das Wort במה wenigstens für die Grabhügel verabscheuter, unreiner Menschen gebraucht werden konnte.¹¹⁴

The location of the grave, then, is telling. This was a person who presumably was not viewed as godless, 'in the religious sense of the word', let alone as 'pagans', for there would have been no special burial place for such people. The assumption is that since במהוי is read as במהוי, the grave must have been able to be demarcated; and since those viewed as 'sinners' or 'wicked' would have received no such notable burial, Duhm will reject many of the popular emendations for רשעים and עשיר. For the former, Duhm has simply nuanced the word differently. For the latter, it is more difficult.

What 'the rich' have to do with the situation is indeed curious. If Duhm is right, that רשעים leads us to see the servant as buried with the poor, then no choice of words by the poet could have been less appropriate here. Conjectures abound. For Duhm, עשוק ('oppressor', 'extortioner') lacks coherence with the context, as one oppressed could hardly be in a position to oppress others. The rendering עשי רע¹¹⁵ is 'allgemein und schwach', to replace עשיר with פשעים is only a paraphrase, and is of little use,¹¹⁶ and to link the meaning of 'the rich' with 'evil', in terms of extortion, stretches the text beyond what it is capable.¹¹⁷ The best we may assume is that the word finds its meaning in an Aramaic parallel עשיק, hence Duhm's translation of the

De Vaux has noted a connection between mounds/high places and burial practices in ancient Israel, defining a *bamoth* as "'a mound or knoll" for purposes of cultic worship', on the basis of the use of pillars (מצבה / מצבה; Gen. 35.20; II Sam. 18.18), and piles of stones (גל-אבנים; Jos. 7.26; 8.29; II Sam. 18.17) for burial practices. These bamoth would have 'looked exactly the same as the mounds used for worship'. It is in this light that de Vaux reads Isa 53.9 alongside, e.g., 1QIsa^a. See de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 2:284, 287. Ibn Ezra likewise had an early suggestion for this reading, in Friedlaender, *Ibn Ezra*, 3:92:

וזהלא במות לא תשתנו/ במלת על במותימו, ומדוע השתנה במלת במותי, ומדוע השתנה במלת במותי, יש להשיב, כי זאת המלה תבא על שנים משקיל, כמו סריסי פרעה ... וסריסי המלך...

¹¹⁴ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 402.

¹¹⁵ So Condamin, *Isaïe*, 322, where his 'les malfaiteurs', stems from this reading: 'On a proposé diverses corrections; la plus probable est peut-être... עשי רע au lieu de עשיר'.

¹¹⁶ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 402. The emendation was proposed by Cheyne, *Critical Notes*.

¹¹⁷ Gesenius, *Jesaia*, *Zweyter Theil*, 184-5, is an early modern example, 'עשיר hier im Parallelismus mit רשע, erklären Martini, Koppe, nach dem arab....allein ich trage Bedenken, dieses Wort anzuwenden, da es der Etymologie nach sonst mit dem hebräischen עשיר gar nicht verwandt ist. עשיר reich selbst führt uns auf diesen Begriff, sofern nach der Moral der Hebräer Reichtum von Stols und Frevel fast unzertrennbar ist, sowie Armuth zu Demuth, Frömmigkeit und Tugend führt.' Brueggemann, *Isaiah*, II:147, is a more recent example of this reading.

word with 'Betrüger' –translated as 'fraudster'.¹¹⁸ From the perspective of the servant's onlookers, he was to be grouped with 'den Zauberern, Nekromanten, böartigen Irrlehrern, falschen Propheten, Volksverführen, solchen, für die man auch die christlichen Boten ansah'.¹¹⁹ Without the perspective necessary to see, hear, and understand the work of the servant, he has only to be regarded as a chief deceiver. However, in the understanding of those who perceive him theologically, for what he has done between God and his people, his burial stood directly at odds with the life he lived – without violence or deceit (cf. Job 10.7; 16.17).

'Haben die Menschen so entschieden', Duhm continues, 'so entscheidet Gott anders'.¹²⁰ This verdict, and consequently the converse theme of *exaltation*, we find in the closing three verses of the poem. Duhm finds 53.10a, as it stands, to be fundamentally flawed and a superfluous and completely unnecessary restatement of what has already been said. V. 10a will need to be substantially emended, since as it stands it is 'gänzlich verderbt', 'vollkommen unmöglich', 'vollends verzweifelt', while 'auch das Metrum durchaus zerstört', and *החלי* 'könnte...höchstens als Glosse geduldet werden'.¹²¹ The first order of business here, as at 52.14b and 53.2, is to emend and order the verse in a way as to bring about a continuity of theme, with the hope of amplifying the dramatic turn in the servant's fate. Duhm's translation of the verse is as follows, with a brief explanation of his rationale to follow:

*Doch Jahwe gefiel's, ihn zu reinigen,
Neu sprossen zu lassen sein Alter;
Die Lust seiner Seele wird er sehen,
Samen lang von Leben.¹²²*

The differences between Duhm's translation and that of, for example, Luther's 1545 translation, are striking:

*Aber der HERR wollte ihn also zerschlagen mit Krankheit,
Wenn er sein Leben zum Schuldopfer gegeben hat,
So wird er Samen haben und
in die Länge leben.*

The difference is at once obvious – Duhm has changed the emphasis of the text as we have it, from a statement of Yahweh's will to strike the servant, to

¹¹⁸ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 401-2.

¹¹⁹ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 402.

¹²⁰ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 402.

¹²¹ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 402.

¹²² Duhm, *Jesaia*, 402.

an affirmation that Yahweh sought to purify him, to give back to him a life that was obediently sacrificed in the first place. The differences occur mostly in the first half of the verse. Contextually, the transition to the theme of exaltation in v.10a-10b appears to be messy. And further, the logic present in v.10a β does not seem to make any sense.¹²³ The questions are fair. It is indeed theologically challenging, contextually difficult, and textually messy. To relieve the tension, Duhm handles the text as follows.

The crux of the theological trouble resides in the specific words דכא, החלי and אשם. To handle them, Duhm first insists that in 53.10a-b α we have four distinct couplets. The divisions are striking, and will give the literary framework within which Duhm may supply his conjectures:

ויהוה חפץ דכא
 החלי אסתשים
 אשם נפשו יראה
 זרע יאריך ימים

Each of these four must 'ein Satz für sich oder ein relativ selbständiges Satzglied sein'.¹²⁴ This will delineate (though by no means indisputably) where the breaks in the verse are to be found. With this established, Duhm then proceeds to handle our above three words. The first, דכא, is read as an Aramaic, not Hebrew, noun. Whereas the latter would imply a crushing or striking, the Aramaic use of the word is that of cleansing, or purifying. No doubt it is in the *piel*, Duhm affirms, but the root here is often mistaken. One will find the Aramaic root in *BDB*, listed under the Hebrew זכה, as this is the word's cognate.¹²⁵ The decision finds precedent in the LXX, which Duhm cites (καὶ κύριος βούλεται καθαρῖσαι αὐτὸν τῆς πληγῆς).¹²⁶ It finds further support, we may add, in Targum Isaiah, 'And it was the LORD's good pleasure to refine and to purify the remnant of his people...'¹²⁷

Second, החלי is particularly difficult, as the definite article disrupts the meter of the verse (so Duhm adjudicates). One will be forced to resort to conjecture, Duhm concedes. Whatever the reading, the word cannot stand as

¹²³ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 402, 'warum diese Bedingungsartikel, nachdem es schon geschehen ist?' So the LXX rather confusingly, 'ἐὰν δὲ περὶ ἀμαρτίας ἡ ψυχὴ ὑμῶν ὄψεται σπέρμα μακρόβιον...'

¹²⁴ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 402.

¹²⁵ *BDB*, 269.

¹²⁶ See van der Kooij, *Textzeugen*, 29, for the proposal of an Aramaic 'vorlage' behind the LXX. Cf. Delekat, 'Septuagintatargum'.

¹²⁷ So the Targum of 53.10a, וּמִן קִדְמֵי יְהוָה הוּת רְעוּא לְמַצְרָף וּלְדַכְאָה ית שִׂאֲרָא דְעַמִּיהּ, See Stenning, *Targum Isaiah*.

dependent on **הפין**, as that connection is the source of the poetic and textual trouble. **א** cannot be right, the line of thought goes, because, as mentioned above, it contextually makes no sense. However, if one removes the **א**, we may find more possibilities. In so doing, we are left, says Duhm, with the consonants **אחשימו**, or, according to the LXX, **אחשימו**. How are we to divide the consonants?

The **אח** will become the definite direct object marker, leaving **שימו** or **ש**. If **שימו**, we may easily change the word to **שיבו** ('old age'), as in the manner of I Kgs 14.4. One final move remains, and that is to alter **החלי** to read **החליק**. The verb **חלק**, in the hiphil, has a secondary definition of 'showing newness' (Job 14.7; 29.20). The move is drastic, to be sure, and cannot be said to have any convincingness that assures the reader that this is sound footing. However, the move to read is not wholly without precedent, at least thematically, in the book of Isaiah.¹²⁸ Job's use of the phrase in 14.7 notes the hope for the tree that has been cut down to its stump. It will, Job affirms, sprout shoots that will not cease to grow. Duhm finds a linguistic parallel in **החליק**; but he also taps into a thematic parallel present in the book of Isaiah elsewhere: out of what is cut down, a remnant or shoot will survive (Isa 1.7-9; 6.11-13; 10.33-11.1). In this way, the emendation may actually serve to illumine the text in an exciting way. Whether one agrees with this or not will surely rest on whether one agrees first with Duhm, that 53.10a is in need of serious textual reconstruction. If so, his proposal is indeed theologically provocative, and worthy of consideration.

The third problematic word for Duhm, **אשם**, is much easier to handle. Duhm will invert the word completely, resulting in **משא**, which in light of Ezek 24.25 denotes the 'Lust der Seele' as 'die Kinder'.¹²⁹ Fitting with the 'this-worldliness' of the poet's hope, which Duhm highlighted in *Propheten* ('eines glücklichen Diesseits'),¹³⁰ the joy that he will see in the future is found in his long life and extensive progeny. It will, also, fit well with Duhm's reading of the fourth stanza above (53.10b α). **משא** stands in apposition to **זרע**. The above four stanzas are thus reworked to read as follows:

¹²⁸ 1QIsa^a introduces a finite verb with a *waw*. It has **ויהללהו**, the stem of which is present elsewhere in the book (22.2(2x); 23.9; 34.3; 43.28; 47.6; 48.11; 51.9; 56.2; 56.6; 66.16), as well as earlier in the poem itself (53.5).

¹²⁹ Duhm, *Jesaja*, 403.

¹³⁰ Duhm, *Propheten*, 344-45.

ויהוה חפץ דכאו
תחליף את־שיבו
משא נפשו יראה
זרע יאריך ימים

We may close Duhm's handling of Isaiah 52.13-53.12 with a few observations of his discussion on resurrection in vv.11-12. Sifting through his textual emendations in these verses does not promise to lend to the overall picture I am trying to paint of Duhm, and as the majority of his discussion rests on his understanding of resurrection in 53.11-12, it will be appropriate to highlight this theme.

The verses have a long lineage within discussions of resurrection in the Old Testament.¹³¹ While Duhm will affirm something of a resurrection in his *Propheten*,¹³² here he is much more reticent. The fundamental reason for the reticence is a combination of his late dating of the passage and his stress on 52.15b. The latter Duhm takes quite literally – rather than being a statement of a kind of spiritual seeing and understanding *within* Israel, the antecedents of the pronouns are the kings and the nations. Yet at the time that the poem was composed,¹³³ the idea of resurrection was well known. Daniel 12.3 as well as the LXX's ending for the book of Job (42.17a) imply that it was a category in use for thinking about miraculous works of God, whether eschatological (in Daniel's case), or something more 'Diesseits' (in Job's case). If not a bodily resurrection, then, to what do the closing verses refer?

Duhm has reconfigured 53.10bβ-11 to read יחליץ מעמל נפשו, which then is a statement that rather than 'seeing out of the anguish of his soul', 'er rettet vom Mühsal seine Seele'.¹³⁴ The delivery does not refer to the physical pain that he suffered under leprosy, as that has already been dealt with in the purifying act of 53.10a. The labor rather refers to the resistance that he faced in bringing an eschatological ethic to Israel, 'Der Gottesknecht wird nicht abermals so...zu kämpfen und zu leiden haben, sondern seine Ziele mit göttlicher Leichtigkeit und Überlegenheit erreichen, weil alle Welt sich dem Wunder beugt'.¹³⁵

Duhm's remaining textual emendations are significant, for theological

¹³¹ Sawyer, 'Hebrew Words'; Levenson, *Resurrection*, 188-89.

¹³² Duhm, *Propheten*, 343.

¹³³ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 19 (§32).

¹³⁴ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 404.

¹³⁵ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 404 (379).

reasons. He changes *יִרְאֶהוּ* to *יִרְאֶהוּ* , *יִשְׁבִּיעַ* to *יִשְׁבַּע* , follows the LXX in adding *אִוִּר*, and finds the subject of the pronominal suffix in *בְּרַעְתּוֹ* to be none other than God himself. We can see why: the notion that ‘der Mensch’ could be responsible for the justification of anyone, is incompatible for Duhm, in light of the rest of the Old Testament. A person cannot justify others – only God can.¹³⁶ And here, the justification is nothing of a forensic sort, but of redeeming the person of the servant in the eyes of the onlookers: *יִצְדִיקָהוּ*. That is, God will make clear, to those who will see, who and what this servant truly was and did; he was not suffering God’s just punishment for his own sin in the form of leprosy – he was, rather, bearing it on their behalf. The emendations serve to highlight just this theme.

But the move to make God the acting agent, ‘causing him to see light’, does not help us easily to escape Duhm’s leading exegetical question, ‘was wird denn mit dem Gottesknecht geschehen?’. Duhm ventures some comment. Its quality justifies its length:

Zum Verständnis der Dichtung ist auseinander zu halten, was über die vom Dichter und seinen Volksgenossen miterlebte Vergangenheit und was über die ihm geoffenbarte Zukunft des Gottesknechts gesagt wird. *Die Vergangenheit wird so geschildert, daß man fast gezwungen ist, eine reale Grundlage für dies Lebensbild in dem Leben eines Zeitgenossen anzunehmen...*

Wir stehen hier vor einem geschichtlichen Rätsel, das wir wohl nicht lösen werden, um so weniger, als wir nicht einmal die Abfassungszeit der Ebed-Jahwe-Lieder genauer bestimmen können; wenn auch vor der Hand die Zeit zwischen dem Exil und Esra als die wahrscheinlichste gelten mag, so hindert doch nichts, den Dichter vom Buch Maleachi beeinflusst zu denken statt umgekehrt, und noch weiter in der Zeit herabzugehen. Er wäre keineswegs unerfreulich, wenn wir die dunklen Jahrhunderte zwischen dem Exil und der Makkabäerzeit uns von einer Gestalt erhellt denken dürften, wie die hier gezeichnete ist...

Ebenso sehr wie das Lebensbild spricht die Weissagung von dem künftigen Geschick des Gottesknechts dafür, daß wir in ihm ein Individuum und kein Kollektivum zu sehen haben. *Es geht weit über die Bedürfnisse des dichterischen Individualisierens hinaus, wenn der Knecht nach Tod und Begräbnis nicht bloß noch lebt...oder wieder leben wird...sondern wenn er sogar Kinder haben und an ihrem langen Leben sich erfreuen wird. Er wird nicht etwa, nachdem er für Gott gestorben ist, durch einen Geistesgenossen ersetzt, sondern persönlich*

¹³⁶ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 404-5, ‘Es ist sehr unwahrscheinlich, daß der Dichter einem Menschen die Fähigkeit oder Befugnis sollte zugeschrieben haben, andere faktisch oder forensich gerecht zu machen’.

lebendig gemacht...

Der Mann, der die Wiederbelebung des Gottesknechts erwartet, braucht nicht an eine allgemeine Unsterblichkeit und Auferstehung zu glauben, *stellt er doch jene Wiederbelebung als etwas Unerhörtes, Unglaubliches, ihm selber erst durch Offenbarung kund Gewordenes hin.* Immerhin dürften, wenn er auch den Heiden nichts Ähnliches zutraut, in seinem Volk gewisse Vorbedingungen dieser Erwartung vorhanden gewesen sein...

Wenn man den Gebeinen des längst verwesten Elisa die Kraft zuschrieb, einen beliebigen Toten durch zufällige Berührung wieder lebendig zu machen, so war auch zur Zeit des Dichters die Vorstellung möglich, daß ein Begrabener durch Gott ins Leben zurückgerufen werden und Kinder bekommen kann. Trotzdem bleibt es für den Dichter das größte Wunder, das die Welt umwandeln wird. *Uns ist es noch wunderbarer, daß ein alttestamentlicher Dichter ein Bild zeichnet, das nach Jahrhunderten zur Wirklichkeit wird, mag es auch hinter dieser Verwirklichung in manchen und wesentlichen Zügen zurückbleiben. Es zeigt sich darin die innere Verwandtschaft der alttestamentlichen Religion mit dem Christentum, allerdings auch ihre Inferiorität, sofern sie den höchsten Gedanken denken, aber nicht verwirklichen kann.*¹³⁷

A few observations are in order. First, one's understanding of the fourth servant song is here contingent upon the degree to which one highlights the themes of debasement and exaltation. Both themes highlight the historical particularity of the servant, as his suffering is described in such concrete detail, and his exaltation is said (when reconstructed) to consist of his seeing his offspring living long and happy lives. Second, since a bodily resurrection of the kind mentioned in Job 42.17a (LXX) and Daniel 12.3 cannot be in view (since that would be something already 'seen' and 'recounted'), there is something of a resurrection different than that understood at the time – he is 'personally brought back to life', but in a unique way, in a way that *exceeds* what we might think of as resurrection. It is in a manner that introduces an eschatological transformation of a world ethic.¹³⁸ Perhaps Levenson's description of resurrection in the Old Testament, more generally, is apt:

I do not mean to imply an easy equivalence of Paul's resurrection existence with the rabbinic World-to-Come. Both do, however, imply embodiedness...though in a transformed mode that is hard to visualize and can be conveyed only symbolically; the convenient modern dichotomy of physical versus spiritual cannot capture it. In both the Pauline and the rabbinic texts at hand, the beneficiaries of the

¹³⁷ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 406-7 (emph. added). Cf. van der Ploeg, *Chants du Serviteur*, 189, 200.

¹³⁸ Cf. Duhm, *Reich Gottes*, 30, where he criticizes a perceived 'Individualismus' in 19th century theology, which is too deeply interested in 'der individuellen Unsterblichkeit'.

new way of being are not disembodied spirits, but neither are they ordinary human beings who, amazingly, were once dead but have since recovered their lives. In both cases, postmortal existence is a radical transformation, not the indefinite prolongation, of earthly life.¹³⁹

The summary, though it appears neither here nor there, is perhaps nevertheless fair to the idea ('Wir stehen hier vor einem geschichtlichen Rätsel'). The 'oblique' nature of 53.11-12 (for Duhm 53.10-12), is not owing to textual corruption as much as to conceptual incapacities.

Third, while the poet envisioned something previously unheard of, his vision of what the 'Gottestat' would entail would inevitably fall short. Even the transformation of the world, within which the nations will come under Yahweh's rule,¹⁴⁰ is nevertheless unable to reach up to Christianity. This should not be stated too strongly, as here a picture is 'sketched', which does indeed become a reality 'nach Jahrhunderten'. In other words, something of a continuity is present. Yet only partially, as it will, 'in manchen und nicht unwesentlichen Zügen hinter dieser Verwirklichung zurückbleiben'. The 'Zügen', we may guess, are seen in the difference between the 'this-worldliness' of the poet, and the 'eternality' of the Christ event; whereas the poet was concerned with progeny and the transformation of his (local?) people, the Christ event concerns the 'immortal soul' and the 'eternal progression from one glorification to another'. As seen in his *Propheten*, the 'Gottesknecht' represents only what is traditional amongst humanity, and therefore has no direct connection to the Christian gospel of the New Testament. If the gospel is read in light of the discrete message of Isa 53, it would in effect cease to be a gospel.¹⁴¹

As will be raised in the 'Conclusion', this is of more importance than we might feel on a cursory reading. In essence, what governs Duhm's wider reading of Isa 53 (and the Old Testament more generally) as part of the Christian Bible, is not a simple movement from the details of the Old Testament to their synthesis in the New. Indeed, Duhm's most explicit value judgment placed upon the chapter – that it will inevitably fall short of the gospel message – in fact arises only subsequent to a prior judgment made on who Duhm thinks Christ to be; it is only *after* this initial decision that the

¹³⁹ Levenson, *Resurrection*, 189.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Duhm, *Jesaia*, 287.

¹⁴¹ Duhm, *Propheten*, 344-45. Cf. van der Ploeg, *Chants du Serviteur*, 200.

place of Isa 53 gains sharper clarity. This, it should be noted, is perhaps as explicit a theological move as one could encounter!

For Duhm, a continuity between the servant's activity and the Christ event can be seen in that both events speak of a type of resurrection, and one which is as yet unheard of. But the break comes strongly, as Duhm reads the chapter, when one asks what type of transformation the respective authors envision. Rather surprisingly, this emphasis needs not to stand at odds with more theological readings of the chapter. Childs, for example, has stressed that the right hermeneutical direction in interpreting Isaiah 53 is to read the early Church as seeing, after the Christ event, a text that mirrored that event strikingly. Similar to the logic present in the encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8.30ff.), the Christ-event becomes the starting point and locus for all subsequent theological interpretive activity.¹⁴²

Thus Duhm closes his handling of Isaiah 52.13-53.12. What I have presented here is selective, in relation to the extremely technical exegesis that marks the commentary. Throughout the comments one finds a consistent hesitation to assimilate the text into wider theological concerns; indeed, his closing comments on resurrection come only after an 'm dash', which itself suggests a break in thought between the exegesis that came before, and the necessary comment on the relation of the servant to Christianity. The break creates for Duhm a gulf between exegesis and theological assimilation; one might even say that Duhm's *religionsgeschichtliche* setting makes the gulf twice as wide, as the two ideas being related are not Old and New Testament (a literary setting that could allow for intertextual coherence and continuation), but 'the religion of Israel' and 'Christianity'. As such, the only available liaisons between the two spheres are that of the progression or break in *ideas*. Perhaps on this note Duhm has not given sufficient hermeneutical attention to the way in which both a text represents an idea, yet conversely an idea is represented in a text, allowing a literary approach to the relation of the spheres (within the wider categories of 'testaments'). If the ideas of the prophets are in some way carried forward to the ideas of the New Testament writers, even in a 'religionsgeschichtliche' fashion, then we would expect these ideas to be represented in the text to whose final shape they contributed;

¹⁴² With reference to Acts 8.30ff., see Janowski, *Gott des Lebens*, 351. With reference to Acts 15.12ff., see Johnson, *Scripture and Discernment*, 102.

the text is not a distraction from, but the living representation of, the theology of the authors themselves.

Nevertheless, there remains serious theological import to be found in the question of 'was ist denn eigentlich geschehen' (or, at least, some version of that question). For not only does Duhm appreciate the dialectical, *epistemological* tension at root in relating 'wie es eigentlich gewesen' to the process of theological apperception, but in a wider sense a text such as Isa 53 will actually resist simple intertextual readings in relation to the New Testament – it is far too marked by its historical setting.

The major characteristics of Duhm's methodological concerns in the previous chapter are realized in his reading of the fourth servant song. The poet here adopts a prophetic role that articulates the highest/purest form of Yahweh's means of salvation. Further, to resist a 'supernatural' approach to Isa 53 (that would, in Duhm's reckoning, collapse the historical event with the 'Erscheinung Christi'), the historical locatedness of the servant was highlighted in distinction to Deutero-Isaiah and the New Testament. What is noteworthy (and what will be revisited in the Conclusion) is that despite an ostensible historicism in the approach, there resides a strong theological presupposition at work regarding the servant, namely, the *necessary* shortcoming of the poet's understanding of revelation and salvation. Despite its wide divergence from the approaches and readings of Childs, Motyer, and others, it nevertheless demonstrates a reading of Isa 53 that is deeply imbued with theological concerns.

Chapter 3

Brevard Childs, Theological Hermeneutics and Isaiah

‘It is constitutive of the theological task of biblical exegesis that a dialectical relationship obtains between the past and the present, between descriptive and constructive, between the time-conditioned and the transcendent’.
Brevard Childs¹

If Duhm located Isa 40-55, and with it Isa 53, in terms of its historical referentiality to the progression of Israel’s theological development, Childs will seek to place Isa 40-55 (and Isa 53) within a ‘canonical’, theological context that attempts to retain something of a dialectic between the approach of Duhm and more explicit theological judgments.² For Childs, the interpretation of Isa 53 is to be approached *via* the redactorial, and from this, *theological*, context in which the chapter now resides. Conceptually, as noted above, Childs will attempt to steer a theological reading of the Old Testament between Protestant liberalism of the 19th and early 20th centuries and its conservative reactions. In his own words, Childs sought ‘an alternative to the sharp polarity that [Vischer] set up between modern historical-critical exegesis and a repristination of sixteenth-century Reformation theology’.³ What is meant by ‘alternative’, and what this looks like for the Old Testament, the Prophets, and specifically Isa 53, is the aim of the present and subsequent chapter.

A substantial summary of the general approach of Childs has recently been undertaken by Daniel Driver.⁴ In the light of this work, it will be unnecessary (and impossible, given the restraints of space) to attempt a similarly exhaustive contextualizing move. What will be of special importance, rather, is the elucidation of those characteristics of Childs’s approach that

¹ Childs, *New Testament*, 41.

² Motyer will choose to place Isa 53 within a sequential literary unfolding of the book of Isaiah as a whole, raising and answering central doctrinal, soteriological questions as the plot unfolds.

³ Childs, ‘Reclaiming’, 4. Cf. Rendtorff, ‘Vischer and von Rad’; Vischer, *Witness*, I.

⁴ Driver, *Childs*.

directly (or indirectly) affect his reading of Isaiah generally, and Isaiah 53 specifically, as Christian Scripture. I have generally categorized these factors below, in terms of the nature of the Old Testament text *qua* text (“The Text ‘Itself’”), and the situating (in some sense *necessary* situating) of the text within a wider rule of faith (“The Text and / in the Church”).⁵ The goal is not to be comprehensive, but only to outline Childs’s approach so as to frame his reading of Isaiah – and particularly Isaiah 53 – as Christian Scripture.

As a kernel of that which follows, we may cite a little-known paper of Childs, given at a symposium in Bern, ‘Die Bedeutung des Jüdischen Kanons in der Alttestamentlichen Theologie’.⁶ Childs appreciates two other contributions to what would become the published version of the symposium – those of Peter Stuhlmacher and Ulrich Luz.⁷ Stuhlmacher and Luz, in Childs’s view, desire to demonstrate how Jesus and Paul critically interpret the Old Testament, and from this, to assess what the theological ‘Mitte’ of the Old Testament is. Childs comments, ‘Ich möchte nicht die Gültigkeit dieser historischen Fragestellung zurückweisen, besonders nicht als apologetisches Instrument gegen solche Gelehrte wie E. Pagels...’ Nevertheless, Childs continues, ‘ist das Verhältnis solcher historischer Rekonstruktionen zur Aufgabe einer biblischen Theologie nicht einleuchtend, und die Aufgabe einer wirklichen biblischen Theologie erfordert nach meinem Urteil eine viel feinere, dialektische Beziehung.’⁸ Just what Childs means by a ‘wirkliche biblische Theologie’, and what role ‘eine viel feinere, dialektische Beziehung’ has, is to follow.

I. *The Text ‘Itself’*

Childs’s first comprehensive hermeneutical engagement with Old Testament interpretation, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, sets the groundwork for an appreciation of the dialectical relationship between the text’s historical particularity, and its intrinsic theological witness and reception.⁹ The hermeneutical shape, *in nuce*, stems from the conviction that the biblical text is

⁵ Cf. Moberly, *Bible, Theology, and Faith*, 42-44.

⁶ Childs, ‘Jüdischen Kanons’, 269–281.

⁷ Stuhlmacher, ‘Jesus von Nazareth’, 81-95; Luz, ‘Paulinische Theologie’, 119-147.

⁸ Childs, ‘Jüdischen Kanons’, 269-70.

⁹ While it focuses on the New Testament in its specific exegetical handlings, Childs’s *New Testament* supplies an extremely concise summary of his interpretive interests. Perhaps unsurprisingly, it experienced little critical impact on the field of New Testament scholarship. Though this was to Childs’s dismay (*Reading Paul*, 1), not all reviewed the work negatively. See Smith, ‘Approaching the New Testament as Canon’.

primarily deictic, 'pointed to the *res*' behind a transparent text – the Triune God in Christ.¹⁰ Childs did not begin with such an explicit affirmation, though his work is more oriented in this direction later in his life. The interest of this chapter is not to chronologically trace Childs's development, as much as it is to elucidate the core convictions that came to inform his 'canonical approach' to the Old Testament. This concerns both the nature of the text as integrally part of the worshipping community (Section I), as well as the nature of the text as 'transparent' (Section II), exerting pressure on the believing community of both Israel *and* the Church. This categorization is admittedly rather artificial: Childs would not have endorsed the simple bifurcation, whereby the former interest resides with biblical studies, and the latter with dogmatics.¹¹ Nevertheless, it does provide a kind of large-scale orientation toward Childs's own approach, hopefully without losing any necessary nuance.

Much of Childs's work on the Prophets (our interest here) can be explained by way of introduction to two other bodies of writing in the Old Testament that informed Childs's approach: the work of the Chronicler, and the place and function of the Psalms. These are not too far afield for our purposes, as the language Childs uses in handling each body of text directly informs his reading of the book of Isaiah.

I.1 *The Chronicler*

Childs's formulation of a canonical approach did not begin with the explicit recognition of dogmatic realities 'in' the Old Testament. Retrospectively, it would appear that a necessary precursor to that move would be establishing the Old Testament as a certain kind of text; namely, one that is primarily

¹⁰ See Driver, *Childs*, 143. That the *res* is more than a vague religious orientation can be seen in Childs's wider biblical theological project in *Biblical Theology*: it is the 'theological reality to which scripture bears witness' (723), namely, Jesus Christ (725). The fundamental question underlying Childs's work, then, is the 'question of understanding the unity of the Bible's witness to the reality of divine redemption in Jesus Christ' (723), without '[restricting] the full range of the biblical voices' (725). The place of economic and immanent Trinitarian formulation plays no small part in the formulation (14). Childs upholds James Barr's affirmation of the Old Testament as soteriologically functional in terms of an economic Trinitarianism; but, Childs notes, Barr does not seriously grapple with the early Church's view that the Trinity was *ontologically* present in the Old Testament, in vertical, and not merely linear (chronological), terms (cf. Jn 1.1-5; Col 1.15-20; Heb 1.2-3). The question at this point would thus become what influence the immanent (and not just the economic) Trinity brings to the theological interpretation of the Old Testament. Watson's charge, therefore, that for Childs 'scriptural texts possess an inherent authority simply as scriptural texts', feels slightly amiss. See Watson, *Text and Truth*, 14-15.

¹¹ As noted below, see Childs, 'Recovering', 23; idem., 'Sensus Literalis', 89. Cf. Childs, 'Barth as interpreter', 52-3.

theological in nature and orientation. As early as his *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis* we can find the interest.¹² There, the Chronicler's parallel account of the Assyrian threat (II Chr 32.1-23) functions as a type of midrash on II Kgs 20, which essentially harmonizes the differing accounts available to him. On the one hand, there is the tradition of Hezekiah's apparent need of Isaiah in order to pray, and on the other, the tradition of Hezekiah's confident ability to pray at length without prophetic aid.¹³

What Childs means by midrash at this point, in 1967, is 'an exegetical activity by a circle of scholars interpreting a sacred text', at the root of which is the 'attempt to elucidate a written source'. It is the 'dialectical movement...from the interpreter to the text, and *vice versa*, from the text to the interpreter'.¹⁴ Two things immediately stand out in this early statement: first, Childs finds the Chronicler to be dealing with a text that is able to press upon him in an authoritative manner; second, Childs is careful to avoid the pejorative understanding of 'midrash', found in certain historical treatments of the Chronicler.¹⁵ Childs grants that midrash is perhaps not the best 'catchall' phrase, and for this reason often speaks of a 'proto-midrash' at work in Old Testament formation.¹⁶ Nevertheless, he finds this kind of technique to be essentially the same kind of activity that subsequently transformed into midrashic engagement,¹⁷ an engagement that fundamentally moves in two directions:

[T]he interpretation moves from the biblical text to seek a connection with a new situation. But then again, the reverse direction is equally important; namely, the interpretation comes from the situation and moves back to the text. In the first instance, the text interprets the new situation; in the second, the new situation illuminates the text.¹⁸

An immediate example of this kind of movement is apparent in Proto-, Deutero-, and Trito-Isaiah's relation to one another, largely determined by the various historical and theological contexts in which the different writers found

¹² Childs, *Assyrian Crisis*.

¹³ Childs, 'Midrash and the Old Testament', 56.

¹⁴ Childs, *Assyrian Crisis*, 107.

¹⁵ Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, below.

¹⁶ Childs, 'Midrash and the Old Testament', 52; idem., 'Psalm Titles', 149.

¹⁷ Childs, 'Midrash and the Old Testament', 53.

¹⁸ Childs, 'Midrash and the Old Testament', 52.

themselves.¹⁹ In a general sense, midrash allows Childs to begin to account for differing 'historical' accounts along positive lines.

By the time of his *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, his assessment of the Chronicler moves decisively further.²⁰ The Chronicler remains, as in *Assyrian Crisis*, deeply affected by 'the consciousness of a body of authoritative writings before him';²¹ but we can in fact say more: the Chronicler's adaptation of *ללכת לפני* in I Kgs 8.25, as *ללכת בתורת* in II Chr 6.16, indicates a 'theology of sacred scripture' already at work in the biblical text.²² Childs notes the simple fact that the Chronicler did not seek to supplant the earlier traditions of Samuel and Kings, but adjoins his own work to these – an observation which intends to highlight an early canon-consciousness, and the abiding, discrete, witness of prior written tradition.²³

Further, the Chronicler's particular use of other Old Testament texts manifests a kind of 'typological exegesis'. Childs notes that the Chronicler has the ability to re-work older historical situations, selectively highlighting what he values to be 'normative, enduring, and representative within the multiplicity of varying historical situations', applying the descriptors of past events or episodes to a present context. Thus, Childs notes, in II Chr 5.13, the Chronicler's use of *יהוה ענן בית מלא* parallels the earlier usage of Ex 40.34ff,²⁴ a movement that affirms the 'selfsame divine reality' to be at work.²⁵ It is at root an 'interpretation of a canonical *text* within the context and for the religious purposes of a community'.²⁶ Or, in line with Wright's description of midrash, a rendering of 'yesterday's text (which is the word of God for all time) meaningful and nourishing for today'.²⁷

¹⁹ Cf. Seitz, *Zion's Final Destiny*; idem., *Isaiah 40-66*; Zimmerli, 'Zur Sprache Tritojesajas'; Michel, 'Zur Eigenart Tritojesajas'.

²⁰ Childs, *Introduction*, 641-55.

²¹ Childs, *Introduction*, 647.

²² Childs, *Introduction*, 647-8.

²³ Childs, *Introduction*, 655. That the Chronicler's work was finally established at a relatively late (Persian) date (c. 350 BCE?), in which a kind of conflation between pre- and post-exilic sources was established, is suggested in Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 14-17; cf. Chapman, *The Law and the Prophets*, 218-31, for an account of a 'canon-consciousness' of the Chronicler.

²⁴ Ex 40.34 reads: *ויכס הענן את־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וּכְבוֹד יְהוָה מִלֵּא אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן*.

²⁵ Childs, *Introduction*, 650. The phrase 'selfsame divine reality' features regularly in Childs's work.

²⁶ Childs, 'Midrash and the Old Testament', 49.

²⁷ Wright, 'Midrash', 134. Though Childs affirms this aspect of Wright's understanding of 'midrash', he would also critique it for being too constrictive, as well as for not rightly coordinating form and function in midrashic activity. See Childs, 'Midrash and the Old Testament', 50-53. Cf. Seeligmann, 'Midraschexegese', 181, for whom midrash always struggled

A further example can be seen in the placement of Joshua's words (Josh 1.9a) into the mouth of David (I Chr 22.13b), which suggests an attempt 'to draw out elements of ontological continuity within Israel's history'.²⁸ Thus, as 'the ontological question' is one of enduring significance for Israel, and as it is eternal and so exempt from issues of 'historical change and development', the Chronicler can apply the singular ontological divine reality ('the Word of God') to 'ancient patriarchs, pre-exilic kings, and exiles from the Babylonian captivity' alike; the Chronicler assumes and attests to a singular unity of the Godhead over Israel.²⁹ The categories at work here will provide the general framework within which Childs finds his *ontological* (i.e. Trinitarian) reading of Isaiah 53 to be in some sense proper to the text itself, and not a foreign intrusion. As will be seen in the next chapter, Childs finds the early Church, like the Chronicler, to be attuned to this interpretive reality.

An interest in the Chronicler as performing a certain kind of midrash appears elsewhere, in relation to Seeligmann's work on early 'Midraschexegese'.³⁰ While Childs could praise Seeligmann's work as insightful and necessary, a qualification is needed. What Seeligmann contributes is the appreciation of midrash as providing an authoritative oral tradition (complementing Israel's authoritative Scriptures), which 'worked within carefully articulated restraints which were grounded in certain religious precepts of orthodox Judaism and which had been shaped by careful philological and contextual rules'.³¹ It is by virtue of these parameters that there was the possibility of 'Wortspiel' in midrashic exegesis (and those activities that stood in its wake). In Childs's view, however, this model of midrash is principally concerned with text-text relationships, in a manner that eclipses the text-*res* relationship (i.e. the text's relation to its subject matter).³² This openness of the text fosters the possibility of reading midrash within the canon (cf. II Chr 13.22; 24.27) along purely literary lines; in this sense midrash is a textual

to uphold an enclosed, authoritative text, yet in a way which avoided a 'Versteinerung', keeping a newness and freshness about the text for ongoing generations.

²⁸ Childs, *Introduction*, 651.

²⁹ Childs, *Introduction*, 654-55. By 'ontological', Childs presumably means that 'mode of speech in relation to a subject matter which disregards or transcends temporal sequence'. So Childs, 'Witness', 60. In this light, the Chronicler is an integral model of reading certain Old Testament materials in a way not tied to historical linearity and chronology.

³⁰ Seeligmann, 'Midraschexegese'.

³¹ Childs, 'Retrospective Reading', 370.

³² The phrasing of text-text v. text-*res* is from Driver, *Childs*, 137-59. Driver appears to derive the categories, in some part, from Steins, *Die 'Bindung Isaaks'*.

phenomenon that commentates upon a prior narrative (and thus alters it).³³ The text-text relationship struggles to articulate the *ontological* relation between narratives, without which it becomes difficult to counter Wellhausen's understanding of midrash.³⁴ Midrash, or 'story' (מדרש), was understood by Wellhausen to be little more than fanciful fiction – an embellishment that obscured the historical referent behind the text.³⁵ To deny this phenomenon, according to Wellhausen, would signal a naivety toward the divergence of historical witness. Childs, however, presses that there must be 'other options for the modern interpreter besides that of naïve supernaturalism or arid historicism'.³⁶ Indeed, in his Exodus commentary, Childs attempted to bring together the insights of Reformation, Rabbinic, and historical-critical scholars.³⁷

Attending to the 'ontological' plane on which biblical midrash takes place can account for divergence in narrative without severing theological continuity:

[T]he constructive task of theology requires the theologian to go much beyond the point of mere description. Indeed, we would argue that it is a theological desideratum to take this particular canonical shape with which the Chronicler has fashioned his tradition with utmost seriousness.³⁸

Four implications follow from this. First, through the author's relativizing of 'all issues of historical change and development', the 'unity of God's will for his people' has been upheld as ontologically continuous in such a way as to handle 'God's will for his people as eternal and unchanging'.³⁹ Second, a foundational continuity was drawn between the oneness of the Godhead and the oneness of Israel's history – the worshipping community past and present was fundamentally the same. Third, the Chronicler's emphasis on retribution (or cause and effect) suggests a view of history that encompasses the whole array of the prophetic corpus, diverge as it does from the Deuteronomistic historian's

³³ Childs, 'Retrospective Reading', 370n.29, notes Clements, *Deliverance of Jerusalem*, and supplies a brief critique of the latter's understanding of 'midrash' as a negative phenomenon.

³⁴ Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, 222, describes midrash as 'the consequence of the conservation of all the relics of antiquity, a wholly peculiar artificial reawakening of dry bones [eine ganz eigene Wiedererweckung der toten Gebeine]... Like ivy it overspreads the dead trunk with extraneous life [mit fremdartigem Leben], blending old and new in a strange combination [in sonderbarer Vereinigung mischend].

³⁵ Cf. Childs's critique Clements on this score as well, in 'Retrospective Reading', 370-71.

³⁶ Childs, 'Retrospective Reading', 371. It is unhelpful that Childs divides these kinds of tendencies from one another (cf. *Biblical Theology*, 99-102). Cf. Driver, 'Later Childs', 122.

³⁷ Childs, *Exodus*, x (e.g. Calvin, Drusius, Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Wellhausen, Gunkel).

³⁸ Childs, *Introduction*, 654.

³⁹ Childs, *Introduction*, 654.

view of exact prophetic fulfillment.⁴⁰ Fourth, and from this, is the apparent fact that the Chronicler regards prior writings – Samuel and Kings in particular – as possessing an enduring value ‘as a means of enrichment of the biblical traditions in the process of critical reflection’.⁴¹

The Chronicler, then, is not concerned with the potential for midrash that an ‘open text’ invites, along the lines of a mere ‘Wortspiel’; rather, the Chronicler is concerned with the ontological continuity between Israel past and present. For Childs, the Chronicler stands in tight continuity with the kind of composition (and redaction) we find in the Psalms.

I.2 *The Psalms*

Insofar as midrash is used by Childs to signify the adaptation of a received tradition to a fresh setting – without ridding oneself of previous tradition (and thereby preserving its ongoing quality as ‘scripture’) – the Psalms manifest substantial continuity. Deeply impressed by Seeligmann’s ‘Midraschexegeese’,⁴² Childs turned his interest to the presence of midrash in Psalm titles.⁴³ Many of the hermeneutical, theological observations made with reference to the Chronicler are observed in these titles.⁴⁴

Generally speaking, the Psalm titles ‘represent an early reflection of how the Psalms as a collection of sacred literature were understood’, specifically through the application of titles that located the texts within a particular historical situation, ‘The titles established a secondary setting which became normative for the canonical tradition’.⁴⁵ Elsewhere Childs describes the process as one that is able ‘to change the context from that in which the text originally functioned’. The late addition of Psalm titles does not alter the text, but ‘a new framework is provided which assigns to it a new role’.⁴⁶

A starting point is to note the relatively stereotyped syntactical formulation in numerous titles (largely from Pss. 50-60) that, while too early to

⁴⁰ Childs, *Introduction*, 652-53, 655. For Childs, the two need not stand at odds, ‘In a real sense the Chronicler’s use of retribution runs parallel to the Dtr. historian’s argument of prophecy and fulfillment’. Cf. *ibid.*, 202-25. In my reading of his *Introduction*, however, Childs does not adequately demonstrate this.

⁴¹ Childs, *Introduction*, 655.

⁴² Driver, *Childs*, 173.

⁴³ Seeligmann (‘Midraschexegeese’, 180), however, only touched on the topic – one reason why Childs felt the need to approach it in more detail.

⁴⁴ Childs, ‘Psalm Titles’, 137-150.

⁴⁵ Childs, ‘Psalm Titles’, 137.

⁴⁶ Childs, ‘Midrash and the Old Testament’, 56-7.

indicate 'a set of hermeneutical rules', nevertheless suggest a nascent 'inner-biblical interpretation'.⁴⁷ Typically speaking, there is a א prefixed to an infinitive construct, followed by either a coordinate or subordinate clause introduced by a finite verb.⁴⁸ Generally in the Old Testament, Childs observes, we find the adaptation of older poetic traditions for contemporary narrational traditions. The insertion of the older traditions into the new produced a 'stereotyped form of the superscription', intended to satisfy a felt need 'to supply a [historical] setting'.⁴⁹ According to Childs, the superscriptions arise from 'non-historical factors',⁵⁰ as seen in the use of titles in the LXX text and that of 11QPs^a.⁵¹

Childs identifies the activity as stemming from a scribal school of sorts, situated in post-exilic Palestine. The activity of the school is situated after the work of the Chronicler, yet before that of Qumran; the fact that the Chronicler did not use the superscription formula suggests a *terminus a quo* sometime after his work, and the use of the 'Psalmenüberschrift' in 11QPs^a suggests a *terminus ad quem* sometime before Qumran. The school, which perpetuated a 'learned tradition of the study of scripture',⁵² did not do so as a primarily academic enterprise – the titles are, rather, 'the result of inner biblical exegesis'.⁵³ Indeed, we might infer that the application of Psalm titles provides a window into David's inner spiritual and emotional life – they give one access to historical and personal information otherwise unknown to the reader. Consequently, Childs suggests that 'the formation of the titles stemmed from a pietistic circle of Jews whose interest was particularly focused on the nurture of the spiritual life'.⁵⁴

⁴⁷ Childs, 'Psalm Titles', 148.

⁴⁸ Cf. Pss. 51; 52; 54; 60 (Pss 7; 18 are a slight exception to the rule).

⁴⁹ Childs, 'Psalm Titles', 142.

⁵⁰ Childs, 'Psalm Titles', 142.

⁵¹ For the text of the LXX and 11Q5 (11QPs.151^a [Col. XXVIII]), as well as a proposal to see Ps. 151 as Midrash on 1 Sam 16.1ff., see Sanders, *Psalms Scroll*, 54-60.

⁵² Childs, 'Psalm Titles', 149.

⁵³ Childs, 'Midrash and the Old Testament', 57. Cf. Sarna, 'Psalm 89'. Cf. Wright, 'Literary Genre Midrash', 134, 'Midrash has primarily...a religious and edifying aim and not a speculative one'.

⁵⁴ Childs, 'Psalm Titles', 149. Though see Childs's criticism (*Isaiah*, 443) of Steck's proposal of 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie' in Isa 56-66 (cf. Steck, *Sudien zu Tritojesaja*, 275; cf. 9), dismissed as 'lacking evidence for the reconstruction of such an audience'. In what way is Steck's proposal any different from that of Childs, on Psalm titles? Historically locating canonical activity has been taken up by Chapman, 'Second Temple Jewish Hermeneutics'; idem., 'Canon: Old Testament'. A certain force to Van Seters's recent attack on Childs (*The Edited Bible*, 362ff.) probably derives from the latter's frequent lack of specificity with who exactly the 'redactors' were.

In the midrashic activity at work in the Psalms there is consequently a theological identity and integrity – the addition of such titles is not distortive but enriching. ‘History’ is slightly recalibrated: it has ‘retained its importance, but in the transformed state of being canonical history’.⁵⁵ Childs concludes:

[T]he midrashic method provides a model for serious theological exegesis in so far as it sets up a dialectical movement, which allows the ancient text to address the changing context of the community, and conversely permits the new conditions of life dynamically to reinterpret the past. The midrashic method serves to admonish the interpreter of the continual demand for close, rigorous study of the text, while at the same time reminding him that he brings to the text his own historically conditioned perspective which should not be denied.⁵⁶

Here Childs’s concern with the Chronicler is carried forward into the Psalms. Midrash, dialectic, changing contexts of communities: all of these echo his statements elsewhere, and relate primarily to the use and establishment of sacred tradition by the *present* worshipping community.⁵⁷ Yet what might we say about this activity as concerned with preserving theological tradition and reflection for Israel’s posterity?

In 1990, Childs wrote a remarkable article that essentially centered upon a word study of the noun דָּוָר.⁵⁸ The article is an attempt to correlate the ‘historical questions related to the formation of Israel’s scripture’, with the ‘hermeneutical and theological issues raised by the concept of canon’ – both of which had reached a peak of interest in the 1980s and 90s.⁵⁹ Childs is interested in how the theological interpreter might approach this question from within the text itself. Rather than adopt the traditional angles on canon in light of ‘not add to the word nor take away’ (Deut 4.2; cf. 12.32), or priestly stipulations as ‘an ordinance forever’ (Exod 12), Childs pursues the question through a form-critical study of דָּוָר. The study encompasses not a particular tradition, but the nature of tradition history more broadly as theologically motivated and perpetuated. Childs’s study of דָּוָר is thus an extension of a well-established

⁵⁵ Childs, ‘Psalm Titles’, 150. The retention of history’s importance is seen in the fact that, again, midrash is an activity concerned not with oral tradition, but the textualized form of that tradition – the Psalm titles developed in conversation with textualized (and therefore historicized) sources. For this reason, Childs found Sandmel’s use of ‘haggada’ (which Sandmel rightly associates with midrash) in the Genesis narratives to be inappropriate, since the development of the Patriarchal narratives (e.g. Gen 12; 20) were probably more indebted to ‘some common oral tradition’ than any textualized, linear progression. See Childs, ‘Midrash and the Old Testament’, (49).

⁵⁶ Childs, ‘Psalm Titles’, 150.

⁵⁷ Cf. Sarna, ‘Psalm 89’.

⁵⁸ Childs, ‘Analysis’, 357-64.

⁵⁹ Childs, ‘Analysis’, 357.

historical-critical approach to the Old Testament.⁶⁰ For Childs, ‘the process of the canonization of the Hebrew Bible was closely related to the concern to render the sacred tradition in such a way as to serve future generations of Israel as authoritative Scripture’. Those traditions that Israel inherits are not theologically neutral, whether cast as ‘history’ or ‘mythology’, but are ‘sacred’ – indeed, Childs here references a singular ‘tradition’ – and not relegated to the past; correlating past and present, with an eye to an ongoing use within Israel’s future progeny, is the foundation beneath tradition (and thereby redaction) criticism.⁶¹

A close word study of דָּוָר turns up a handful of observations we would not be surprised to find: it is a collective term, indicating those who share a general temporal sequence together; it ‘increasingly becomes simply a synonym for forever’, expressing ‘the finality of judgment’ (Isa 13.20; Jer 50.39) as well as ‘the enduring constancy of the promise’ (Joel 4.20); the phrases לְדָוָר וְדָוָר, לְדָוָר וְדָוָר,⁶² do not designate timelessness, but eternity – not something metaphysical, but something linear and chronological.⁶³

Though memory and recitation play some role for posterity,⁶⁴ Childs notes that late pre-exilic and post-exilic Old Testament formation followed Ancient Near East⁶⁵ and Hellenistic⁶⁶ patterns of textualization for the benefit of future generations.⁶⁷ This conclusion of Childs is highly significant –

⁶⁰ Similarly, Childs also viewed his wider ‘project’ as an extension of form criticism. See Childs, ‘Response to Reviewers’, 52. Cf. MacDonald, ‘Book of Numbers’, 116.

⁶¹ Cf. Childs’s criticism of R.E. Brown (‘Biblical World’), in his *New Testament*, 46-7. Childs’s earlier work on etiology presents a similar line of thought, but from the other direction: the etiological formula עַר הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה and its variations suggest a secondary, later addition to prior extant traditions, as a way to adopt and adapt (often Canaanite) traditions into a Yahwistic (/Deuteronomistic) frame of reference. It seldom justifies ‘an existing phenomenon’, but more often stands as a kind of ‘personal testimony’ that confirms a prior, received tradition. If etiology functions to catch the *past* up to the present, as it were, the use of דָּוָר (outlined by Childs) secures the text for a *future* generation. See Childs, ‘Until this Day’, 288-89, 292. For an extension of the incipient critiques of this article, see Childs, ‘Etiological Tale’, 387-397. Van Seters challenged Childs’s description of biblical etiology as ‘redactional commentary’, labeling that ‘a rather meaningless phrase’. See Van Seters, *In Search of History*, 222n.43.

⁶² In the Psalms alone, see Ps 10.6; 33.11; 45.18; 49.12; 61.7; 77.9; 79.13; 85.6; 89.2, 5; 90.1; 100.5; 102.13; 106.31; 119.90; 135.13; 145.13; 146.10 (cf. Deut 32.7; Is 13.20; 34.17; 58.12; 60.15; 61.4; Jer 50.39; Joel 2.2; 4.20; Prov 27.24; Lam 5.19; Esth 9.28; Dan 3.33; 4.31).

⁶³ Childs, ‘Analysis’, 358-9 (cf. 363). Psalm 78.5-7 is a particularly striking example.

⁶⁴ So the common admonitions to ‘remember’ (cf. Deut 32.7; Exod 3.15).

⁶⁵ For the patterns in cognate literature of the Ancient Near East, see Tigay, *Gilgamesh Epic*, 102, who cites the concluding hymn to Marduk in the *Enuma Elish* (VIII, 158) as an example. According to its epilogue, the hymn (or possibly the work as a whole) had been preserved ‘for the hearing of future generations’ (*ištur-ma išt(a)ka nana šimē arkūti*).

⁶⁶ So Jub 4.17-18 (cf. 1.5; I Enoch 82.2).

⁶⁷ Childs, ‘Analysis’, 360. Cf. ‘Critique’, 182.

textualization of (oral) tradition is not merely a matter of putting pen to paper, but of rendering sacred traditions as *scripture*.⁶⁸

This phenomenon is seen in the Prophets (e.g. Isa 8.16; 30.8; 34.16-17; Jer 30.2), but the Psalms provide a particularly rich example; for, here we find texts of a particularly liturgical nature. Childs finds Psalm 102 to be the clearest demonstration of this kind of forward looking, theologically informed, liturgically centered characteristic of Old Testament formation. Critical handlings of the particular psalm have pointed out the various layers at work in its composition.⁶⁹ Childs seeks to highlight what of these hold particular importance for understanding the Old Testament as Scripture. The original, (probably) pre-exilic individual lament psalm (102.2-12, 24-25) has been subsequently layered to accommodate a (probably) exilic setting (102.13-23, 26-29).⁷⁰ Though the original was an individual lament, it is now applied now to corporate Israel, having 'taken up the ancient complaint and appended a new word of promise'.⁷¹

Indeed, the ancient setting is soon fully eclipsed by the writer – not only is the ancient text appropriated for the present, exilic community (while upholding the ontological continuity of Yahweh's relationship to Israel), but the exilic writer is writing לדור אחרון (v.18).⁷² Childs notes the purpose of this, 'The word was given not primarily to assure the continuity of past tradition, but rather the ensure the certainty of the future promise'.⁷³ God's promise to Israel is not viewed in terms of timelessness, but rather in terms of a horizontal perpetuity: 'generations'.⁷⁴

That God's response to Israel's lament 'is now addressed to every suffering generation',⁷⁵ is a statement a hair's breadth away from an affirmation that functions centrally in Childs's wider work, 'The divine promise is not a coefficient of the past, but a witness recorded for future generations'. Scripture

⁶⁸ Cf. 'Canonical Shape', 47. Childs, *Assyrian Crisis*, 106-7. Childs's comments on the significance of this development are paralleled in Ricoeur, 'What is a Text?', 147.

⁶⁹ Childs is here indebted to Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 537-9; Kraus, *Psalmen II*, 694ff.

⁷⁰ That this layer most likely stems from an exilic setting is felt in the language of vv.14-17 especially, in addition to the exilic parallels of Isa 30.18; 49.13; Jer 30.18; 31.20.

⁷¹ Childs, 'Analysis', 361. For other individual psalms that have been later adapted to corporate settings, see Pss. 22; 51; 69; 77; 102 (Broyles, 'Psalms of Lament', 393). Cf. Gunkel and Begrich, *Einleitung in die Psalmen*, 173ff. (§6.1ff.).

⁷² Cf. Ps. 48.12-14; 78.4, 6.

⁷³ Childs, 'Analysis', 361-2.

⁷⁴ Childs, 'Analysis', 362.

⁷⁵ Childs, 'Analysis', 362.

is thus ‘kerygmatic’.⁷⁶ The surety of God’s promise does not stand on its own inherent timelessness, but on the eternity and transcendence of the divine nature, into which all history is subsumed.⁷⁷ Similar to the Chronicler’s view of the divine promise as constant over ‘ancient patriarchs, pre-exilic kings, and exiles from the Babylonian captivity’,⁷⁸ the psalmist regards the textualization of the promise as one concerned primarily with future generations. In this way, Psalm 102 further articulates and applies what Childs has to say regarding the Chronicler, and presses for an account of the Old Testament as Scripture that is ‘radically theocentric in orientation’.⁷⁹

I.3 Prophets

With regard to the Prophets. With relation to the Chronicler and the Psalms (i.e. the Psalm titles as well as דִּוֵּר in Ps 102) we saw the general canonical concerns of midrash as an inter-textual phenomenon that suggests a measure of scripturalization in the transition from oral to written tradition. This is a phenomenon that increasingly took place in the post-exilic setting, and suggests a kind of ‘theology of sacred scripture’ at work in the very process of Old Testament growth and organization.⁸⁰ Childs would adopt eventually the specific language of ‘canon consciousness’ – ‘Kanonbewußtsein’ – from Seeligmann,⁸¹ as an Old Testament embodiment of a principle *scriptura sui ipsius interpres* already felt to be at work within the canon.⁸² In sum, the goal so far has been simply to highlight the various reasons why Childs finds the Old Testament to be proximately theological in terms of the *text itself*.⁸³ This will be carried forward a bit further, into the Prophets, before arriving at the more

⁷⁶ Childs, ‘Analysis’, 363.

⁷⁷ Cf. Childs, ‘Psalm Titles’, 150, ‘History has retained its importance, but in the transformed state of being canonical history’.

⁷⁸ Childs, *Introduction*, 654-55.

⁷⁹ Childs, ‘Analysis’, 363. Childs did supply an early article on the place of Psalm 8 in the context of the Christian canon (‘Psalm 8’), though I exempt it’s inclusion here on grounds that it is not as nuanced or thought through as his other work.

⁸⁰ Cf. Childs, *Introduction*, 647-8.

⁸¹ Specifically, see Seeligmann, ‘Midraschexege’, for whom the development of midrashic practices reached their peak under ‘das Aufkommen eines Kanonbewusstseins’ (152). Cf. Childs, ‘Midrash and the Old Testament’, 53.

⁸² Childs, ‘Midrash and the Old Testament’, 57. Childs felt the same to be true in the New Testament’s formation. Cf. his *New Testament as Canon*, 21, ‘Canon consciousness thus arose at the inception of the Christian Church and lies deep within the New Testament literature itself’.

⁸³ Childs would thus seek to escape the criticism of Van Seters, who found Childs’s ‘canon-criticism [sic]’ to have grown ‘out of a strong motivation to use the “canonical text” as a basis of religious authority to which philological and text-critical study must be quite subservient’. See Van Seters, *Edited Bible*, 362. Cf. Römer, *Deuteronomistic History*, 49n10.

'dogmatic' extension of this reality toward Christian reading of the Old Testament.

In what is probably Childs's most compact, systematic statement on the relationship between Old Testament exegesis and hermeneutics, 'Retrospective Reading of the Old Testament Prophets', he offers a thoroughgoing treatment of exegetical attempts to account for the 'multilayered' nature of prophetic literature.⁸⁴ This, in turn, demands critical analysis to regard its task as a multifaceted undertaking. For this reason, Childs felt the need to approach the present shape of the Prophets in light of his earlier work on midrash, to see in what way the general concerns there are present here. The specific question at work will concern both *how* the prophetic corpus grew as it did, but perhaps more importantly, *why* it grew in such ways.⁸⁵

Childs is interested in noting the advances gained by 'Adaptation', 'Fortschreibung', 'Editorial Redaction', and 'Etiology / *vaticinium ex eventu*'; further, reflections are offered on the limits of these models of interpretation, and on the 'crucial hermeneutical issues at stake' in their evaluation and use. The specific handling of the hermeneutical issues will be addressed in the following section, concerning the 'text-*res*' relationship of intertextuality / allegory. What concerns us here is Childs's various critiques of ways of accounting for retrospective (/ retrojective) literary development in the prophetic corpus; for, Childs's critiques function as a roundabout way of establishing his view of the theological nature of the Old Testament. Childs's reticence to establish a *model* for reading the Old Testament theologically is noteworthy, if often frustrating in elucidating what it was Childs was actually pressing for in the details. His critiques outlined here, however, provide an avenue toward understanding what exactly might be entailed in reading the prophets according to their 'canonical shape'.

Childs approaches each of the categories above in turn. 'Adaptation' is a category drawn from Seeligmann,⁸⁶ to whom Childs was deeply indebted in his own thinking regarding the early formation of canon consciousness. Thus Childs appreciates Seeligman's 'Midraschexegese', by which one finds an openness of the biblical text when set within conscious canonical parameters;

⁸⁴ Childs, 'Retrospective Reading', 362-77.

⁸⁵ In its own way, cf. Moberly, *Old Testament*, 2.

⁸⁶ Seeligmann derives his understanding of 'Adaptation', in part, from S. Schechter.

i.e. within a 'Kanonbewußtsein'.⁸⁷ Driver has aptly summarized Seeligmann's article elsewhere,⁸⁸ though we may simply observe that Childs perceived the function of adaptation to take place on grounds of the text's 'openness' – this openness in turn brought forth a kind of 'Spielelement', specifically, the phenomenon of 'Wortspiel'.⁸⁹ While Childs could appreciate the advance that Seeligmann brought with reference to an early 'Kanonbewußtsein',⁹⁰ he noted that the examples given in that study did not spring from a circumstantial *necessity*, as much as from textual *possibility*.⁹¹

In contrast, 'Fortschreibung', or the 'prolongation' / 'post-history' of a prophetic oracle,⁹² is a circumstantially necessary move, given a later situational change, 'The nature of the expansion was a secondary layering of the basic text much like a commentary, which was evoked either by the need for further explanation, or from some difficulty within the text itself, or by a tension which had developed because of the effect of subsequent historical events'.⁹³ One finds the phenomenon at points of discontinuity (of varying levels) within a text. Similar to 'Fortschreibung' is the (not so) simple process of 'editorial redaction', which extends beyond individual pericopes, sometimes covering entire prophetic books.⁹⁴ The process is one of 'literary layering', whereby the experience of 'changing sociological forces' calls for the recontextualization of earlier prophetic material to correspond to these later settings.⁹⁵ In the prophets, the studies of Barth's *Jesaja-Worte* and Clements's 'Fall of Jerusalem' are two particularly influential examples.⁹⁶ While Childs will criticize a simplistic view of 'Fortschreibung' (below), this model of accounting for retrospective testimony in the prophets does provide a provisional means of appreciating a

⁸⁷ Seeligmann, 'Midraschexegese'.

⁸⁸ Driver, *Childs*, 173ff.

⁸⁹ Cf. Seeligmann, 'Midraschexegese', 152, 176.

⁹⁰ Seeligmann is careful on this point, 'Doch interessiert uns hier nicht der äussere Prozess der Kanonisierung, sondern der Wandel im Bewusstsein, der dem alten Wort eine neue Bedeutung und Autorität beilegt' (176).

⁹¹ Childs, 'Retrospective Reading', 362.

⁹² 'Fortschreibung' is a rather difficult term to translate, though 'prolongation' is probably most accurate – the rendering appears in Margaret Kohl's translation of Smend's *Astruc to Zimmerli*, 248. 'Fortschreibung' may be viewed as complementary to Hertzberg's 'Nachgeschichte', in his 'Die Nachgeschichte alttestamentlicher Texte'.

⁹³ Childs, 'Retrospective Reading', 363-64.

⁹⁴ Childs, 'Retrospective Reading', 364. Cf. Van Seters, *Edited Bible*, 362ff.

⁹⁵ Childs, 'Retrospective Reading', 365. Cf. 'Canonical Shape', 49-52.

⁹⁶ Barth, *Die Jesaja-Worte*; Clements, 'Fall of Jerusalem'. The phenomenon is obviously found elsewhere. In relation to Genesis 12-50 and its relation to later Mosaic Yahwism, for example, see Moberly, *Old Testament*.

text's diachronic witness – its 'depth' – without sacrificing the wider redactional/editorial context of biblical books and canons.

Finally, Childs notes etiological modes of reading, alongside those of *vaticinium ex eventu*. These descriptors, Childs notes, emerged within scholarly debate about the nature of prophecy in relation to historical retrojection.⁹⁷ The fact that *vaticinium ex eventu*'s earliest explicit debate is seen in Jerome's response to Porphyry⁹⁸ would suggest, contrary to Motyer, that *vaticinium ex eventu* is not purely an issue stemming from rationalism's failure to 'countenance predictive prophecy'.⁹⁹ It is, rather, a means of historically accounting for prophetic literature that embodies concerns temporally subsequent to the original prophetic persona. Etiology (especially in the wake of Gunkel) similarly sought to claim the past for the present: simply viewed, it assigns an explanation and justification to present, existing phenomena within Israel, largely along the lines of causality, and often by the use of a 'basis-establishing element' (היום הזה, עד היום, עד היום ההוא, כן, etc.).¹⁰⁰ Whereas etiology previously functioned in accord with form-critical concerns, Childs finds a real positive contribution of the work when allied with redaction criticism (see below). Admittedly, if etiology functions closely with redaction criticism, it is not immediately clear how it is actually different from either 'Fortschreibung' or 'Nachgeschichte', as all are both retrojective and pressured by the ongoing validity of the extant traditions.

While Childs can appreciate all four of these means of accounting for retrospective reading of the prophets ('Adaptation', 'Fortschreibung', 'Editorial Redaction', and 'Etiology' / '*vaticinium ex eventu*'), he can also level criticisms: 'Fortschreibung' was not as simple a process as, for example, Zimmerli had supposed.¹⁰¹ With reference to Ezekiel (on which Zimmerli had based his observations), Garscha and Greenberg illustrated that the phenomenon of 'Fortschreibung' was not the mere literary progression from the simple to the complex, expanded over time through memetic inheritance.¹⁰²

⁹⁷ Childs, 'Retrospective Reading', 365.

⁹⁸ So Osswald, 'Vaticinia ex eventu'. Osswald is reliant in his article in the *Biblisch-historisches Handwörterbuch*.

⁹⁹ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 25 (cf. 27-8). That Motyer equates rationalism strictly with the Enlightenment project is seen in his 'Isaianic Literature', 32.

¹⁰⁰ Gunkel, *Genesis*, viiff.. Cf. Alt on the *Kinderfrage*, in his 'Josua', 176-92.

¹⁰¹ Zimmerli, 'Das Phänomen der ›Fortschreibung‹'.

¹⁰² Garscha, *Studien*. Cf. Childs, 'Retrospective Reading', 363-64.

Editorial redaction, while foundational for a canonical approach, suffers a potential ‘endless proliferation’ of literary strata, often well beyond what was most likely the case in the various texts’ composition. Childs notes the scholarly tendency to fragment prophetic literature when (only when?) conceptual tensions are present. The problem, Childs points out, is that literary layers are often assigned according to differentiated strands of thought. So, in Childs’s view, Hermisson’s argument for ‘die *qarob*-Schicht (Naherwartungsschicht)’ in Isa 40-55,¹⁰³ characteristic of which are ‘an imminent deliverance from exile’ and ‘a demand for better conduct from Israel’, posits itself *necessarily* against a layer that views Yahweh’s forgiveness to be ‘unconditional’ (Isa 40.1ff.).¹⁰⁴ The interpreter’s idiosyncratic ‘conceptional rationalizations’ (shaped by ‘modern rational categories’) consequently lead to ‘literary fragmentation’, resulting in ever-more hypothesized literary ‘Schichten’.¹⁰⁵ Childs appreciates that there *are* numerous tensions within Deutero-Isaiah; his caution would, however, aim to foster a more healthy sense of self-criticism:¹⁰⁶ synchronic and diachronic approaches can both run afoul of the text’s own integrity.¹⁰⁷

Contrary to ‘Fortschreibung’, which grew *forward* out of previous traditions, an appreciation of etiology’s *retrojective* activity always runs the risk of diminishing those prior traditions, by covering up their particular historical referentiality. Where ‘Fortschreibung’ builds, etiology and *vaticinium ex eventu* cover up.¹⁰⁸ Both are concerned with an ontological continuity, though how they go about drawing the connection functions in opposite directions.¹⁰⁹ The primary danger lies in the potential for etiological retrojections to cast Israel’s past in purely literary categories, ‘without genuine historical rootage’.¹¹⁰

¹⁰³ Hermisson, ‘Einheit und Komplexität’. The layer supposedly consists of Isa 42.18-25(?); 46.8, 12-13; 48.12-16; 48.17-19; 49.7, 88-12, 24-26(?); 50.3(?); 51.1-2+4-8; 51.12-14 (, 15-16); 54.11-17; 55.6ff. (and perhaps also 47.3, 6ff.; 44.6-8; 43.14-15).

¹⁰⁴ Childs, ‘Retrospective Reading’, 368. Cf. Kratz, *Kyros*, who finds five literary layers at work in Deutero-Isaiah. Similarly, Steck, *Gottesknecht und Zion*. Cf. Joachimsen, ‘Steck’s Five Stories’.

¹⁰⁵ Childs, ‘Retrospective Reading’, 368-9.

¹⁰⁶ Childs adopted much of his framework from von Rad. Notable are the comments of the latter, in his *Genesis*, 13, 19.

¹⁰⁷ This is, again, Childs’s view of Hermisson, and it is perhaps slightly overextended. Williamson has given a more measured treatment of Hermisson’s proposal, with a critique apparently sympathetic with that of Childs. See Williamson, *Book Called Isaiah*, 22ff. Hermisson is aware of the general difficulties in the discussion, op. cit., 288-89.

¹⁰⁸ Below, introducing Childs on the book of Isaiah, I will note how Childs actually finds positive import in both of these movements; for, both imply a tradition that exercises an ongoing theological pressure within Israel’s worshipping community.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Childs, ‘Midrash and the Old Testament’, 52, on differing ‘directions’ of interpretation.

¹¹⁰ Childs, ‘Retrospective Reading’, 372.

Perhaps the most threatening implication of this etiological emphasis comes in a subtle shift of referentiality – the socio-political factors that gave rise to etiological retrojection become the real subject matter of discussion, resulting in a ‘massive demythologizing of the Old Testament’.¹¹¹ Similarly, the very Scripture of Israel comes to resemble little more than ‘ideological constructs of editors whose agenda is largely determined by wishful thinking or self-interest’.¹¹² No longer is the primary referent of Scripture *theological*, but *anthropological* – the exact kind of move Childs sought to overturn in his handling of *דִּיר* and Ps 102.¹¹³

II. *The Text and/in the Church*

An important turn came about sometime in Childs’s career, when he felt that, despite all of the import that midrash possessed for a theological reading of the Old Testament, it would not suffice.¹¹⁴

Above, Childs’s appreciation of Seeligmann was in need of a crucial nuance – namely, that midrash as a category for understanding the Old Testament’s growth and theological force was not able adequately to reckon with the text’s relationship to its proper ‘subject matter’. It was this very subject matter that was at work in the Old Testament’s exertion of pressure on Israel’s successive generations. In a central statement on the matter, Childs writes:

Seeligmann has described a process of interpretation within scripture which he correctly derived from a consciousness of canon (*Kanonbewusstsein*)...Although such exegetical activity grew out of a concept of the canon as an established body of sacred writings, it is a derivative phenomenon which does not represent the constitutive force lying behind the actual canonical process. Rather, the decisive force at work in the formation of the canon emerged in the transmission of a divine word in such a form as to lay authoritative claim upon the successive generations.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ Cf. Childs’s similar language in response to Gottwald *Tribes of Yahweh*. It was perhaps the buried endnote in that work (794n.598), accusing Childs of falling into his own trap of biblical theology, that prompted Childs’s reply, judging Gottwald’s work to be ‘a massive theological reductionism’, ultimately rendering ‘the uniquely biblical witness mute’, and finally destroying ‘the need for closely hearing the text on its verbal level’. See Childs, *Old Testament Theology*, 25. Gottwald subsequently, and to his credit charitably, replied, ‘Social Matrix’, 310ff.

¹¹² Childs, ‘Retrospective Reading’, 372.

¹¹³ Cf. Childs, ‘Analysis’, 363. With reference to ‘Adaptation’, Childs also critiques certain misuses of ‘Midrash’ in Old Testament scholarship, though I exempt this section from the present discussion; it will be addressed below, in the context of text-text v. text-res interpretation.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Driver, *Childs*, 184ff.

¹¹⁵ Childs, *Introduction*, 60.

The 'constitutive force' behind the rising 'Kanonbewußtsein' in Old Testament formation was something other than the purely material circumstances of a literary setting growing in fixation. The divine word (of promise) pressed itself in an ontological manner only suggested in the Chronicler's work above.¹¹⁶

Childs's foray into the canonical processes at work in New Testament formation brought the difference to the fore, where a huge differentiation is made, 'Crucial to Jewish midrash is a particular hermeneutical understanding of the biblical text which implied not only a closed corpus of canonical literature, but a dogmatic construal of the written text's relation to Jewish oral tradition'.¹¹⁷ Though the relation of 'written' to 'oral' Torah, and what it implies for the nature of an emergent midrashic activity, cannot be dealt with here,¹¹⁸ Childs's conclusion from the statement is noteworthy, 'Jewish midrash is text-oriented in a very different manner from that of early Christianity'.¹¹⁹ Childs *qua* Christian Old Testament theologian feels it to be a matter of theological integrity to interpret the Old Testament from a position that regards Christian tradition to be of positive import. The context of the move bears revisiting.

II.1 Childs and Yeago: Appropriating Trinitarian Categories

Childs often speaks of 'the coercion or pressure of the biblical text itself' upon the interpreter.¹²⁰ On the surface we might read this kind of affirmation to stem from our previous section, relating to the theological nature of the 'text itself'.¹²¹ Yet for Childs the coercion clearly comes from without.

¹¹⁶ Childs's position here appears to stand somewhere between classical Protestantism's understanding of Scripture as deriving its authority from a pressure exerted from within the text itself, and Catholicism's (and Orthodoxy's) emphasis on ecclesial recognition and sanctioning of these texts as authoritative. Cf. Jenson, 'Hermeneutics and the Life of the Church', 89-90.

¹¹⁷ Childs, *New Testament*, 491.

¹¹⁸ See Sommer's excellent contribution, 'Oral and Written Torahs'. Cf. Satlow, 'Oral Torah'.

¹¹⁹ Childs, *New Testament as Canon*, 491. I owe the specific citation here to Driver, *Childs*, 187.

¹²⁰ Childs, 'Recovering', 17. Note both the definite article (*the* coercion'), as well as the reflexive pronoun (*the text itself*): Childs appears to have something very concrete in mind at this point, though his reliance on Yeago would confusingly suggest the opposite.

¹²¹ Childs perhaps leans upon Reformation theology for a basic interpretive structure, as seen in his equation of 'the traditional Christian understanding' with 'classic Reformed and Lutheran dogmatics' with no qualification given, in his 'Speech-Act Theory', 378. Cf. Seitz, *Character*, 68-9. Whatever the relationship between Reformation contexts and historical inquiry (liberal protestant Lutheranism certainly entertained these interests), a rough analogue can be traced between *sola scriptura* and the insistence on the text *itself* as carrying meaning. Akin to *sola scriptura*, Childs maintains that 'the text is the tradent of authority' for Christian interpretation ('Retrospective Reading', 375). That Childs was equally able to critique certain

Childs uses the phrase ‘coercion’ in praise of David Yeago’s ‘New Testament and Nicene Dogma’, a sophisticated attempt to relate the New Testament (specifically the Christ Hymn of Phil 2.6-11) to later Nicene Dogma.¹²² Rather than regard later ecclesial formulations as extrinsic additions to the text itself, as a product of the ‘dead hand of dogma’,¹²³ Yeago suggests that a return to some central epistemological considerations may curb certain hermeneutical, rhetorical excesses of ‘Modernity’. In particular, Yeago seeks to elucidate the relationship of ‘judgments’ and ‘concepts’.¹²⁴ Judgments act as the ‘Gestalt’, or the expression of apprehension, while concepts are subsidiary and instrumental to judgments.¹²⁵ Concepts are contingent, and judgments are terminal. One important implication of this relationship is that any number or variety of concepts can serve a singular judgment: there is always the ‘possibility of valid alternative verbal/ conceptual renderings’ of an ‘identical judgment’.¹²⁶ Thus, in relation to Phil 2.6ff. and later Nicaean formulation, for example, ‘it is not at all odd or naive to claim that they “say the same thing” about Jesus and the Father’.¹²⁷

Unity of subject matter over Old and New Testaments must, therefore, be sought at the level of judgments – the key question being what judgments the Old Testament’s differing contexts and language indeed make on their own terms.¹²⁸ The failure for Old Testament scholarship to adequately carry out this task was for Childs an enduring frustration with the older ‘Biblical Theology Movement’, which carried more interest in seeking to correspond Old Testament language (at the level of concepts) with theological tenets (at the level of judgments) of Christian Theology. The movement never seriously

Reformation proclivities (namely, the denigration of Tradition for the sake of Scripture) is seen in his ‘Canonical Shape’, 53.

Other have picked up on Childs’s language of ‘coercion’ and its role for interpretation. See, notably, Seitz, *Figured Out*; idem., *Word Without End*; idem., *Prophecy and Hermeneutics*; Rowe, ‘Trinitarian Hermeneutics’. Rowe, lamentably, provides New Testament texts, and Old Testament texts cited in the New Testament, as his examples, and so does not immediately aid the question of interpreting the *Old* Testament as Scripture.

¹²² Yeago, ‘New Testament’, 87-100. The chapter was originally published in *PE* 3 (1994), 152-64, alongside Childs’s ‘Recovering’. I will cite from the former.

¹²³ Yeago, ‘New Testament’, 87.

¹²⁴ Yeago does not mention Kant in the essay – a surprising gap, given that the relationship of judgments to concepts, similar to the relationship of ‘noumena’ to ‘phenomena’ as well as ‘reason’ (‘Vernunft’) to ‘understanding’ (‘Verstand’), are Kantian concerns, perhaps given their last full-scale treatment in Kant’s *Critiques*.

¹²⁵ Yeago, ‘New Testament’, 93.

¹²⁶ Yeago, ‘New Testament’, 93. Cf. Jenson, ‘Trinity’, 329-30.

¹²⁷ Yeago, ‘New Testament’, 95.

¹²⁸ For the classic defense of this position, one may note K. Barth’s first two prefaces to his *Römerbrief*.

reckoned with what it was these concepts were talking about in the first place (i.e., the text's *judgments*, its subject matter).¹²⁹ Consequently, in his *Old Testament Theology*, Childs sought 'to move from the biblical witness (*verbum*) to its theological subject matter (*res*) within the confines of the Hebrew Bible'.¹³⁰

The process is fundamentally a dialectical one, by which the interpreter is constantly pressured to account for the various levels on which, and contexts within which, Scripture is able to function:

[C]onfronting the subject matter of the two discrete witnesses creates a necessity for the interpreter to encounter the biblical text from the full knowledge of the subject matter gained from hearing the voices of both Testaments. The interpreter now proceeds in a direction which moves from the reality itself back to the textual witness. The central point to emphasize is that the biblical text itself exerts theological pressure on the reader, demanding that the reality which undergirds the two witnesses not be held apart and left fragmented, but rather critically reunited.¹³¹

The theological interpreter strains to hear what shared 'judgments' emerge when careful attention is given to the discrete 'conceptual' expressions of Old and New testaments. This becomes 'the reality itself', the *res* which is thus governed by, *but which also governs*, the textual witness. Textual witness to the reality behind the text – we might say an 'ontic' trinitarianism¹³² – and the inverted move from this reality back to the textual witness provides a general rubric for Childs's dialectical reading the Old Testament as Christian Scripture.

Again, to speak of the Old Testament's 'Christuszeugnis' is to seek to carry out this dialectical movement. It is not a move to and fro between text and dogma, as if there were such a simple bifurcation in the first place; rather, the very notion of 'Scripture' carries a broad sense which includes both the historical demarcation of included books, *as well as* the history of the text's reception, redaction, and theological shaping for future generations.¹³³ Childs's last work proposed the same model for understanding the Pauline Corpus:

¹²⁹ So Childs, *Biblical Theology in Crisis*, 51-87.

¹³⁰ Childs, *Old Testament Theology*. The assessment is found in Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 101. Indeed, at one point, Childs adopts an unusual first-person tone in a sweeping rhetorical series of affirmations (*Old Testament Theology*, 28-9).

¹³¹ Childs, 'Recovering', 24.

¹³² Childs did not speak of an 'ontic trinitarianism' as such, but did speak of an 'ontic interpretation', an 'ontic dimension', and an 'ontic reality' at work in the formation of the Old and New testaments. See his *Biblical Theology*, 385, 416, 521.

¹³³ With reference to the book of Isaiah, see Childs, *Isaiah*, 3, 'By the term *canon* I am not merely addressing its formal scope, but including the quality of the theological testimony identified with the prophet Isaiah'.

Throughout the preceding chapters I have used the word 'canon' in its broadest sense. Canon is not just a listing of received books, but involves the process by which the letters of Paul were received, collected, transmitted, and shaped by the early apostolic church. *In other words, it includes philological, historical, literary, and theological dimensions.*¹³⁴

Thus to demarcate history and theology as hermetic approaches to Scripture, or to dig an ugly ditch between text and dogma, is not proper to the material itself. The conviction led Childs to critique Kähler's distinction of 'Historie' and 'Geschichte'. According to Childs, Kähler 'sensed the church's unique, confessional, kerygmatic understanding of its sacred traditions, testified to in Scripture', but did not adequately 'pursue the relation of sacred and secular history'.¹³⁵ Sacred and secular, 'Geschichte' and 'Historie', are interrelated in the biblical texts (Old and New alike) in such a way as to render their separation a harmful undertaking.¹³⁶ For this reason, we find the necessity of dialectical reading, where the categories are mutually informative:

It is not only possible, but actually mandatory for any serious Christian theological reflection. Because Scripture performs different functions according to differing contexts, a multi-level reading is required even to begin to grapple with the full range of Scripture's role as the intentional medium of continuing divine revelation.¹³⁷

The approach of Childs here is to interpret the Old Testament in a way that honors the theological nature of the text as Scripture (whether as a literary phenomenon, in the Synagogue, or in the Church), and in a way that countenances with integrity ('any serious Christian theological reflection') the pre-reality of the immanent, ontic presence of the triune God, *within which* the Bible is viewed as Christian Scripture.¹³⁸ In this way Childs stands close to similar concerns within 'systematic' theology.¹³⁹

¹³⁴ See Childs, *Reading Paul*, 253 (emph. added).

¹³⁵ Childs, *Reading Paul*, 13. Cf. Kähler, *Der sogenannte historische Jesus*. The critique is also leveled against Bultmann (*History and Eschatology*, 127).

¹³⁶ Childs, 'Barth as Interpreter of Scripture', 56, 'I don't see how you can avoid a dialectic between text and reality, in some sort'.

¹³⁷ Childs, 'Recovering', 24.

¹³⁸ The implications of Childs's 'ontological' reading of the Old Testament for Jewish-Christian dialogue have been addressed at length, often by Childs himself. See his 'Recovering', 26. Cf. Levenson, *Hebrew Bible*, 104.

¹³⁹ Jenson draws upon Irenaeus' *Against Heresies* for construing a unified, divine reality over both testaments. Jenson depends in good measure upon Rahner (*Systematic Theology*, I:139), and a close identification of the immanent and economic Trinity (*Systematic Theology*, I:59). His particular narrational approach runs into problems, or at least perplexities (what does 'the Son appears as a narrative pattern of Israel's created human story before he can appear as an individual Israelite within that story' actually mean? *Systematic Theology*, I:141; also, I:138ff.). Cf.

There are reasons why we might fail to feel the force of Yeago's arguments for critical Old Testament study.¹⁴⁰ But at least as pertains to Yeago, his comments on judgments and concepts provide Childs with a theoretical framework within which legitimate readings the Old Testament from an explicitly theological perspective are validated. If, for example, the Church affirms that the godhead is fully known only in its Triune relationships – i.e. a theological *judgment* – this will need to be related to the *judgments* behind Old Testament kerygmatic affirmations regarding the nature of Yahweh – e.g. that he alone is Yahweh (Isa 40.12ff.; cf. Deut 6.4), that he demands complete and sacrificial obedience (Gen 22), etc. – and not merely to the Old Testament *conceptual* expressions of these judgments.¹⁴¹

One may simply compare the epistemological categories of Yeago with the contention of Childs that a theological hermeneutic should seek 'to analyze structural similarities and dissimilarities between the witnesses of both Testaments'. Childs suggests that, 'in terms of an understanding of God', 'a comparison is made, but not just on a conceptual level...[A] *theological relationship is pursued both on the level of textual witness and that of the discrete subject matter (res) of the two collections*'.¹⁴² Textual witness may stand for 'concepts', and discrete subject matter for 'judgments'. The contention cuts two ways; on the one hand, it seeks to overcome those models of Old Testament interpretation that stop at the conceptual disciplines of philology, linguistics, archaeology, etc., for, in Yeago, we find the simple observation that all knowledge proceeds along lines of judgments (i.e. a familiar face is recognized as a person, rather than as a conglomerate of physical features¹⁴³): none are exempt from the subordination of concepts to judgments.¹⁴⁴ On the other hand,

Crisp, 'The Pre-Existence of Christ'. Despite some sharp criticisms (Hart, 'Divine Impassibility', 188ff.), Jenson represents a serious attempt to reckon with the kind of economic-immanent association that Childs suggests. Cf. also Lindbeck, 'Story Shaped Church'. For a registered differentiation with Lindbeck, see Jenson, *Systematic Theology*, I:18n.43.

¹⁴⁰ Most notable of which is that it does not (alongside Rowe, 'Trinitarian Hermeneutics') address the question of the *Old Testament*, which is a much more difficult topic, in his terms, than the New.

¹⁴¹ Jenson, 'Trinity in the Bible', 329-30. Yeago ('New Testament', 95-6) criticizes Dunn's *Christology in the Making*, 114-21, for failing properly to coordinate judgments and concepts in this way.

¹⁴² Childs, 'Recovering', 23 (emph. added).

¹⁴³ Cf. Louth, *Discerning*, 61. Drawing on Polanyi's *Knowing and Being*, 123-180, Louth notes that Polanyi 'normativized' this kind of knowledge across all disciplines, even the hard sciences, 'Polanyi's bow towards Dilthey suggests that what is really involved in knowing is better grasped in the humanities than in the sciences...' (64).

¹⁴⁴ Though Childs does not entertain this line of thought in his 'Recovering', he does elsewhere shown an appreciation for Gadamer, for whom this general epistemological critique

positively, Childs's model for reading opens the possibility of a shared subject matter between the testaments, by essentially recasting what we construe to be the text's *sensus literalis* – if all Old Testament concepts are subject to judgments, then there is no simple, *prima facie* 'literal sense' to Scripture; for, to assume this would be to honor only half of the act of knowing. The *sensus literalis* is not easily equated with the *sensus historicus*¹⁴⁵ – indeed, for Childs, it is not easily equated with any concrete conceptual mode of knowing.¹⁴⁶ As above, with reference to the Chronicler, certain judgments (i.e. the ontological question of the 'Word of God') imbue the texts in such a way as to force biblical interpretation to move beyond mere *prolegomena*.¹⁴⁷

II.2 Childs and Allegory: From 'Ontological Plane' to Trinitarian 'Res'

Above I have presented Childs's plea that the abiding ontological dimension of Old Testament texts be seriously handled. As Driver has noted, throughout the 1990s Childs developed this aspect of the Old Testament's textual nature, through an extension into Christian dogmatic categories. In terms of a two-testament canon, Childs finds that the *Christian* Old Testament scholar will, at some point, be compelled to address the ontological 'Sache' as something with existential relevance to later Christological formulations. In sum, the 'Sache' is not altered from its Old Testament context, but extended forward into a Christian frame of reference; where once Yahweh was regarded in the light of Israel's reflection on her past experience, this experience is now carried forward into the early church, and with it, Yahweh's identity. But Childs is clear that this identity is not seen as a gradual unfolding through time, reaching its climax in the New Testament; rather, the dramatic nature of the Christ-event to a large

functioned as the crux of his *Truth and Method*. Cf. Driver, *Childs*, 287; Fowl, 'Canonical Approach'; Noble, *Critical Reconstruction*, 219-22. Driver's emphasis, with Childs, on Scripture's 'inner logic' can lead him to (questionably) dismiss Gadamer as 'not integral' to elucidating a properly canonical approach (*Childs*, 53n.85).

¹⁴⁵ In his *Struggle* (167-80), Childs notes Nicholas of Lyra (1270-1349) to be a scholastic example of one highly interested in the *sensus literalis* of the Old Testament, though able to include the *sensus spiritualis* under that heading. See Childs, *Struggle*, 178.

¹⁴⁶ Pace Louth (*Discerning*, via Gadamer), this is not a problem unique to Modernity. Childs notes the tendency in Jerome to disintegrate Scripture's *skopos* by dislocating interpretive observations from one another. White, *Jerome and Augustine*, gives a helpful account of the disagreements over this dislocation in the correspondences of Jerome and Augustine. White's is a translation of Schimid, *Hieronimi et Aurelii Augustini*.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Childs, *Introduction*, 654-55.

extent *reinterprets* what came before. In relation to Old Testament interpretation alone, Childs writes:

Historical critical reconstructions can aid the interpreter in understanding Israel's own witness by seeing how its witness to the content of its experience with God over generations led to a reshaping of its faith in a manner often very different from the actual historical development, at times overriding, subordinating or recasting the noetic sequence in the light of a new and more profound ontic interpretation of the ways of God with Israel.¹⁴⁸

This phenomenon has been seen above, in terms of midrash, Psalm titles, and the 'theocentricity' of the redactional processes at work in Old Testament formation. But Childs will stress that there is significance, indeed pressure, to open the avenue even wider, extending the categories to incorporate Christian dogmatics. The move is significant, for not only does it subtly (or drastically) change the shape of Old Testament interpretation, but it moves Childs away from 'midrash' as an adequate category for understanding the Old Testament in its fullness, and presses the Christian theological interpreter to adopt some understanding of 'allegory'. This is not an arbitrary move, in the mind of Childs, for a crucial differentiation is at work between midrash and allegory, the latter manifest in the early Church's reading of the Old Testament.

While there is undoubtedly a good deal of the Old Testament that is midrashic, Childs is concerned to point out that the post-biblical reception of the Old Testament parted ways between Synagogue and Church. In the context of post-biblical Judaism, midrash approaches the Old Testament as full of surface level tensions whose resolution is sought 'through a strategy provided by intertextual readings'.¹⁴⁹ Childs finds this understanding of midrash present in two modern Jewish scholars, James Kugel and Daniel Boyarin, both of whom uphold the text as somehow originally 'hidden and ambiguous', with its truth being 'only later revealed through continual interpretation'.¹⁵⁰ Indeed, for Boyarin, midrash engages a text that is by nature 'gapped and dialogical',¹⁵¹ a reading that understands midrash to be 'a response to a genuine textual stimulus' of ambiguity.¹⁵² Again, midrash attempts to bridge this gap, or to resolve tensions present in the text. As Childs understands it, it engages

¹⁴⁸ Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 416. Cf. *ibid.*, 385, on Israel's affirmation of Yahweh as 'Creator'.

¹⁴⁹ Childs, 'Critique', 181-82.

¹⁵⁰ Childs, 'Critique', 181. See Kugel, 'Two Introductions'; Boyarin, *Intertextuality*.

¹⁵¹ Boyarin, *Intertextuality*, 16.

¹⁵² Boyarin, 'Dialectic of Midrash', 41.

‘surface irregularities’ as a problem to be resolved; it handles biblical verses, and not books; and it ‘remains concrete in its focus in moving between two texts...’.¹⁵³ As such, it is a ‘horizontal’ activity – not in any pejorative sense, but in the simple understanding of it as ‘a dialectical movement of the self with another, and between the past and the present’.¹⁵⁴ Elsewhere he has summarized it, ‘...bewirkt das jüdische Verständnis der Rolle der mündlichen Tradition als eines massgeblichen Kommentars zur schriftlichen Tradition eine sehr unterschiedliche Dynamik gegenüber der des Christentums (in Gestalt des Midrasch)’.¹⁵⁵

This is not to say that midrash in the Old Testament is devoid of ‘vertical’ concerns – indeed, the whole point up to this point has been to show that the growth and development of the Old Testament in terms of midrash has relied chiefly on the ontological continuity between Israel’s successive generations – a continuity grounded ‘firmly in the unitary nature of God’.¹⁵⁶ But in Childs’s estimation, the extension of that kind of claim into the post-biblical period draws a decisive line between Judaism and Christianity. Indeed, from the point of view of the Church, Childs felt a certain disconnect, and could assert that ‘there can be no direct adaptation of the midrashic method’.¹⁵⁷ As he would develop the notion, Childs finds the dividing line to differentiate between ‘discerning meaning through the interaction of two written texts’ (i.e. midrash), and finding meaning ‘by moving to another level beyond the textual’.¹⁵⁸

This second move, in ‘its broadest sense’, is allegory, and concerns the relation of disparate texts in terms of appeal to a third party, as it were. This will extend the phenomenon already observed in the composition of the Old Testament toward Christian theological affirmations. Childs writes of allegory,

¹⁵³ Childs, ‘Critique’, 182.

¹⁵⁴ Childs, ‘Critique’, 182.

¹⁵⁵ Childs, ‘Jüdischen Kanons’, 275.

¹⁵⁶ Chapman, *Law and Prophets*, 284.

¹⁵⁷ Childs, ‘Psalm Titles’, 149.

¹⁵⁸ Childs, ‘Critique’, 182-83. Childs originally could affirm that certain New Testament practices resembled ‘a typical midrashic technique’ (*Biblical Theology in Crisis*, 116), but would later sense the difference more acutely. On the New Testament he writes, ‘[S]ein Zeugnis gründet in der Begegnung der Evangelisten mit Jesus Christus als dem auferstandenen Herrn. Das Neue Testament ist kein Midrasch zum Alten Testament’ (‘Biblische Theologie’, 2). Though no conjunction is given, we would not be amiss to think of a ‘darum’ between the clauses. Surprisingly, Childs is able to praise Bultmann for his identification of the Old Testament ‘als ein Zeugnis des Scheiterns’, even if the latter failed to appreciate the dialectical movement between this early ‘Zeugnis’ and its resourcing of the Old Testament for its self-understanding. Cf. the critique of Bultmann in *Biblical Theology*, 76-77).

that it 'seeks to discern meaning by relating [the level of the textual] referentially to a substance (*res*), a rule of faith, of a hidden eschatological event'. It operates 'within a larger Christological structure'.¹⁵⁹

In the light of the comment, when Childs will speak of 'intertextuality', he will have in mind the relation of texts through that which Christian theology deems Scripture's deepest 'Sache'.¹⁶⁰ In a sense, this need not stand in opposition to the theological trajectory of the Old Testament, for those texts, as Childs has outlined their development, are by nature open to future adaptation and appropriation;¹⁶¹ the fact that the early Church developed its self-understanding and its knowledge of God (/Christ/Holy Spirit) primarily from this Old Testament suggests that the earliest Christian theology, at least, sought to carry forward this reality of Yahweh's ongoing continuity throughout discrete historical dispensations.¹⁶² In a compact paragraph from his 'Biblical Theological Reflections on Reconciliation', Childs places his finger on the intersection he is seeking to locate:

Although the doctrine of the Trinity is not fully developed in either of the testaments, the question arises to what extent theological reflections on both testaments respecting reconciliation can be adequately understood without recourse to trinitarian terminology. It was exactly to grapple with both the noetic and ontic dimensions of God's reconciliation in Jesus Christ that the church appealed to the language of both an 'economic' and 'immanent' Trinity. Once it is fully understood that biblical reflection is not merely descriptive on the level of the witness, but that it involves the effort to explore the relation between witness and substance, then the theological naivety [sic] of the widespread criticism of the use of trinitarian language as a category foreign to scripture becomes fully apparent. The crucial issue rather turns on how well the categories are applied. What does it mean, for example, that 'the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world' (Rev. 13.8), or that we have been elected in Christ from all eternity (Eph. 1.4)?¹⁶³

The questions posed here are surely more than rhetorical, but something less than conclusive. To approach the question is to grapple with the ongoing

¹⁵⁹ Childs, 'Critique', 183.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Rowe, 'Trinitarian Hermeneutics', who seeks to overcome that paradigm 'that would destroy the connection between the reality to whom the Bible testifies and the reality whom the church worships'. At the root of the issue, Rowe writes, '[T]he question of trinitarian interpretation of Scripture turns out to be essentially bound up with the divine referent of Scripture' (297).

¹⁶¹ Cf. Childs, *Struggle*, 184.

¹⁶² Childs, 'Biblische Theologie', 22.

¹⁶³ Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 521.

'struggle' of what is entailed in reading the Old Testament as Scripture.¹⁶⁴ For Childs, the early Church's view of the nature of the Old Testament's relation to the ontic Christ, by virtue of its preserved canonical setting, is itself authoritative for how the present interpreter approaches the Old Testament:

[T]he identity of the earthly Jesus and the exalted Christ was understood and interpreted by the New Testament by means of its use of the Old Testament. The early church appealed to the Old Testament as an authentic witness to the true nature and divine office of Christ as king, Son of God, and Redeemer which had been promised beforehand by the prophets (Rom. 1.2). Jesus was an earthly descendent [*sic*] of David, but designated Son of God by his resurrection (Rom. 1.4). Indeed, the resurrected Christ is portrayed by Luke as chiding the disciples for failing to understand and to believe all that had been plainly spoken of him by the prophets (Luke 24.25ff.). In sum, to speak of Christ's ontic and noetic revelation is a non-biblical formulation, but the formulation does correctly describe a central biblical stance toward the identity of Jesus as the exalted Christ.¹⁶⁵

Childs will find this precedent to be authoritative for present-day theological interpretation; he will also, it is important to note, regard this move of the early church to have read alongside the grain of the Old Testament, and not against it, '[W]hen the interpreter moves from the reality of God manifest in action back to the Scriptures themselves for further illumination of the divine economy, he or she is constrained to listen for a new song *which breaks forth from the same ancient, sacred texts*'.¹⁶⁶

The result affects a construal of the *sensus literalis*. In surveying the history of the Christian endeavor to read the Old Testament as Scripture, Childs engages Luther and Calvin (among others) as examples of what the literal sense came to represent through the Reformation. For Luther, a battle against scholastic interpretation sought to uphold and highlight the literal sense of the text, '*scripturae sanctae simplicem sensus [sic]*'. Childs writes, 'Still Luther continued to speak of a spiritual meaning which was not isolated from its literal sense, but rather was an understanding which grasped the true substance of the witness, namely Christ as the righteousness of God for salvation'.¹⁶⁷ Similarly, Calvin, for whom the literal sense concerned an author's intention, could yet find the literal sense to encompass much more:

¹⁶⁴ Childs, *Struggle*, 299ff.

¹⁶⁵ Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 466.

¹⁶⁶ Childs, 'Recovering', 24 (emph. added). Childs, 'Reflections on an Era', 34, could even write of 'the New Testament's understanding of the authoritative function of the Old Testament, which has been continually transformed by the Spirit into the law of Christ'.

¹⁶⁷ Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 45.

Although the literal sense is insufficient apart from the Spirit, Calvin does not distinguish a spiritual sense from the literal as if it belonged to a second stage of interpretation... The task of the biblical interpreter [for Calvin] is to pursue the subject matter of Scripture, the *scopus* of which is Jesus Christ. The theologian aids in this endeavour by ordering the material according to the church's rule-of-faith, and thus keeping the biblical interpreter from distraction or confusion.¹⁶⁸

Rather succinctly, Childs has summed up the relation of the literal sense to its deepest subject matter, in such a way that the two are inseparable.¹⁶⁹ At a Yale colloquium addressing Karl Barth and the future of theology, Childs contributes the following in the summarizing discussion:

...You see, when you read Calvin, he fights against the whole medieval tradition by saying it's the *sensus literalis* that counts – it's the literal sense – and you have page after page against the whole church dogma. But then you read Calvin on the Old Testament, and here's Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ. How could it possibly be? And everybody just says that Calvin is just inconsistent.

It seems to me that this doesn't at all touch the heart of the problem: that for Calvin, the *sensus literalis* is Jesus Christ. And it was only when you have the eighteenth century identification of the literal sense with the historical sense that you're just hopelessly lost...¹⁷⁰

The use of Isa 6.10 in Jn 12.40-41 is illuminating. John sets the use of Isa 6.9-10 in the context of Jesus' signs, and generally adheres to the sense of the MT's phrasing, verbs, etc.¹⁷¹ This is given as grounds for the reality that they were not able to believe Jesus' signs (διὰ τοῦτο οὐκ ἠδύναντο πιστεῦειν), and by extension, believe in him (v.37; cf. 4.48). John goes a step further (v.41), making an editorial comment that links Isa 6 and Jesus' sign ministry, 'ταῦτα εἶπεν Ἡσαΐας ὅτι εἶδεν τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐλάλησεν περὶ αὐτοῦ'.¹⁷² Childs is aware of the rather deflated model of reading that traditional Christian exegesis has assigned to v.41's wording, 'as if the New Testament were supplying the real object of the prophetic vision – Jesus Christ – unfortunately missed by the Old Testament'.¹⁷³ He rather follows Calvin, who comments upon וַיִּרְאֶה אֶת־אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה:

[I]t is wrong, I think, to limit this, as some do, to the person of Christ; for it is indefinitely, on the contrary, that the Prophet calls him God.

¹⁶⁸ Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 49.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. Seitz, *Figured Out*, 47.

¹⁷⁰ Childs, 'Barth as Interpreter of Scripture', 52-53. Cf. Childs, *Struggle*, 210-12.

¹⁷¹ The Gospel writers adopted Isa 6 in various, fascinating ways (Matt 13.10ff.; Mark 4.10ff.; Luke 8.9ff.; John 12:37ff.). Cf. Hartley, *Wisdom Background*; Evans, *To See and Not Perceive*, 81-135; Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, 15ff.

¹⁷² Cf. Jn 1.14. Here, ἐθεασάμεθα replaces εἶδεν, though in light of 1 Jn 1.1, this does not appear to be a significant difference.

¹⁷³ Childs, *Isaiah*, 60.

Not do their views derive any support from the word אֱלֹהִים, which seems particularly to apply to Christ; for it is often applied to God in an absolute and unrestricted manner. In this passage, therefore, God is mentioned indefinitely, and yet it is correctly said that Isaiah saw the glory of Christ, for at that very time he was the image of the invisible God (Col. 1.15).¹⁷⁴

Calvin avoids any shallow one-to-one correspondence, either between אֱלֹהִים and Χριστός, or between the *trisagion* and later Trinitarian formulation. Calvin rather appears sensitively to appreciate the openness of the Old Testament ('an absolute and unrestricted manner') by which the Trinity may be regarded in and behind the text.

If the text is transparent, and its 'Sache' / 'res' / *sensus literalis*, is Jesus Christ, then what might we retain from Modernity's accomplishment of critical historical distancing? Specific to our purposes, if Childs has moved the relation of the Old and New Testaments away from a purely linear, chronological model of fulfillment, toward a morphological fit according to the 'Sache' of God's triune revelation (immanently and economically), then what might still be said, *positively*, of the Old Testament's abiding, discrete witness?

Childs feels the tension inherent to this struggle, and so proposes a 'multi-level approach to Scripture', that seeks to embody 'the ability of exegesis to illuminate the full range of the sense of the text while holding together witness and subject matter in a unity commensurate with its canonical function'. The statement is sufficiently dense in its formulation; perhaps for this reason Childs gives three entry points, 'avenues', by which this statement may be enacted. These are not, it should be stressed, subsequent modes of reading, since Childs is aware that '[t]here is no single hermeneutical principle which would establish a fixed temporal order in exegesis or which would prioritize one entrance into the text'.¹⁷⁵ No prior constructed framework can satisfy the task of theological reading.¹⁷⁶

First, Childs stresses that it is essential to allow the Old Testament to speak in accordance with its 'historical, literary, and canonical context', for to fail to do so would be to 'distort the testimony and to drown out the Old

¹⁷⁴ Calvin, *Isaiah 1-32*, 201.

¹⁷⁵ 'Recovering', 22. Cf. Driver, *Childs*, 229ff. This is remarkably close to Barth's proposal of 'Schrifterklärung', consisting of *explicatio*, *meditatio*, and *applicatio*. See Barth, *CD I.2*, 722-740 (§21.2.3-5).

¹⁷⁶ For Childs, to speak in terms of 'dialectic' signals the difficulty of the interpretive endeavor. Cf. his *Biblical Theology*, 99.

Testament's own voice'.¹⁷⁷ This would resemble an appreciation of a traditional understanding of Scripture's *sensus literalis*, in terms of its *sensus historicus*.¹⁷⁸ Second, as an *extension* of this original witness,¹⁷⁹ the theological interpreter looks for 'structural similarities and dissimilarities' between Old and New Testaments, ultimately seeking an exegetical and theological 'relationship of content'.¹⁸⁰ The obvious difficulty with this second step is the proclivity to collapse one testament into another, thus flattening the discrete witness of each; to solve the difficulty, Childs defines the task in broad, general terms, as the engagement of a 'theological enterprise' in which 'neither witness is absorbed by the other, nor are their contents fused'.¹⁸¹ Third, there is the Christian theological affirmation of the divine unity over both testaments of Scripture; if the second avenue stressed the mutually-informing relationship of Old and New Testaments as concerns a shared subject matter, the third presses for a unity of this subject matter (two and three, it would appear, are two sides of the same coin).¹⁸² This last contention immediately informs the nature of the Old Testament as a transparent text.

What is important to note is that Childs has found these three moves to be, in reality, 'a single method of interpretation', yet one that 'takes seriously both the differing dimensions constituting the biblical text and the distinct contexts in which the text operates'.¹⁸³ There is something of a dialectic at work between the singularity of approach, and the manifold processes that any approach requires; put succinctly, what does a single approach look like, that concomitantly upholds a *sensus historicus* (*/originalis*),¹⁸⁴ an extension of this recorded content (and its form), and the strain to hear a commonality of subject matter across both testaments? What enduring value and witness does Childs's

¹⁷⁷ 'Recovering', 22-23.

¹⁷⁸ Childs spends considerable time distancing himself from this easy conflation, arguing that the *sensus literalis* was in fact evoked by Israel's central theological experience and proclamation, and so could not be divorced from this theological dimension ('Recovering', 23). See also Childs, 'Sensus Literalis', 89; idem., 'Scripture of the Church', 721; Noble, *Critical Reconstruction*, 307-8. The relation of the *sensus literalis* to the *sensus historicus* is thoroughly treated in Frei, *Eclipse* (esp. 1-16). Cf. idem., *Types*, 124ff., where the 'literal sense' is cast in terms of 'first-' and 'second-order' statements/appraisals, very much akin to Yeago's categories.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. *Biblical Theology*, 87.

¹⁸⁰ Childs, 'Recovering', 23.

¹⁸¹ Childs, 'Recovering', 23.

¹⁸² Childs, 'Recovering', 23.

¹⁸³ Childs, 'Recovering', 22.

¹⁸⁴ On the Reformation's use and interchange of these terms, see Childs, 'Sensus Literalis', 89. For an extended (critical) treatment of Childs on this score, see Noble, *Critical Reconstruction*, 306-313.

'first' avenue possess, if avenues 'two' and 'three' are to be simultaneously enacted?

III. *Isaiah as Exemplary: 'The Brittle Quality of the Present Literary Structure'*

What remains to be seen is how the majority of assertions above, regarding the Old Testament and theological interpretation, applies to the book of Isaiah in particular. The prophets have already been addressed, and Isaiah is no exception to the outlines given there. But Isaiah *does* provide particularly striking examples of the application of those earlier notions.

Childs's opens his *Isaiah* with a brief *apologia* for his project – the obvious question is why another Isaiah commentary should be required in the wake of numerous similar projects that have recently appeared. Childs's finds that despite the resurgence of interest in the book at the close of the 20th century, 'tremendous confusion still reigns regarding virtually every serious problem of interpretation'.¹⁸⁵ The aim of the commentary is not to provide a highly technical treatment of the various layers and developments of Isaianic literature; Childs notes that this has already been done in Wildberger, Elliger, Oswalt and Barthélemy.¹⁸⁶ It is, rather, to supply a 'fresh interpretive model that does not get lost in methodological debates, and that proves to be illuminating in rendering a rich and coherent interpretation of the text as sacred scripture of both church and synagogue'.¹⁸⁷

Childs hopes that his commentary will avoid the 'deleterious effect' of sharply demarcating the book into two or three components, which directly affects the book's ability to function as enduringly important for 'both Jews and Christians'.¹⁸⁸ Even so, redaction criticism receives a high praise in the 'Introduction'. While form-critical study of Isaiah did much to articulate the

¹⁸⁵ Childs, *Isaiah*, xi.

¹⁸⁶ Childs probably has in mind the BKAT publications of Wildberger, *Jesaja 1-12*; idem., *Jesaja 13-27*; idem., *Jesaja 28-39*; and Elliger, *Deuterocesaja*. Also, Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle*; Oswalt, *Isaiah 1-39*; idem., *Isaiah 40-66*. It is curious that Childs affords Oswalt this measure of praise, given Williamson's critique of the commentary, in his review of Oswalt, 380.

¹⁸⁷ Childs, *Isaiah*, xi. It is a major criticism of the commentary, that despite the reference to 'both church and synagogue', and a subsequent reference to Isaiah's 'enduring importance for both Jews and Christians', Jewish tradition, scholarship (ancient and modern) and liturgy play no role in the commentary; indeed, these seemingly charitable prefatory comments do not bear out in any exegesis to follow. On my reading, there are only three passing comments, on pp. 18, 30 and 198 to modern Judaism, and though there are references throughout the commentary to the 'Jews', or to 'Jewish' features of the text and its referents, these are set in antiquity, along with the commentary's sole reference to the synagogue (546).

¹⁸⁸ Childs, *Isaiah*, xi.

relationship between oral and written tradition behind the book (and thus to overcome the debilitating entrenchment between 'echte' and 'unecht'¹⁸⁹), Childs does not find it an adequate model to avoid the 'atomizing' of the literature.¹⁹⁰ The reasoning is understandable, if one accepts Childs's insistence that the textualization of oral tradition is a process that eclipses what came before in the book of Isaiah.¹⁹¹ For Childs, oral tradition has ceased to exist for the interpreter.¹⁹²

Rather, Childs finds redaction criticism to provide the most promising avenue by which we may approach the theological dimension of the text of Isaiah: first, the editor of the Isaianic material has done more than arbitrarily combine discrete collections at a late date. Following Ackroyd, Childs finds redaction criticism to enable speaking of the 'presentation of a prophet' in Isaiah as a theological phenomenon.¹⁹³ How the editor wished 'to render his material' is of utmost importance.¹⁹⁴ Second, as mentioned above, the nature of prophetic literature is such that textualized tradition has eclipsed oral tradition for the interpreter. Contrary to Duhm, for example, the true 'schöpfersichen Wirksamkeit' is longer to be relegated to the originary, oral setting,¹⁹⁵ but felt to be present within the creation of a literary corpus. Third, the value placed upon late/final redaction opens avenues for construing 'unity' along lines other than single authorship. Childs finds Clements and Liebreich to be positive contributions in this regard,¹⁹⁶ and though he does not cite him, there is a clear move away from Pfeiffer, for whom the book of Isaiah represented 'a miniature library rather than a book'; Isaiah thus is 'not essentially different from the Book of the Minor Prophets, and could nearly be regarded, like Psalms and Proverbs, as an anthology or rather a "collection of collections"'.¹⁹⁷ Rather, Childs proposes that 'a conscious intention can be discerned toward uniting the

¹⁸⁹ This is seen as early as Gesenius, *Jesaia, Ersten Theiles*, xiii. Duhm, however, did not abide by this tidy demarcation. See his treatment of Isa 32, in *Jesaia*, 238.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. Childs on Isa 44.24-45.25, where Elliger's literary resolution of 44.24ff. is critiqued (*Deuterojesaja*), as well as Kratz's redactional reconstructions (*Kyros*). Childs will find Hermisson an improvement upon Elliger and Kratz (*Deuterojesaja*), and will ultimately defer to the intertextual work of Beuken.

¹⁹¹ Cf. Childs, 'Retrospective Reading'.

¹⁹² See Davies's 'brief plea for a sense of proportion' in relation to this eclipse (found in Seitz), in his 'Prophecy and Tradition'.

¹⁹³ Ackroyd, 'Presentation of a Prophet'. Cf. Rosenzweig, 'Unity of the Bible', 23.

¹⁹⁴ Childs, *Isaiah*, 2.

¹⁹⁵ Duhm, *Propheten*, 8.

¹⁹⁶ Clements, 'Unity'; Liebreich, 'Compilation'. Indeed, Clements is perhaps responsible for sparking a recent interest in redactional construals of unity in Isaiah.

¹⁹⁷ So Pfeiffer, *Introduction*, 447-48, who represents an extreme position.

various parts into some form of coherent literature as a whole'.¹⁹⁸ Finally, the direction of force in the growth of the Isaianic literature is complex, and moves forward in its adaptive potentialities (e.g. 'Fortschreibung') as well as backward (e.g. editorial redaction).¹⁹⁹ The very growth of the book represents dialectic moves between text and reader, past and present, and even judgment and salvation.²⁰⁰

How might these premises affect the theological context of the book of Isaiah, as 'Christian scripture'? To begin with, a model of single authorship is as historically as theologically problematic. *Contra* Young, Oswalt and Motyer, Childs suggests that a 'much more subtle and profound theological reflection is called upon to do justice both to the unity and diversity of the biblical corpus'.²⁰¹ Further, redactional analysis, *alongside intertextuality* (see Childs's differentiation, above, regarding the difference between midrash and intertextuality), addresses 'in different ways, different issues, and different ages a part of the selfsame, truthful witness to God's salvific purpose for his people'.²⁰² Intertextuality will also confront literary or structuralist proposals, since for Childs the medium of the text is not the message; rather, the text, while a 'literary vehicle', points 'to the substance (*res*) of its witness, to the content of its message, namely, to the ways of God in our world'.²⁰³ That the text possesses this ability will probably vary in persuasiveness from case to case; what is significant for Childs, however, is that the contention, as seen above with reference to Yeago, provides a mode by which to approach the uniting of the two testament – and with this, the ability to read Isaiah as specifically *Christian* scripture.

¹⁹⁸ Childs, *Isaiah*, 3.

¹⁹⁹ Childs favorably cites Williamson's proposal (*Book Called Isaiah*), that Deutero-Isaiah forms the center of redactional activity in the book. If Childs does pick up Williamson's thesis, it does not show in substantial ways. On Isaiah 6, for example, Childs mentions Williamson's proposal regarding the development of the phrase זרע קדש (cf. Ezra 9.2), but does not pick up the relation of the commission of 6.9-10 to the apparent overturning of that commission in 42.18 (cf. the potential retrojection of 29.18; 35.5).

²⁰⁰ Childs, *Isaiah*, 90, suggests that 9.7-10.4 'reflects the same familiar Isaianic dialectic that always matches the promise of eschatological salvation with the present reality of Israel's persistent disobedience'. For other exegetical uses of 'dialectic', see his treatments of Isa 21.1-17 (154), 28.14-22 (207-209), 42.1-4 (327; cf. Matt 12.17-21), 54.1-17 (428), and 65.17-25 (537).

²⁰¹ Childs, *Isaiah*, 4.

²⁰² Childs, *Isaiah*, 4.

²⁰³ Childs, *Isaiah*, 4.

III.1 *The Book of Isaiah*

Many of Childs's basic concerns appear in his article, 'The Canonical Shape of the Prophetic Literature'.²⁰⁴ Here, as we have seen at length already, the prophetic corpus is oriented primarily toward Israel's progeny, and 'is deemed normative for all future generations of this community of faith'.²⁰⁵ Sometimes 'the material is passed on, complete with all of its original historical particularity'. Other times, 'the canonical process selects, rearranges, or expands the received traditions'.²⁰⁶ This is not always easy to ascertain, as '[t]he motivations behind the canonical process were diverse and seldom discussed in the biblical material itself'. Nevertheless, the prophetic corpus itself consistently bears the mark of a text whose 'authoritative claim was laid upon all future generations of Israel'.²⁰⁷ Throughout Isaiah, this reality is seen most clearly in a relationship of time and history that emerges between the historical particularity of prophetic literature and its ongoing ontological subsumption.

III.1.1 *Chapters 1-39*

Isa 2.2-22

Given Childs's contention that literary development was never really a haphazard phenomenon, it is interesting to revisit the comments of his *Isaiah* at those sections where scholarly consensus has traditionally created sharp literary and historical divisions (Duhm is, unsurprisingly, usually mentioned at these points).²⁰⁸ How Childs accounts for differences is often illuminating (if also periodically disappointing). In fact, the word 'coercion' usually signals that the concerns above are at work in making sense of an otherwise disparate text.

One example from Isaiah 1-39 illustrates the approach Childs advocates. It is at this point an exegetical given that this initial body of literature does not form a simple compositional unity, but rather represents a long, involved exegetical and theological development, in some sense necessary in light of the rising status of prior written traditions as Scripture. Isaiah 2.2-22 is an illuminating case. Verses 2-5 are clearly some kind of textual unit, stemming from a late redactional addition. The relationship of 2.2-5 to Micah 4.1-4 is not

²⁰⁴ Childs, 'Canonical Shape'.

²⁰⁵ Childs, 'Canonical Shape', 47.

²⁰⁶ Childs, 'Canonical Shape', 48.

²⁰⁷ Childs, 'Canonical Shape', 48.

²⁰⁸ So, Childs's comments on Isa 1.27-28 (*Isaiah*, 21-22); 4.2-6 (34-37); Isa 11.1-12.6, and 13-23 (114); 24-27 (in its 'literary context...in relation to a larger canonical corpus'; 172), etc.

entirely clear,²⁰⁹ which leads Childs to approach the verses in relation to their literary context.²¹⁰ There are plenty of redactional concerns surrounding 2.2-4(/5), locating the section in relation to both Babylonian and Persian contexts. Sweeney, for example, suggests that Isa 2-4 functions to contextualize, in a Persian setting, why the ideal of 2.2-4 has not come to fruition. Further, Isa 2.2-4 in relation to 2.10-21 places 'the concern with Zion in a worldwide context that accounts for the upheavals of the reign of Darius I (522-486)'.²¹¹ Similarly, Clements proposes that 2.1-4 and 4.2-6 are interjections by the late fifth century redactor, having applied earlier oracles of judgment to the events of 587 BCE, thus leaving a gap to be filled with the optimism of 2.1-4 and 4.2-6.²¹² Sweeney and Clements here present a kind of etiological, *vaticinium ex eventu*, reading that Childs resists – primarily on grounds that it presents the book's pressured growth as moving in the wrong direction.²¹³

Redactional approaches to 2.6-22 fair no better in Childs's estimation. From Duhm to Procksch to Clements, text and redaction criticism have proved 'largely unilluminating',²¹⁴ perhaps because they have not been able to arrive at a kind of iron-clad certainty that can theologially deliver. Rather, the function of the present form of the passage in its wider literary context provides the text's richest meaning, wherein the diachronic and synchronic relate to each other in a subtle fashion. The language of the text is 'radically theocentric' in its affirmation of Yahweh as sovereign creator. Further, the culmination of the passage supplies an 'utterly theocentric focus', leading the reader to find 'the central pulse beat of Isaianic theology, and 'inexorably to seek its source in the chapters that lie ahead'.²¹⁵

The use of תורה (v.3) presents Childs with an opportunity to apply his understanding of Isaiah's growth to a very specific exegetical moment. Sheppard has appreciated that the use of תורה throughout the book as varied,

²⁰⁹ Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12*, 49-52, is taken up by the questions of origins of Isa 2.2-5 and Micah 4.1-4 in a protracted and distracting way. More helpful is Williamson, *Isaiah 1-5*, 166, 178-79, who suggests that the similarity in language may derive from the common source of the school 'responsible for the preservation and development of the Isaiah tradition' (179). Sweeney, *Form and Intertextuality*, 210-21, gives a helpful contextualizing discussion of the function of both passages in their respective contexts.

²¹⁰ Childs, *Isaiah*, 28.

²¹¹ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39*, 95.

²¹² Clements, 'Fall of Jerusalem', 424-25, 433-34.

²¹³ Childs, 'Retrospective Reading', 371-72. Childs would no doubt also have difficulty with Blenkinsopp's reading of 2.2-5 as a 'kind of exalted "Zionist" mythopoesis' stemming largely from the era of early Persian dominance. See Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39*, 191.

²¹⁴ Childs, *Isaiah*, 31.

²¹⁵ Childs, *Isaiah*, 33.

and in need of *ad hoc* interpretation. On 2.3, a more restricted sense of תורה as *Mosaic* opens to associate itself with the prophetic usage. For Childs, this is entirely plausible, given the forward pressure of Mosaic Torah as sacred scripture.²¹⁶ Even so, while this aligns with the canonically ordered presentation of Law-Prophets, Childs contends that the ‘semantic extension’ that leads to this association has rather to do with a pressure from within the prophetic corpus itself, ‘[T]he subject matter of the prophetic message as divine truth continues to exercise a coercion on Israel such that the Mosaic Torah itself increasingly received its full meaning from the divine reality witnessed to by the prophets’.²¹⁷ The result for the interpreter presents something of a dialectic between the very development of Law and Prophets, ‘In a word, both law and prophetic proclamation were expanded in terms of a deepening grasp of God’s reality, but neither was subordinated in principle to the other’.²¹⁸

Further, the juxtaposition of the salvation of 2.2-4 (/5) with the judgment of 2.6-22 does not present a dissonant collection of voices, but rather possesses its own theology, ‘imbedded in the earlier tradition’.²¹⁹ The point that the interpreter is to glean follows:

Isa 2,2ff. offers an eschatological vision of God’s coming rule which picks up a variety of ancient motifs. *The brittle quality of the present literary structure only confirms the basic theological point that eschatological history, that is God’s time, cannot be smoothly combined with empirical history. Nor can the two be cleanly separated.* The subtlety of the book of Isaiah turns on the dialectical relationship of this interaction. What seems to be a political threat to Judah from the Assyrians suddenly becomes the entrance of an eschatological divine judgment.²²⁰

The book of Isaiah itself has little concern for a chronological history outside of God’s eternal rule, and as such, ‘there is no simple linear continuity between Israel’s historical existence and the entrance of God’s kingdom. Rather, into the

²¹⁶ Childs, *Isaiah*, 30.

²¹⁷ Childs, *Isaiah*, 30.

²¹⁸ Childs, *Isaiah*, 30. Cf. Chapman, *Law and Prophets*.

²¹⁹ Childs, ‘Retrospective Reading’, 373. Childs appreciation of various earlier traditions thus differs from those who stress an originally unified composition, such as Roberts, ‘Isaiah 2’, who finds 2.2-22 to derive as a unit from Isaiah of Jerusalem, in light of the Syro-Ephraimite war. Roberts’s ‘only quibble [with critical redactional work] is the single-mindedness with which most scholars look to late contexts for the work of redaction’ (291). Cf. Motyer, *Isaiah*, 53-9.

²²⁰ Childs, ‘Retrospective Reading’, 373 (emph. added). Cf. Isa 6.1, on which Childs comments, ‘Yet within this real history – “the year that King Uzziah died” – there is the entrance of another history and another time. The nature of God’s rule which had been revealed to Isaiah obtained long before the death of Uzziah. The whole world is filled with God’s glory and has always been’ (‘Retrospective Reading’, 373). Cf. Childs, *Isaiah*, 54-55.

old breaks the radically new'.²²¹ The result, in Childs's reading, is that 'prophetic eschatology is not an unmediated derivative of empirical history, but of a different order of divine intervention which is only dialectically related to temporal sequence'.²²² This dialectical relation of 'linear' to 'chronological' history becomes an interpretive fulcrum for Childs's *Isaiah*.

III.1.2 *Deutero-Isaiah*

Childs regards Deutero-Isaiah as a 6th century literary creation that does not stem from precedents of oral-turned-written tradition, as elsewhere in the book.²²³ Its own formation was dependent upon earlier Isaianic material, which it in turn adjusted.²²⁴ That the bulk of Deutero-Isaiah was originally an independent 'unit', later appended to earlier Isaianic material, is not a problematic assertion for Childs; he takes for granted the 6th century exilic setting of its origins. Yet, as above with Isa 2.2ff., the book of Isaiah itself 'has furnished these chapters with a very different setting'. Isaiah 40-55 (and 56-66) 'are now understood as a prophetic word of promise offered to Israel by the eighth-century prophet, Isaiah of Jerusalem'.²²⁵ This is so for certain negative reasons, and well as those positive. Negatively, the originally independent 'Deutero-Isaiah' has not been assigned a later date by those who passed on the writings; our speculations over when and where derive from 'scattered vestiges'. Added to this, Childs notes, those responsible for the preservation and eventual joining of Isa 40ff. with what comes before left hardly a trace of their own historically particular location.²²⁶

²²¹ Childs, *Isaiah*, 29.

²²² Childs, 'Retrospective Reading', 374.

²²³ Here Childs follows the work of Torrey, *The Second Isaiah*, and Muilenburg, *Isaiah 40-66*. Against this approach we may set Gressmann, 'Literarische Analyse'; Mowinckel, 'Komposition'; and Begrich, *Studien*. Childs (*Introduction*, 321-22) praises Melugin for pointing the way forward in a more moderate approach. By the time of his *Isaiah* (290-91), however, he will not concede any ground to a previous oral tradition (though, strangely, see a possible concession in *Isaiah*, 442).

²²⁴ Childs, *Isaiah*, 291. Cf. Childs earlier treatment, in his *Introduction*, 328-330.

²²⁵ Childs, *Introduction*, 325.

²²⁶ Childs, *Introduction*, 325. See also Childs, 'Canonical Shape', 53, '[T]he tradents of the tradition have sought to hide their own footprints in order to focus attention on the canonical text itself and not on the process. The content of the prophets' message is first and foremost a theocentric word'. In a different context, cf. Childs, *New Testament as Canon*, 23, where 'the function of canonical shaping was often precisely to loosen the text from any one given historical setting, and to transcend the original addressee. *The very fact that the canonical editors tend to hide their own footprints, largely concealing their own historical identity, offers a warrant against this model of historical reconstruction*' (emph. added). Cf. Childs *Introduction*, 78.

By virtue of this, they were able 'to subordinate the original message to a new role within the canon'.²²⁷ Where once there was a historical context, now the chapters are thrust into a different mode of discourse. Oracles are loosened and re-appropriated 'within the context of the eighth century prophet, Isaiah of Jerusalem'.²²⁸ One significant outcome is that important figures have now lost their historical particularity, and have become 'types'. Cyrus becomes 'such a theological projection', a type of divine agency, that 'his role blurs into the description of Abraham' (41.8ff.).²²⁹ The outcome, for Childs, is at once apparent, 'The theological context completely overshadows the historical'.²³⁰ This will surface in relation to Childs's reading of Isa 53, where the historical person of the suffering servant has been transposed, so as now to occupy 'a central and continuing theological role in relation to the life of the redeemed community of Israel'.²³¹

This shift from the historical to the theological subtly changes the nature of Isa 40ff. as an eschatological hope. By appending them to an 8th century prophet long deceased, the redactors have effectively placed the words of the exilic writer in the mouth of Isaiah of Jerusalem, orienting 40ff. toward an open future, regardless of whatever exilic setting/events originally stood concomitant to the message. The chapters have now become 'fully eschatological', assuming 'an almost purely theological shape'.²³²

III.1.3 *Trito-Isaiah*

Trito-Isaiah is also likely an originally independent collection, following Duhm's formal presentation of the theory.²³³ Stemming from a post-exilic context, Childs allows for a discrete voice in Isa 56-66 (which is 'from an altered historical situation'), though as elsewhere is quick to note the relation of the chapters to what has come before, both in 1-39 and 40-55.²³⁴ Beginning with this

²²⁷ Childs, *Introduction*, 325.

²²⁸ Childs, 'Canonical Shape', 50.

²²⁹ Childs, *Introduction*, 326. Cf. Seitz, *Prophecy and Hermeneutics*, 50 (and to some degree, 248).

²³⁰ Childs, *Introduction*, 326.

²³¹ Childs, *Isaiah*, 422.

²³² Childs, *Introduction*, 326. Tull, 'One Book, Many Voices', 283-4.

²³³ Duhm, *Jesaja*, 418-19 (cf. 18-19).

²³⁴ Trito-Isaiah's relation to Deutero- and Proto-Isaiah has recently been treated by Stromberg, *Isaiah After Exile*. Stromberg obviously has precursors in Steck (*Studien*; 'Autor und/oder Redaktor') and Beuken ('Isaianic Legacy').

relationship, Childs writes, is the prime task of the exegete.²³⁵ Trito-Isaiah's use of Deutero-Isaiah, for example, illustrates a perceived continuity between the bodies of works; they 'highlight a continuity' rather than 'mark a change in direction',²³⁶ a continuity felt largely in terms of eschatology. Yet the deeper continuity resides, of course, at the ontological level of *res*, emphasizing 'the deictic rather than the midrashic function of Third Isaiah's use of Second Isaiah'.²³⁷

How to account for this level of continuity in the exegetical task, which concerns the translation and interpretation of Isa 56-66 as a post-exilic document, becomes extremely difficult. In reality, the collection's reliance upon Deutero-Isaiah is not entirely clear. Childs thus attempts to steer a course between Duhm's presentation of a largely oral-turned-written collection, and Steck's highly sophisticated 'Schriftgelehrte Prophetie'.²³⁸ The distinction is important, since Childs's understanding of the development of the Old Testament, and its accrued *textual* authority, requires textual interaction. Yet for Childs, Steck is perhaps *too* convenient. At the very least, Childs affirms, '[T]he primary function of intertextual reference in Third Isaiah seems often to have been executed casually from memory with only rare cases of exact citation. *Its function is deictic – that is, pointing, identifying – rather than midrashic*'.²³⁹

How might one then construe its concrete engagement with historical particularities? Childs proposes that, at least in terms of the theme of the אֱלֹהִים אִיבֵי, something takes place similar to Deutero-Isaianic typification noted above (59.18; 62.8; 66.6, 14; cf. 1.24; 9.11). Historical figures are relocated away from their originating situations, and resituated within a wider, ongoing theological context. In Trito-Isaiah, the enemies of God are no longer Assyria, Babylon, Egypt, etc., but only a 'theological function of the enemy'.²⁴⁰ Here there is a divergence from Deutero-Isaiah somewhat. In Isa 40-55 the enemies of God are historical entities (if only typologically portrayed), who will, in the *eschaton*, be given their just deserts. In Trito-Isaiah, however, the enemies of God are not understood chronologically, but ontologically; that is, in 'the

²³⁵ Thus Childs can leave to the side the kinds of *interests* (if not all of the findings) in Hanson's *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 32-208. Childs finds Hanson's project to be 'dominated by ideology' (*Isaiah*, 444).

²³⁶ Childs, *Isaiah*, 442.

²³⁷ Childs, *Isaiah*, 442. Cf. Beuken, *Jesaja IIIA*, 7-18.

²³⁸ Duhm, *Israels Propheten*, 361ff.; Steck, *Studien*, 269ff.

²³⁹ Childs, *Isaiah*, 445 (emph. added).

²⁴⁰ Childs, *Isaiah*, 448.

profoundest of mysteries and with acute tension, the defeated voice of evil opposing God's rule will be allowed to continue. The enemies of God in Third Isaiah are identified with those of every age...because they constitute an ontological opposition to God's will'.²⁴¹ This is the 'terrifying paradox', Childs writes, that closes the book of Isaiah,²⁴² and in light of his wider hermeneutical approach, it would not be wrong to see it as a terrifying paradox passed on for successive generations to possess as sacred Scripture.²⁴³

We saw above that Childs proposed three levels by which to appropriate the prophets theologically for the Church (or simply to recognize them as *already* so appropriated).²⁴⁴ The initial level concerns the discrete, diachronic witness of the Old Testament in its own right; the second concerns an analysis of shared subject-matter, 'a relationship of content' that moves from concept to judgment (in Yeago's categories); the third level seeks constructively to account for a unity in the godhead over Israel and the Church. On all three levels, Childs finds Isa 53 to be an 'amazing morphological fit with the passion of Jesus Christ'.²⁴⁵ The conviction is shared in his *Isaiah*.²⁴⁶ Something about Isa 53 embodies the approach in a particularly distinct way. How Childs handles this follows in the next chapter.

²⁴¹ Childs, *Isaiah*, 546. Cf. *ibid.*, 448.

²⁴² Childs, *Isaiah*, 546.

²⁴³ Childs, *Isaiah*, 449.

²⁴⁴ Childs, 'Recovering'; *idem.*, 'Witness'. On the 'repeat' material in the articles, cf. Driver, *Childs*, 239.

²⁴⁵ Childs, 'Recovering', 24; *idem.*, 'Witness', 63; *idem.*, *Biblical Theology*, 382.

Cf. Moberly, 'Isaiah and Jesus', 242-43.

²⁴⁶ Childs, *Isaiah*, 422-23.

Chapter 4

Brevard Childs and Isaiah 53

'[T]he servant of Isaiah is linked dogmatically to Jesus Christ primarily in terms of its ontology, that is, its substance, and is not simply a future promise of the Old Testament awaiting its New Testament fulfillment'.

Brevard Childs¹

Childs approaches Isaiah 52.13-53.12 with the awareness that this is perhaps the single most debated text in the Old Testament (from both textual and hermeneutical perspectives), a fact which requires textual and hermeneutical sensitivity: textual issues are not easily resolved (if at all), and Christian appropriation of the chapter will be seen to be a difficult undertaking. This does not marginalize textual work, as 'The decisions in establishing a critically responsible reading of the Hebrew text can greatly influence the interpretation'.²

Childs's hermeneutical awareness is evident in his prefatory remarks to his exegetical method. There is a need for the Christian interpreter to locate and hear Israel's own discrete voice in this text – a point probably made with an eye toward the potentially suppressing nature of Christian exegesis on the chapter (cf. the perennial debate over עֲבָדָה below). So as to let this voice be heard clearly, Childs allows his discussion of Christian readings of the chapter to appear only at the end of his treatment. Locating later typological readings thus, one is better equipped to hear the *sensus literalis* of the text, which, for Childs, raises a substantial hermeneutical question, 'To what extent does a proper exegesis derive from bringing a historical or literary perspective from outside the context of the book itself? Is the interpretation dependent on

¹ Childs, *Isaiah*, 423.

² Childs, *Isaiah*, 410.

a correct assessment of the literary and theological function of the text within its present canonical context (chapters 40-55)?³

The terms 'proper exegesis' as well as 'interpretation', and what these imply for the primacy of canonical interpretation cannot be dealt with here, though it should at least be spelled out later.⁴ But at present, it is noteworthy to point out that for Childs, the 'literal sense' of a text cannot responsibly entail a suppression of the surrounding context (in the case of Isaiah 52.13-53.12, chapters 40-55, as well as 56-66 will be significant for Childs's reading). As it is a methodological issue that has been dealt with earlier, Childs does not elaborate substantially. But one may note the difference between this notion of a text's 'literal sense' and that of Childs's historical-critical interlocutors (cf. Duhm). The identification of the *sensus literalis* with historical categories is insufficient for Childs, as the text as it stands, in its location, even limited to its more immediate literary context, is part of a fabric of intertextuality, which resists any piecemeal handling of smaller pericopes as independent of the text's larger context (again, see Duhm on the significance of the poet's distinctive voice *over against* that of Deutero-Isaiah). Though not addressed at any significant length in his prefatory comments, this will become clear with at least one of his expositions of the text (i.e. his reading of the 'identity' of the Servant).

The fact that biblical texts are part of a textual fabric raises the significance of redaction criticism, since the threads of this fabric are precisely those different layers of textual tradition. For this reason, Childs singles out redaction criticism in his introduction as particularly significant for interpreting Isaiah.⁵ Yet something more than redaction criticism, canonical interpretation takes all layers together, as they are presently situated. The significant hermeneutical difference between redaction criticism and canonical readings, at this point, is that whereas the former is primarily a historical, backward-looking survey, canonical interpretation looks forward,

³ Childs, *Isaiah*, 410.

⁴ Brett, *Crisis*, 11, has noted a 'totalizing tendency' that canonical interpretation is seen to assume (i.e. it does not allow for a genuine pluralism in approaches to Old Testament theology). Childs would undoubtedly respond that the text *itself* possesses a coercive force that confronts the reader, and not the other way around. The text, Childs writes, is a 'literary vehicle' that points to 'the substance of its witness' (*Isaiah*, 4). The definite article is significant: the 'res' behind the text is definitive, and so the degree to which exegesis/interpretation is able to connect with that singular reality is the degree to which it is successful. A key component of text-as-vehicle is a passage's canonical situating.

⁵ Childs, *Isaiah*, 2ff.

as it were, on the assumption that the shape of the text is not accidental, but may very well have something to say to the interpreter in its present form. In this way, the diachronic can be preserved in relation to the synchronic, though 'its relation to the present, shaped text is subtle and indirect'.⁶

What bearing this holds for Isaiah 53 can be seen in how this chapter fits into the larger movement present in Deutero-Isaiah's work. As of 1979, Childs did not sense any literary progression in the text and, being careful to avoid any endorsement of a particular view of authorship with regard to the servant songs, treated the language of 'servant' in Isa 40ff. rather statically. In some passages, the servant is viewed as 'collective Israel'; in others, 'he is an individual'.⁷ These 'two servants' are correlated not in a developmental relationship, whereby the one is subsumed into, or made subservient to, another, but their coexistence is one that 'reflects a great variety of tensions'.⁸ The divergences are assimilated by recourse to a frame of reference that finds positive value in the text's vicissitudes. Childs writes:

The polarity remains between the servant as a corporate reality and as an individual, between the typical features and the historical, between a promised new Israel of the future and a suffering and atoning figure of the past. *Nowhere is there any effort made to resolve the tension by means of a historical sequence, or by a theological pattern, or by an explanatory commentary.*⁹

The coexistence of these representations is one of a fundamental tension in witness. As per his wider thesis in the work (i.e. his *Introduction*), Childs seizes the moment to emphasize a textual-theological point, that 'the canonical process preserved the material in a form, the significance of which was not fully understood'.¹⁰ The authorial / editorial failure to 'fully' understand the role of the servant results in a view of the chapter that 'continues to oscillate between the past and the future, the individual and the community, and the actual and the ideal'.¹¹

⁶ *Isaiah*, 410. Cf. Childs, 'Retrospective Reading', 373, '[E]schatological history, that is God's time, cannot be smoothly combined with empirical history, nor can the two be cleanly separated. The subtlety of the book of Isaiah turns on the dialectical relationship of this interaction'. Childs, *Isaiah*, 440-41, construes the relationship of Deutero- and Trito-Isaiah in the same vocabulary.

⁷ Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1979), 334.

⁸ Childs, *Introduction*, 335.

⁹ Childs, *Introduction*, 335-6 (emph. added).

¹⁰ Childs, *Introduction*, 336.

¹¹ Childs, *Old Testament Theology*, 241.

The conclusion feels unsatisfying, if for no other reason than that it suggests theological insight on grounds of a generalized agnosticism: our uncertainty must reflect an authorial/redactional uncertainty, an uncertainty from which we draw theological import. Consequently, we are disengaged from historical-critical inquiry.¹² Prolonged reflection on the chapter, its vocabulary, its retrospective confession, its peculiar 'Gattung', and its present affinities with the gospel narratives, suggests that for Christian theology, the chapter can do more than wait passively 'to receive its meaning from the future'.¹³

Prolonged reflection on the passage, along with a more sensitive appreciation of the text's historical referent as a heuristic component of interpretation,¹⁴ led Childs to develop his reading of Isa 53. In his *Isaiah* (2001), Childs no longer acknowledges an inherent tension, a 'polarity', in the same way as he formerly did. He does not attempt 'to resolve the tension' of the two servants 'by means of a historical sequence' (above); but he *does* attempt to resolve the tension literarily. Chapters 40-55 depict a 'lengthy prophetic narrative',¹⁵ which reaches its peak in 49ff. The literary facets of this interpretation can be seen in his frequent use of terms such as 'intertextuality' and 'allusion'.¹⁶

We may note the trend, generally.¹⁷ The parallel of הנה in 42.1 and 52.13 signals a connection between the poems that would suggest a collective reading of 52.13-53.12;¹⁸ however, these passages are interrupted, and

¹² Further, Childs's equivocations in the comment above ('the past and the future, the individual and the community, and the actual and the ideal') appear careless and imprecise in their formulation. Why should these categories not be historically, textually, and theologically porous?

¹³ Childs, *Introduction*, 336.

¹⁴ Similar are the reflections found in Barth, 'Humanity of God'. Cf. Childs, 'Barth as Interpreter', 35.

¹⁵ *Isaiah*, 410. Cf. *ibid.*, 441, where Childs refers to the "'storied" referentiality essential to [T]'s kerygmatic (canonical) witness'.

¹⁶ In his *Isaiah*, Childs remains vague with reference to the distinction between 'intertextuality' and 'allusion', which are generally, respectively, related to synchronic reading and authorial/redactional intentionality. As of 1979, Childs found the 'effect of the canonical process' to 'render the traditional accessible to the future generation by means of a "canonical intentionality"', which, we should be careful to note, takes place 'irrespective of intentionality' (*Introduction*, 79). In the opinion of Driver, *Childs*, 152n.70, Sommer is more appreciative of the nuanced difference between intertextuality and allusion. See Sommer, *Prophet Reads Scripture*, 6-31. Sommer finds Childs to display 'a certain synchronic bias' which stands at odds with 'allusion'. What the differentiation looks like in practice is illuminated in Sommer's 'Allusions and Illusions'. Cf. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*.

¹⁷ What follows draws upon Childs, *Isaiah*, 377-9, 381-2, 412.

¹⁸ Childs reads 42.1-4 to be collective in nature, though he concedes that this is not without difficulty. See his *Isaiah*, 323-5 (cf. 384).

therefore reinterpreted, by the two poems of 49.1-6 and 50.4-9. The acclamation of 49.3, 'You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified', transfers the collective identity to the individual; interestingly, Childs translates the verse, 'You are (now) my servant, you are Israel, in whom I will be glorified'.¹⁹ The peculiar rendering is part of a wider sequential reading that attempts to trace a literary development in both generalities and specifics: in response to Cyrus' liberation of Israel, Israel the 'servant' refuses 'to see' (42.19ff.), persisting in its indictment of Yahweh (40.27), and in 48.8, Yahweh condemns this hardness of heart,²⁰ introducing the servant afresh in 48.16, this time with a significant prepositional modification: ועתה אדני יהוה שלחני ורוח. In light of the use of עתה, Childs brings 49.3 into general correspondence with 48.16, 'You are (now) my servant.'²¹ One may add to all of this the lexical possibilities in the placement of 49.3,²² by which ישראל can be rendered as a vocative ('O Israel'), or in apposition to עבדי אהה ('you are my servant, who is Israel'), or as a predicate. Syntactically, Childs chooses the last of these, 'You are my servant; *you* are now Israel'.²³

Childs is indebted to Beuken at this point,²⁴ who places a high emphasis upon the immediate context of 48.1-19,²⁵ and the change of person vis-à-vis the servant. The 'former things' (48.3) may refer to the Exile, the fall of Jerusalem, or perhaps even creation,²⁶ but the 'new things' (48.6) refer to a transfer of the role of the servant, from corporate to individual.²⁷ Following Israel's refusal of the 'Cyrus option', Yahweh commissions the individual speaker of 49.1ff. to bring salvation through 'his spirit', in contrast to Cyrus's military strategies.²⁸

¹⁹ Childs, *Isaiah*, 412. Contra Melugin, *Formation*, 146, 'The text in chapter 49 clearly identifies the servant as Israel'.

²⁰ Cf. Isa 6.9-10.

²¹ Cf. Beuken, *Jesaja IIA*, 293.

²² In the MT, ישראל is sandwiched between the disjunctives 'atnāh and zāqēp gādōl.

²³ Childs, *Isaiah*, 383-4. A similar line of thought, though with different referents, is seen in Blenkinsopp's reading of 49.3 (*Isaiah 40-55*, 209-10; cf. 300).

²⁴ Beuken, *Jesaja IIA*; idem., *Jesaja IIB*.

²⁵ Beuken, *Jesaja IIA*, 277, 'De genrekritische exegese heeft vanuit haar eigen uitgangspunt deze passages synchronisch, los van hun onmiddellijke context, geïnterpreteerd'.

²⁶ Beuken, *Jesaja IIA*, 277.

²⁷ Beuken, *Jesaja IIA*, 279, 'Het is belangrijk op te merken dat hiermee een persoonswisseling gepaard gaat. Het nieuwe bestaat erin dat iemand zich presenteert als door Jahweh met zijn geest gezonden'.

²⁸ Beuken, *Jesaja IIA*, 294, '[YHWH] zendt...nu degene die hier spreekt, om als bemiddelaar die verlossing te bewerkstelligen, niet door wapengeweld maar in de kracht van Gods geest'. Again, cf. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 300. For Beuken, *Isaiah 49.3* is written as a retrospective confession (*Jesaja IIB*, 12) and supplies a type of commentary on the relation of

Following Beuken, then, Childs reads Isaiah 52.13ff. as part of a larger literary context, steadily gaining momentum as it approaches the fourth servant song, at which point 'God intervenes to end the exile and to usher in his eschatological reign'.²⁹

Perhaps the most significant contextualizing move made by Childs comes in how he construes Isaiah 53 within Christian theology. Portraying the hermeneutical difficulty rather than relieving it, E.J. Young's comment (cited by Childs, 422), is illustrative of both the desire and difficulty found in identifying this servant figure with the person of Jesus of Nazareth, 'We may say with assurance that there is only One of whom these words may be spoken, namely, Jesus the Christ'. Childs will take issue with this kind of historically dislocated reading, for in both 49.1-6 and 53.1ff. he has read the text as indicating the historically particular nature of the servant in Israel and the historically particular nature of a confessing community, in the sixth century BCE. Thus a reduction of the chapter to the function of foretelling, or to the function of merely displaying a 'timeless metaphor' about corporate suffering, does not help to illumine the historical particularity that these chapters assume.

I. *The Text 'Itself'*

The initial move in Childs's reading of the text is actually twofold. On the one hand, Childs is interested in upholding a 'historical mooring' of the servant's identity in Isa 53. The use of עֶבֶר/עֲבָרִי does not stand in reference to corporate Israel, but to a historically particular person, specifically a person within the 6th century Babylonian exile. Locating the servant in this way will sharpen the relief by which we see and hear the central figure of the community's confession. On the other hand, this historical particularity functions as a necessary component of the changed community's confession. The work of the servant in 53.4-6, 8, 11ff. is perceived at a point in time after the death of the servant, and was 'assigned a central and continuing theological role in

Israel's unfaithfulness and the faithfulness of the Servant (who has now taken Israel's commission upon himself), 'Was er voor 49:1 sprake van Israël/Jakob in een context van ontrouw en trouw die nog bewezen moest worden, na 49:1-6 is er enkel sprake van een Israël dat de verheerlijking van Jahweh zal dienen' (*Jesaja IIB*, 18).

²⁹ Childs, *Isaiah*, 410. On Isa 40-48 as a 'dramatic' text, gaining momentum, see Berges, *Jesaja 40-48*, 64ff.

relation to the life of the redeemed community of Israel'.³⁰ Without a historical particularity to the suffering servant, this kind of insistence would make no sense.

This interest presents a development in Childs's reading of this chapter specifically, and in his wider appreciation of the contribution of historical analysis and particularity for theological reading. In fact, it presents something of a contrast with Childs's earlier reading of Deutero-Isaiah and the servant songs. As noted in the previous chapter, Childs understood the ongoing significance of Isa 40-55, and the servant in particular, to reside not in a historical reconstruction, but in the eschatological function of these chapters within the wider book.³¹ The development, I will suggest below, is a positive one, attributing more significance to the text's historical dimension.

Childs's argument for the servant's 'role' as being one of a continuing, theological nature, is resonant with what he has said elsewhere on the significance of the use of the biblical texts by those who shaped them, on which the canonical interpreter hopes to engage 'the features of this particular set of religious texts in relation to their usage within the historical community of ancient Israel'.³² That the servant was an ongoing theological locus of reflection for Israel raises the possibility for an ontological relation between the work described in Isaiah 53 and the work ascribed to Jesus by the early Church. Within this context of a retrospective, confessing community Childs's exegesis seeks to add depth to what is perhaps an inherently 'theological reading'; to read 52.13-53.12 within the framework of a confessing community's retrospective reflection compels the interpreter to look not merely at the verses, but alongside them as well, as one seeks to gain a clearer view of what it is that they are confessing to have come to know. Elsewhere, Childs has put the language slightly differently:

Israel's history reflects both an inner and an outer dimension. By this distinction I am not speaking of internalized history and external

³⁰ Childs, *Isaiah*, 422. A retrospective perception and appreciation of the servant is markedly similar to Schneiders, *Revelatory Text*, xvii-xl (cf. 97-131). On p. xxii (cf. 102-8), Schneiders attempts to overcome the oft-stalled discussion on the historical Jesus, by insisting that the 'pre-Easter' Jesus is communicated only through language already impacted by the 'post-Easter' Christian proclamation of the 'Christ of faith'. As such, the synoptic gospels are primarily theological documents of a kerygmatic nature (though Schneiders does attempt to retain some tension at this point). Cf. Beuken on Isa 53 (*Jesaja IIB*, 197), where we have a poem that reflects from exaltation, *back* to suffering, and not vice versa. Cf. Schneiders, *Encountering Jesus*, 9-47; Allison, *Constructing Jesus*, 1-30 (in part).

³¹ Cf. Childs, *Introduction*, 338.

³² Childs, *Introduction*, 73.

history as two sides of the same coin...but the distinction relates to a qualitatively different perspective from which events are viewed. *The contrast lies in viewing history from Israel's confessional stance, from within a community of faith, rather than from a neutral, phenomenological reconstruction.*³³

Put in broad terms, one cannot merely operate at an *etic* level of 'explanation', but must, under Childs's interpretative rubric, seriously engage an *emic* 'description'.³⁴ Alternatively, it embodies the differentiation between Yeago's 'concepts' and 'judgments'. But neither, it must be noted, 'functions as a hermetically sealed system which functions in absolute independence from the other'. The consequent task is a subtle one, which avoids two fundamental dangers, 'the rationalistic assumption of a common reality behind all religious expression', and 'the threat of super-naturalism which would deny in principle any relation between an outer and inner side of historical events'.³⁵

The guiding, often unseen, question behind Childs's exegesis of Isaiah 53 is how the details of the text inform the nature of the confession of this redeemed community within Israel. That is to say, the confessing community within 'redeemed' Israel creates the line in which textual critical work will operate. It is this fact that makes the aim of being 'postmodern yet downwind of modernity' so well exemplified in Childs's reading of Isaiah 52-53. As much as his general canonical concerns may be loosely dubbed 'postmodern', one sees in Childs's handling of the text that this is not synonymous with a return to a 'precritical' mode of interpreting, but that it enjoys a close relationship to the advancements of historical-critical study as highly informative for the interpretive process – in the case of Isaiah 53, historical-critical study will emphasize the nature of the 'confessing community' who reflect, retrospectively, on the function of the servant on Israel's behalf.

On the heels of the assertion that the diachronic and the synchronic enjoy a subtle, indirect and nuanced relationship,³⁶ Childs sharpens and directs his reading of the present passage toward identifying the ongoing hermeneutical significance of the servant figure in both ancient Israel and the early Church. His explicit statements on this specific topic are saved for the end of his handling. But his exegesis, up until these more explicit conclusions, certainly buttresses his findings. This is not to suggest that his exegesis is

³³ Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 100.

³⁴ On this, cf. Brett, *Biblical Criticism*, 15ff.

³⁵ Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 100.

³⁶ Childs, *Isaiah*, 410.

guided by a particular conclusion extraneous to the text itself, but rather that he seeks to elucidate a key theme, or dimension, within the chapter that he sees as organic to the shape of the text as we have it (the threefold division of the song into ‘voices’ – divine, confessing community, divine).³⁷ For Childs, it is the paradigm of a confessing community that both informs and is itself informed by his exegesis.

Childs’s first order of business (conceptually, if not linearly in his commentary) is to establish the identity of the ‘we’ in 53.1, since it will be this ‘we’ that shapes his understanding of a changed perspective within Israel. The ‘we’ is distinct from the servant, who at this point has personally taken on Israel’s corporate servant identity (vis-à-vis his reading of 49.3), and it is the ultimate uplifting/exaltation of the servant that has given the ‘we’ the new perspective from which they write. The exaltation of the servant brackets the poem, as it was this event that not only opened eyes and ears (cf. 52.15b-53.1), but also presumably was the impetus for the composition of this poem in the first place.

The ‘broken style’ of v.14a/b is itself a means of creating a striking comparison between the past life and present/future effect on those who have come to understand his ministry to Israel.³⁸ The effect on nations and kings is not the same as his effect on those within Israel who perceive the revelatory significance of the event, as the revealing of ‘the arm of Yahweh’.³⁹ Thus the ‘startling’⁴⁰ of kings and nations is not in a manner that impresses a lasting significance: from the point of view of the writer, this kind of impact is had only within that circle in Israel who have come to perceive the servant with new eyes.

³⁷ Divine: 52.13-15; Human: 53.1-11a; Divine: 53.11b-12.

³⁸ Thus Childs does not follow the emendation of Marti (*Jesaja*, 345). Condamin, surprisingly, finds the replacement to disrupt a poetic sense in the text *as it stands*, ‘La transposition malheureuse de 52, 14 après 53, 2...remplace cette admirable symétrie par des répétitions de mots successives, fâcheuses à la fois pour le sens et pour la poésie’. Cf. Beuken, *Jesaja IIB*, 205.

³⁹ Childs, *Isaiah*, 413.

⁴⁰ Childs preserves the wording as now present in the MT (תָּרַח), yet chooses to translate the verb as ‘startle’, citing lexical flexibility rather than textual corruption. Childs cites Gesenius, *Jesaja, Zwoyter Theil*, 174ff. (cf. *BDB* 633, II), yet it is a curious citation, as Gesenius interprets the nature of the startling as something salvific; i.e., the kings and nations came to see the historical restoration and triumph of a despised people (*Jesaja, Zwoyter Theil*, 176). Gesenius translates the תָּרַח clause, ‘So werden sein viele Völker frohlocken’ (174), citing Vitranga, Lowth, Dathe and Kocher. In other words, within this reading of the wider context of ‘startling’, semantic flexibility is appropriate. But within Childs’s reading, it is not clear what it means to cause one to leap for joy in a (merely) shocking way, without any salvific undertones.

This division between the 'we' and the 'kings and nations' is justified both from a form critical standpoint ('the confessing "we" of the Old Testament is always Israel and not the nations'),⁴¹ as well as from a significant observation made by Beuken, that the emphasis in 52.15b is not placed on 'startling', but on sight and comprehension. Childs notes, 'The key to this interpretation is found in the intertextual reference to 48:6ff. Israel is challenged to see and to hear the new things God is about to reveal...The reference is to a group within Israel to which has been revealed the "new things", hitherto hidden'.⁴² So long as the emphasis falls on sight and vision, the echo of 48.6ff. shapes what this language presently suggests: the transformation of vision is one that takes place within Israel itself, though not in Israel's entirety (cf. Isa 50.10-11).⁴³ In addition to what Childs has noted here, we could simply add the observation that 52.15b and 53.1 have a close literary relation, sharing verbal links and resonances that would suggest the subject of 52.15b to be the same as that of 53.1.⁴⁴

It is worth supplying a brief outline of Beuken's exegetical approach at this juncture.⁴⁵ As already mentioned, intertextuality plays a significant role, providing thematic links between various chapters in Deutero-Isaiah.⁴⁶ In the present case, the argument for the above reading is given substantial justification by Beuken. The 'nieuwe groep' of 52.15b,⁴⁷ who stand distinct from the immediate (one might say ostensible) antecedents of 52.15a, are best read in light of the unfolding sequential drama of Isa 40-55 (there is a certain 'taalverwantschap', a family resemblance of language). The drama begins with the charge that Yahweh brings against 'the house of Jacob', against the people who 'are called by the name of Israel' (הַנִּקְרָאִים בְּשֵׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל). Yahweh then contends that he had declared things previously which 'suddenly' came to pass, rendering the attribution of agency to the peoples' idols null. Not only are the idols shown to be subject to Yahweh's will (and hence futile), but the people of Israel *themselves* are brought under subjection to Yahweh's changes in the course of human history: something is happening 'now', in Israel's midst, previously unknown and unheard of, which (alongside their idols) reaffirms their subjection to Yahweh. It is in this context, as we shall see, that Beuken situates the language of Isa 52.15b.

⁴¹ Childs, *Isaiah*, 413.

⁴² Childs, *Isaiah*, 413. Cf. Beuken's comment (*Jesaja IIB*, 203) that Isa 48 is 'decisive' ('doorslaggevend') for an explanation of the plural verbs in 52.15b.

⁴³ The 'exclusivity' of a smaller community within Israel, which rightly perceives what the servant has accomplished on Israel's behalf, reaches a well-known and searching treatment by Paul, in Romans 9.6ff.

⁴⁴ Cf. Koole, *Isaiah 49-55*, 259. Childs apparently feels that the language of 'sight' and 'hearing' must remain within Israel itself; otherwise, why not give 52.15b to the 'kings' and 'nations', and simply leave 53.1 for the believing community within Israel? I address the difficulties of this reading in the Conclusion.

⁴⁵ The line of thought is taken from Beuken, *Jesaja IIB*, 203-6.

⁴⁶ For an example of his literary approach, see his 'Main Theme of Trito-Isaiah', where various literary phenomena are recognized (including 'aposiopesis', 69-75). On Isa 52.13-53.12, Beuken regards his reading as attending to the 'macrosyntactisch teken' (*Jesaja IIB*, 197).

⁴⁷ Beuken, *Jesaja IIB*, 271-75.

Beuken does acknowledge that there is a certain obvious relation of 52.15a and 52.15b, *prima facie*. He cites Isa 49.7 (מַלְכִים יִרְאוּ) and 52.10 (וְרָא כָל־אֲפִסְי־אֲרִיץ אֶת יְשׁוּעַת אֱלֹהֵינוּ) as two examples of similarities in language for the impression; but, he notes, רָא is present in numerous contexts in which the salvation of God's own people is in view (41.20; 42.18, 20; 52.8).⁴⁸ Similarly, שָׁמַע occurs almost exclusively in the context of *Israel's* hearing.⁴⁹ Correspondingly, the כִּי at the outset of 52.15b is read as emphatic ('Waarlijk...'), rather than as causative.⁵⁰ A result is that the kings/nations and the implied subject of 52.15b stand as two differing responses to the servant's work.⁵¹

Moreover, the parallelism between 52.15b and 53.1 closely aligns the subject of the verbs of 52.15b and the confessing 'we' of 53.1ff. In light of this, the most natural object of 'see' and 'hear' in 52.15b is the יהוה זָרִיעַ of 53.1.⁵² The arm of the Lord is, in some sense, manifest to the nations (52.10), but this only from within, and through, the existence of Israel itself (40.10; 48.14; 51.5, 9). This kind of reading, Beuken contends, comes to affect discussion concerning the 'universal' nature of Deutero-Isaiah, as here we find the primary activity of God to concern the wellbeing of Israel; the 'kings and the nations' do not partake in this kind of proximate revelation, but witness it only from a distance – they are mere 'toeschouwer en toehoorder'.

Further, רָא and בִּין both carry a positive content, contrary to the response of the kings in 52.15a, which suggested a 'shame' or confusion 'caused by unexpected events' ('die door onverwachte gebeurtenissen veroorzaakt wordt'). In this sense, 52.15 represents two different reactions (a/b), even if these reactions are not necessarily exclusive (they may rather be successive in the outworking of the servant's work).⁵³

Childs notes that Isa 53.2-3, being retrospective in nature, encompasses a 'painful reflection' of the confessing community. The verses are in some part biographical due to an assumed historical personage,⁵⁴ but any firm 'Gattungskritik' will struggle to identify the present text. For this reason, while Childs grants a biographical nature to the poem, he is quick to note that it is a biography that transcends the biographical, by virtue of its confessional, and thus deeply theological, nature. One thinks of Childs's contention regarding the fundamentally religious nature of any tradition, form, or

⁴⁸ Beuken, *Jesaja IIB*, 205, '...om de heilservaring van Gods eigen volk'.

⁴⁹ In the *Qal*, see 40.21, 28; 41.26; 42.18, 20, 23; 44.1; 46.3, 12; 48.1, 12, 14, 16; 50.10; 51.1, 7, 21; 55.2. In the *Hiphil*, see 41.22, 26; 42.9; 43.9, 12; 44.8; 45.21; 48.3, 5, 6-8; 52.7. Beuken notes the exceptions of 47.8; 48.20; 49.1 and 50.4.

⁵⁰ On the emphatic use of כִּי, see Muilenburg, 'The Particle כִּי'.

⁵¹ Beuken, *Jesaja IIB*, 199, contrasts the responses as, respectively, 'de reactie van de "velen"', and 'de reactie van hen "aan wie niets verteld was"'. For a recent treatment of the difficulty of 'implied subjects' in Deutero-Isaiah, see Williamson, 'Isaiah 41.2-3'.

⁵² Cf. de Leeuw, *De Ebed Jahweh-Profetieën*, 226-7.

⁵³ Beuken, *Jesaja IIB*, 206.

⁵⁴ Childs notes the repeated use of the simple pronoun 'he', though this is not in vv. 2-3, but only denoted through verbal suffixes. Nevertheless, the use of the pronoun הוּא in vv. 5, 11, 12, and the use of אִי in v.3 may make the point well enough.

redaction criticism, that the approach must conform to ‘the particular mode of speech being examined’.⁵⁵

Childs’s disillusionment with form-critical analysis in Isa 53 is thus targeted *not* at the fundamental historical interest in the discussion. It simply seeks to calibrate that discussion, ‘extend’ it, so that it might more properly align with what he finds to be *every* form’s underlying literary genre; and this is a genre that is fundamentally aligned with oral and written tradition: it is, at root, theological.⁵⁶ The confessional response that shapes the poem of Isa 53 fully embodies this ‘form’.

So, here, the painful reflection is exhibited in a description of the servant that transcends that which is simply ‘historical’⁵⁷: the same community that now sees the servant afresh, once averted their eyes from him (v.2), despised and shunned him, and ‘held him in no regard’ (v.3; Childs’s translation of אִישׁ־אֶחָד in v.3b as ‘everyone’ has an indicting force that brings all present under this charge). This becomes even more poignant as Childs notes that despite all of the statements of the servant’s physical appearance and suffering, the focus remains on the reaction of the community to this appearance and to these sufferings, ‘Almost immediately one senses that the chief interest of the narrative is not biographical; rather, the concrete features that encompass the ensuing description focus largely on the response of others to him’;⁵⁸ this fits Childs’s earlier framing of the chapter within a present and future, confessing community.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Childs, ‘Response to Reviewers’, 52. Despite Childs’s clarification that he thus has no qualm with ‘historical scholarship *per se*’, the confusion persists. See, e.g., Perdue, ‘Old Testament Theology’, 110, ‘[Childs] begins with regarding the historical-critical method as theologically bankrupt’. Contrast Smith, review of Childs, 407, ‘It is entirely clear that by application of a canonical approach Childs does not intend to reject the historical critical method but to give it free reign [*sic*]’.

⁵⁶ While Childs may view his project as, in some sense, extending form criticism, he nevertheless states firmly, ‘[T]o suggest my approach to canon is a purely formal, literary construct without theological content is a fundamental misunderstanding of the proposal’. See Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 72. Cf. Chapman, *Law and the Prophets*, 44ff.

⁵⁷ Childs notes that this phenomenon occurs elsewhere in the Old Testament: in the Psalter (cf. Ps. 22.6-7; 88.8), as well as in Jeremiah (15.17; 20.7; 20.10). Prophetic suffering ‘depicts’, or perhaps even *assumes*, ‘a calling, even an office, into which a servant of God has been summoned’ (414). The issue largely turns on prior form-critical decisions. Hanson is probably correct in generally stating that biography is not one of the ‘forms’ in mind, ‘We are not dealing with biography in a strict literal sense. We are dealing, rather, with poetic language, which through symbols, metaphors, and similes reveals something important about God’s will and the nature of the one/those who seek faithfully to obey God’s will’. See Hanson, *Isaiah 40-66*, 164.

⁵⁸ Childs, *Isaiah*, 414.

⁵⁹ Cf. the statements of Childs in his ‘Analysis’, 363, present in Isa 53, insofar as Childs reads the poem in its entirety as a present *theological* reflection on a past suffering

As the ‘sorrowful recital’ of Isaiah 53.2ff. continues, the voiced reflection of the community reaches what is perhaps its maximum theological depth – at the bottom of the experience of the suffering servant, theological reflection comes most sharply into focus. First, there is the dramatic shift in perspective: the despising ‘we’ are now the confessing ‘we’, ‘The confessing community bears testimony to what it has seen and now understands (52.15). It was for “our sins” he was tortured; it was for “our iniquities” he was bruised’.⁶⁰ Childs notes the language of ‘surely’ (אִכֵּן), as marking the beginning of a theme of confession. One may note, not entirely in contrast to this, Duhm’s assessment that ‘it is better if one holds it as an adversative particle’.⁶¹ The result is something of a concessive clause, thus reading, ‘[Even though] we held him of no account, nevertheless he has borne our infirmities...’ Such a reading stresses the shift in perspective of this community, as it heightened by the ensuing וַאֲנִיחָהּ in v. 4. Whether one follows Duhm or Childs, the consequence remains the same: through the suffering of the servant, ‘we’ are healed, and receive peace instead of punishment (53.6).

Whilst looking at the community’s confession of the servant’s suffering ‘on behalf of’, Childs allows a brief caveat, that the interpreter should be wary of imputing anachronistic notions of vicariousness to this text. Anselm’s doctrine of the atonement, he notes, may go against the grain. Nevertheless, what the text *does* say about the nature of suffering ‘on behalf of’ needs to be heard in all of its fullness. Childs sidesteps a definitive reading of the text in relation to the theme of ‘vicariousness’, and leaves it to the reader to adjudicate whether the proposals of Orlinsky (‘vicariousness’ is incompatible with an Old Testament conception of covenant, and thus Isaiah suffers because of his unpopular ministry⁶²), Whybray (Israel’s sin demanded a prophetic ministry [cf. the Servant]), which carries intrinsic dangers and

individual. Seitz (*Word without End*, 10; *Prophecy and Hermeneutics*, 24) has rearticulated the need to address the theological dimension of the prophetic corpus in this way. See Seitz’s earlier *Zion’s Final Destiny* (47ff.), where he pressed for the need to read Isaiah 36-37 as a unit of literature befitting not as much ‘historical analysis’ as that dubbed ‘literary-theological’. ‘The basic point [chapters 36-37] wish to make, from start to finish, is a theological one’ (48).

⁶⁰ Childs, *Isaiah*, 415.

⁶¹ Childs, *Jesaia*, 369.

⁶² This sounds similar to Duhm at points, insofar as the notion of ‘on behalf of’ is left somewhat ambiguous. The point in Orlinsky, to be sure, is that such a notion does not exist in this passage, or perhaps anywhere else in the Old Testament, when concerning the outcome of Israel’s corporate sin. But even this position cannot escape the abiding ambiguity as to how the sufferings of one individual can have a material effect on a larger community.

sufferings⁶³) and Hanson⁶⁴ are faithful to the text. However, one may note a perhaps indirect assessment of these challenges to readings of vicariousness, in that Whybray's proposal is written off as a 'bland and even superficial understanding of the passage', which in turn 'serves as a major indictment of his conclusions'.⁶⁵ Orlinksy may be guilty by association, as Childs links him to Whybray, and Hanson's reading is labeled a 'modern "politically correct" formulation'.⁶⁶ Childs's treatment of the topic with an eye toward Christian appropriation will be positively constructed in his later sections of New Testament and theological contextualizations. In any case, the two occurrences of 'I leave it to the reader to decide...' assume, at the very least, a certain kind of reader sympathetic with Childs's theological concerns.

Childs notes Janowski's learned contribution,⁶⁷ which rightfully claimed that עֶבֶד did not originate within a cultic context – following Gese⁶⁸ – and thus should not necessitate a notion of 'scapegoat'. It does not appear, however, that Childs finds Janowski entirely persuasive (or overly helpful), as the former wishes to retain an aspect of vicariousness in the servant's suffering and death, 'The vicarious role of the servant lies at the very heart of the prophetic message and its removal can only result in losing the exegetical key that unlocks the awesome mystery of these chapters'.⁶⁹ Further, Janowski's contribution, though illuminating on the development of עֶבֶד, may in fact distract from larger point, which is 'that God himself took the initiative in accepting the servant's life as the means of Israel's forgiveness'.⁷⁰ Thus at the heart of the retrospective community's confession is a statement about the nature of God, and this God's activity, both on behalf of, and towards those who 'believe'. The efficaciousness of this servant's suffering turns on whether

⁶³ See, for example, Jer. 20.7.

⁶⁴ I am still not quite clear on how Hanson addresses vicariousness here. The effect of the Servant, loosening the 'stranglehold' that sin-punishment had on Israel (159), is commented upon, though specifically how this happens is not elaborated. Any way it is to be read, Childs no doubt misrepresents Hanson through an unfair adjudication. That which Childs cites of Hanson is the *beginning* of the latter's reflection, and not the *conclusion*.

⁶⁵ Childs, *Isaiah*, 415.

⁶⁶ Childs, *Isaiah*, 416.

⁶⁷ Janowski, 'He Bore our Sins'.

⁶⁸ Gese, 'The Anotement'. Janowski, notably, was a student of Gese. On the respective approaches of Childs and Gese to the phenomenon of 'canon', one may consult Schnabel, 'Die Entwürfe'.

⁶⁹ Childs, *Isaiah*, 418.

⁷⁰ Childs, *Isaiah*, 418. Though at this point one must question whether Childs understands Janowski accurately, since Childs adheres to a reading of vicarious suffering in vv. 5, 8 (*Isaiah*, 415-6).

God accepts these sufferings as (in some sense) vicarious. In v.10ff. we see the community's positive affirmation of God's involvement, indeed even standing behind the sufferings themselves, as they are said to be his will (v.10a).

Childs closes with his reflections on the exaltation of the servant in 53.11-12, which mirrors the opening of the poem in 52.13. As Duhm observed, this bracketing highlights the servant's future 'Wunderherrlichkeit', 'as the core of [the] prophecy'.⁷¹ It is perhaps difficult, then, to place a final word on the chapter, given that the nature and mechanism of the exaltation is left unclear. Childs eschews any definitive or determinate reading, *à la* traditional readings of a resurrection. Duhm notes the 'unbelievability' of the message sounded in 53.1, and owing to his late dating of the poem, notes that resurrection would likely have been a believable category for the readers (cf. Mal 3.23; LXX Job 42.17ff.).⁷² Though the nature of this resurrection will remain elusive in the immediate context, the exaltation of 52.13 and 53.10ff. will, for Childs, find an extension in Isa 56-66, where the servant seeing his offspring plays 'a major role'.⁷³

In summary, the vantage point of 52.13-53.12 – that of a retrospective, confessing community – provides a significant hermeneutical 'key' that frames the chapter's interpretation. It is within this initial, guiding category that Childs's exegesis takes place, which seeks to add a critical depth to the chapter's larger interpretation. Put in terms of diachronic and synchronic readings, the relation between the two is 'subtle and indirect'.⁷⁴ Within the chapter itself, difficult exegetical work does not detract from the chapter's overall interpretation, but serves to deepen a reading whose general frame of reference is already established from within the text. Within the wider literary setting of the chapter (Isa 40-55), diachronic and synchronic retain their subtle and indirect relationship: on the one hand, the phrase 'my servant' has taken on a specific, individual nature, and thus crucially reaches back to Isa 49.1ff.; on the other hand, the nature of the servant's future exaltation cannot be established from the MT of 53.11-12, and so it becomes a more fruitful

⁷¹ Duhm, *Jesaja*, 396.

⁷² One wonders if a sort of middle way could be found in this dispute, in the fashion of Levenson's 'Resurrection in the Torah', whereby 'life after death', for the patriarchs, was to be found in their progeny. Perhaps this notion changes in the prophetic material?

⁷³ Childs, *Isaiah*, 419.

⁷⁴ Childs, *Isaiah*, 410.

endeavor to reach forward to chapters 56-66 to establish in what ways the book's present shape may illumine an aspect of his exaltation.

Most prominently, Childs notes the peculiar use of the plural עבדים in 54.17b.⁷⁵ Childs attempts to distance himself from semantic emphases that would distance 54.17b from its present, Deutero-Isaianic context,⁷⁶ choosing rather to regard the (here) idiosyncratic usage as a continuation of the 'larger prophetic drama of Second Isaiah'.⁷⁷ As such, it reaches back to Isa 53.11b, as an embodiment of the posterity promised there:

The suffering innocent one of chapter 53 is seen as having his life, in some way, extended and incorporated through his suffering by those who are now designated 'the servants of the Lord.' They are the bearers of the true faith in the next generation...In chapter 53 they had...responded in a confession that through the suffering of the servant they had been made whole. They now will receive their vindication from God.⁷⁸

There is thus a literary, sequential reading of the relation of Isa 53 and 54. Yet Childs, while critiquing Elliger for assigning 54.17b to a Trito-Isaianic context, nevertheless appreciates the semantic links between עבדים and Isa 56-66.⁷⁹ The chief outcome of the appreciation is that the ensuing plural subjects are regarded as 'the communal heirs of the servant',⁸⁰ a thesis, curiously, at home in numerous critical discussions that build upon Elliger.⁸¹

II. *The Text and/in the Church*

Childs closes his reflections by situating the chapter within one final concentric circle of synchronic appropriation, the Christian canon. Here one finds the attempt to integrally relate the depth and discrete voice of the *sensus literalis* of Isaiah 53 to the New Testament, though without compromising the abiding witness of the former. Surely this is a formidable task, and even if any exhaustiveness were possible, a commentary would not be the place for it (as Childs himself notes). In light of this, his reflections are intended to 'stimulate

⁷⁵ Stromberg, *Isaiah After Exile*, 243-47, has provided a clear and succinct summary of scholarship on v.14b.

⁷⁶ E.g. Elliger, *Verhältnis*, 162.

⁷⁷ Childs, *Isaiah*, 426.

⁷⁸ Childs, *Isaiah*, 430-31.

⁷⁹ Cf. Isa 63.17; 65.8, 9, 13, 14, 15; 66.14.

⁸⁰ Childs, *Isaiah*, 431.

⁸¹ Blenkinsopp, 'Servants of the Lord', provides a socio-historical presentation, while his later *Isaiah 40-55* (cf. 366), provides a more literary proposal. Cf. Beuken, 'The Servants of Yhwh'.

further thought', rather than to be definitive and exhaustive.⁸² To do this, Childs begins with the relation of Isaiah 53 to the New Testament, and follows with the ways in which the 'suffering servant' has framed an understanding of the person of Christ, within Christian theology.

It is not until the second of these that we find an early Christian counterpart to that Old Testament community that reflects retrospectively on the suffering servant. But some comment on the relation of Jesus to the New Testament, and particularly the Gospels, is certainly in order. This Childs does with reference to the well-worn 'mind of Christ' debate, noting both the traditionally 'conservative' position, that one can demonstrate a conscious dependence of Jesus on the material of Isaiah 53, and noting the traditionally 'liberal' position, that a notion of a suffering servant was not present until a later Christianity and so not in the mind of Christ in any perceived sense.

But Childs notes some problems with the age-old debate. Aside from the fact that reading a non-canonically-contextualized individual suffering servant (in isolation from its larger literary context) is an ostensibly post-Duhm phenomenon, both positions have relied on rather tenuous historical-critical reconstructions that may fail to contextualize Isaiah 53 *primarily* in the wider (literary) Christian canon.

For this reason, Childs steers clear of trying to relate the suffering servant to a 'historical' Jesus, whereby the authority of Isaiah 53 is linked primarily to what Jesus did or did not have in mind in his own suffering; the kerygmatic lens through which the narratives of Jesus are told upsets any supposedly neutral historical-criticism from engaging the text, as such supposed objectivity is consequently not proper to the material itself.⁸³ Kerygmatic witness, contrary to Bultmann's inference from the phrase,⁸⁴ grows both from within its Old Testament rootedness, and yet somehow stands distinct from this origin, as its witness is 'fulfilled' in the incarnation of Christ (in the broader, Johannine sense of the phrase).

⁸² Childs, *Isaiah*, 420.

⁸³ Cf. Schneiders, *Revelatory Text*, xxiii, 'The past exists only as it is subsumed into the experience, including the interpretive activity, of the subject in the present. The evangelists were not looking back on and describing an objective past, the life of the earthly Jesus, which they then interpreted in the light of their resurrection faith. They only had access to the "past" as it was part of their present'.

⁸⁴ Perhaps most memorably in his, 'Significance of the Old Testament'.

The two-way avenue of discrete Old Testament witness and later theological reflection on this witness, so long as each 'horizon' retains its communicative integrity, obfuscates a supposed clarity in whether the category of an individual suffering servant was present in the earliest Church's reflections on Christ. Whether such a category was present, or whether the person of Christ was later reinterpreted within this category, misses a crucial hermeneutical reality in any discussion of the New Testament's use of the Old. Yet rather than leave us at an interpretative stalemate (since a true dialectic need not imply this), the reality of a kerygmatic witness, through which the gospel narratives are related, possess a theological role 'as the witness of scripture within the entire Christian canon'.⁸⁵ It is for this reason that the key to Christian appropriation of the chapter, and thus to its New Testament extension, is to be found in the role of the Church's kerygma as itself coterminous with the witness of the chapter at hand (i.e. Isa 53).⁸⁶ Commenting on the formation of the New Testament canon, Childs describes the activity in a way that dovetails with the formation of the Old, and thereby paves the way for the relation of Isa 53 to the gospels:

Central to the canonical process was the concern to render the occasional form in which the gospel was first received into a medium which allowed it faithfully and truthfully to render its witness for successive generations of believers who had not directly experienced Christ's incarnation and resurrection.⁸⁷

This at once stands in parallel fashion to the underlying motivations behind the Old Testament's growth and preservation, as Childs regards them. But it also stands in particular connection with Childs's reading of Isa 53: the ongoing preservation of the 'Christ-event', or the ongoing theological reflection on the suffering servant of Israel's past (exilic) experience, are rendered both true and meaningful through their textualization.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Childs, *Isaiah*, 422.

⁸⁶ See Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 513, '[T]he christological use of [Isa 53] seems to be firmly imbedded in the earliest stratum of the kerygma'. Following this statement, however, Childs views this kerygma to have played only a 'minor role in the Gospels and in Paul'.

⁸⁷ Childs, *New Testament as Canon*, 22. Cf. Watson, *Text and Truth*, 52-54.

⁸⁸ See Chapter Three, which touches on Childs's emphasis on the significance of the textualization of oral tradition. Worthy of comparison are Watson's comments on the nature of the 'Gospels as Narrated History', 'The evangelists render neither an inert, immobilized past, nor a purely present address in historical disguise. The past that is rendered is a past that lives and remains effective in the present, for it is the past of the Christ-event whose historic status secures it against a "merely historical" immobility... Writing is not extraneous to the event, but belongs to its very nature... [T]he Christ-event demands its own writing in the form of the gospels' (*Text and Truth*, 53-54). Cf. *ibid.*, 1, where 'truth is textually mediated'.

All of this is simply to say that while the interplay of text and reader may serve to complicate discussions on the mind of Christ (who influenced whom?), it may in effect clarify the more general discussion by relocating what it is we are talking about in the first place. Childs's cautions in the larger discussion of the 'mind of Christ' places a hermeneutical sensitivity to the centrality of the Church's kerygma at the center of the discussion.

An emphasis on kerygma opens the theological discussion to a field beyond the New Testament itself, namely, to the early Church's application of its kerygma to wider theological, dogmatic categories. It is perhaps for this reason that Childs's reflections close with a treatment of early Christian theology's appropriation of the passage to the person of Christ within wider dogmatic categories. The issue is not that of prophecy and fulfillment, in the sense of a temporally dislocated oracle only later realized in the narratives of the New Testament, but that of 'analogy', whereby the suffering servant acts as the meditative locus of future theological reflection, both within our retrospective Israelite community, as well as within the Church's reflection on the person of Jesus Christ. In canonical terms, the text as it stands demonstrates the ongoing centrality of this suffering figure, and thus exerts a coercion, authoritatively, 'that exercised pressure on the early church in its struggle to understand the suffering and death of Jesus Christ'.⁸⁹

As Childs notes, an older model of viewing prophecy and fulfillment as the move from *atemporality* to temporality has not been able to sustain an interest in a chapter clearly anchored to a specific historical location (e.g. a figure in the Babylonian exile), since this model operates on terms foreign to the nature of the text itself (i.e. what Childs has noted regarding ongoing theological reflection). If we can learn something of the nature of prophecy and fulfillment from the chapter at hand, it is that extending significance ought not to imply a lack of historical specificity. And it is within this framework that Childs notes the early Church's use of 'analogy', as a way to connect the 'redemptive activity of the Isaianic servant and the passion and death of Jesus Christ'.⁹⁰ Childs elaborates:

[A]n analogy was drawn between the redemptive activity of the Isaianic servant and the passion and death of Jesus Christ. The relation was understood "ontologically," that is to say, in terms of its substance,

⁸⁹ Childs, *Isaiah*, 423.

⁹⁰ Childs, *Isaiah*, 423.

its theological reality. To use classical Christian theological terminology, the distinction is between the “economic” Trinity, God’s revelation in the continuum of Israel’s history, and the “immanent” Trinity, the ontological manifestation of the triune deity in its eternity. Thus, for example, the epistles of Ephesians and Colossians argue that the creation of the universe cannot be understood apart from the active participation of Jesus Christ (Col. 1:15ff.). Or again, the book of Revelation speaks of “the lamb slain before the foundation of the world” (13:8). In a word, in the suffering and death of the servant of Second Isaiah, the selfsame divine reality of Jesus Christ was made manifest. The meaning of the Old Testament servant was thus understood theologically in terms of the one divine reality disclosed in Jesus Christ. The morphological fit between Isaiah 53 and the passion of Jesus continues to bear testimony to the common subject matter within the one divine economy.⁹¹

Childs’s closing reflections represent the struggle to articulate how dogmatic categories, growing from the Church’s kerygmatic relationship to Jesus, act as a lens, almost a rule, through which the suffering servant is read (‘The meaning of the Old Testament servant was thus understood theologically in terms of the one divine reality disclosed in Jesus Christ’); the kerygma sets the terms, and the servant is read to fit this proclamation, retrospectively and typologically.⁹² It is from the substance, the enduring nature of the Church’s proclamation of the person and work of Jesus, that the Old Testament is interpreted; our present chapter happens to possess a unique depth of potentiality in this respect, and dovetails well with Childs’s earlier outlining of ‘theological exegesis’, whereby the reader pursues a ‘relationship of content’ between Old and New Testaments; herein, a ‘level of theological construction is brought together in rigorous reflection in which the full reality of the subject matter of scripture, gained from a close hearing of each separate testament, is explored’.⁹³ In the same article, four years before the publication of *Isaiah*, Childs can make the same kind of ‘ontic’ Trinitarian reading, likewise citing Col 1.15 and Rev 13.8 (and Jn 1.1):

[I]t is important first to recall that it was not just the Church Fathers who sought to relate the message of the gospel to the Jewish Scriptures in a manner which went far beyond asserting a relationship in terms of an historical sequence. The New Testament does not confine itself to just a temporal relationship such as that of prophecy and fulfillment. Rather its use of this temporal pattern does

⁹¹ Childs, *Isaiah*, 423.

⁹² Cf. Seitz on ‘figural’ reading in his *Prophecy and Hermeneutics*, 69. Cf. Childs, ‘Retrospective Reading’.

⁹³ Childs, ‘Recovering’, 23.

not rule out at the same time moving the discourse to an ontological plane...Of course, this New Testament usage [Jn. 1.1; Col. 1.15; Rev. 13.8] does not in itself resolve the issue of theological exegesis of the whole Christian Bible, but it does provide a serious precedent for theological reflection, and calls into question the widespread reflex of biblical scholars to dismiss any category other than historical sequence as an illegitimate intrusion from the side of philosophy.⁹⁴

The early Church thus sets a precedent, which legitimates the interpretive process to move away from theological reading as a strictly 'horizontal' affair, and toward a reading of the Old Testament that has something *immediately* theological, Christological, in its kerygmatic pressure.⁹⁵ It was this very practice that lead Childs to praise, albeit carefully and in some ways critically, Aquinas's Isaiah commentary. One upshot of Aquinas's work, Childs notes, is the 'profound wrestling with the selfsame ontological reality shared by both testaments', as well as his 'careful attention to the ontological force exerted by the subject matter itself (*res*)'.⁹⁶

In summary, the confessing community of believing Israel, a feature which the text of Isa 52.13-53.12 appears to assume, finds a counterpart in the early Church's ongoing reflection on the person of Jesus. As the suffering servant remained an abiding locus of theological reflection within Israel, so did the passion of Jesus hold lasting import for the early Church's reflection on its own identity, and on its relation to God. A certain level of ground-clearing needed to be done, to shift the discussion away from the traditional 'mind of Christ' debates, so as to emphasize the role of the Church's kerygma as a crucial hermeneutical factor in any New Testament appropriation of the Old. And it is from within this kerygma that the early Church formulated its thinking on the relationship, that of 'substance', of Jesus to the suffering servant.

The impact is at once felt for a handling of the paradigmatic occurrence recorded in Acts 8.30ff. Koole seems to misinterpret the significance of 8.35's precise wording, finding the passage to be a potential warrant for a particularly *linear* understanding of prophecy and fulfillment in the early

⁹⁴ Childs, 'Recovering', 21.

⁹⁵ The categories of 'horizontal' and 'vertical' ('participatory'), in relation to biblical interpretation, have recently been spelled out by Levering, who praises Childs's canonical approach as a particularly promising avenue for relating the general categories of 'history and theology'. See Levering *Participatory Biblical Exegesis*, 8ff. Cf. idem., 'Linear and Participatory History'.

⁹⁶ Childs, *Struggle*, 163-64.

church. Under this model, the relation of the economic and immanent, or noetic and ontic, Trinity, is not easily rendered.⁹⁷ The precise wording, however, is crucially differentiated from a model of linear fulfillment: the Ethiopian's query presents a context for Isaiah 53 in terms of a crippling model of linearity for prophecy and fulfillment, 'περὶ τίνος ὁ προφήτης λέγει τοῦτο; περὶ ἑαυτοῦ ἢ περὶ ἑτέρου τινός' (8.34). Philip's answer, however, does not adhere to the terms set by the question; it rather tells the Ethiopian the 'good news about Jesus' (8.35) – a kerygmatic presentation of the person of Jesus, to which the Scriptures attest, but only at the deeper level of a shared trinitarian 'res', 'καὶ ἀρξάμενος ἀπὸ τῆς γραφῆς ταύτης εὐηγγελίσατο αὐτῷ τὸν Ἰησοῦν'. Janowski notes the significance of the wording:

Die Antwort, die er erhält, ist erstaunlich, denn Philippus antwortet nicht: 'Dieses Wort (nämlich 53,7f) ist in Jesus erfüllt' oder: 'Der Gottesknecht von Jes 53,7f ist Jesus Christus'. Vielmehr, beginnt Philippus zu reden und ausgehend von diesem Schriftwort das Evangelium von Jesus zu verkündigen (Apg 8,35). Wie das anschließende Taufbegehren belegt (Apg 8,36-38), läßt sich der fromme Äthiopier durch diese Methode der aktualisierenden Schriftaneignung überzeugen, weil sie Sinn für ihn macht.⁹⁸

Janowski is surely right in noting the significance of the specific wording of 8.35. As he points out, the subsequent desire of the eunuch for baptism really only makes sense in light of a wider, dogmatic placement of Isa 53.⁹⁹

In conclusion, Childs has sought to read Isa 53 in line with his previous hermeneutical concerns of both Scripture's 'ontological plane', as well as its allegorical setting for Christian biblical theology. The starting point has been the location and elevation of the confessing 'we' of the poem, which in turn lends a kerygmatic, confessional nature to the text itself, concerned with the ongoing theological reflection of those who would come to 'believe' (53.1) in the message proclaimed about this person. Certain exegetical decisions were made along the way to establish the 'we' as a chief concern of the poem.

⁹⁷ Taking Luke-Acts as some kind of literary / theological unity, a similar issue arises in Luke 24.13-35 as in Acts 8.30ff. On the attestation of this text to the Christ-event, in such a way that one's paradigm of the Old Testament's relation to Christ in fundamentally reoriented, see Moberly, *Bible, Theology, and Faith*, 63; Hays, 'Reading Scripture', 229-32.

⁹⁸ Janowski, *Der Gott des Lebens*, 351.

⁹⁹ In, *Der Gott des Lebens*, 380-83, Janowski finds Acts 8 to function as an invitation to scriptural reading, a practice spelled out through five implicated areas of reading the Old Testament: 'Der Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums', 'Die zweifache Leserichtung der christlichen Bibel', 'Die Korrelation von Ursprungssinn und Rezeptionssinn', 'Das Neue Testament im Licht des Alten Testaments', and 'Das Lesen der zweigeteilten christlichen Bibel'.

Having established this starting point, Childs can speak of the kerygmatic transformation or typification of the historical person of the servant into a theological signifier. Similar to the wider typifying moves at work in Deutero-Isaiah's corpus, a once historical entity has been recontextualized to serve a different (theological) function.¹⁰⁰ Such a transformation renders certain form-critical questions regarding the poem (which 'Gattung' does it in fact inhabit?) difficult, and perhaps even fruitless.

Interestingly, Childs does not draw a chronological line between the servant and the Christ event, in the older model of prophecy and fulfillment. Rather, by noting the early Church's proclivities toward ontological, allegorical interpretation, Childs notes that the relation between the early Church and the Old Testament was a dialectical one, between the discrete influence of the Old Testament and the recalibration of its witness in light of the revelation of the Christ event. The move seeks to relate a reading of Isa 53 to a subject matter that attends the text not simply at the level of concepts (to employ Yeago once again), but at the deeper level of judgments – the triune God's economic *and* immanent presence in the events recounted in the poem. An attempt is thus made to carry out the three avenues proposed in his 'Recovering'.¹⁰¹ The extent to which this is successful will be handled in the Conclusion, but we can say for now that Childs's reading of Isa 53 strives to embody a model of theological interpretation that relates the Old Testament to the triune '*res*'.

¹⁰⁰ In turn, for Childs, this will be re-appropriated yet again in Trito-Isaiah, beginning with 54.17b. See Childs, *Isaiah*, 430-31. Cf. Stromberg, *Isaiah After Exile*, 243ff.

¹⁰¹ Childs, 'Recovering', 22-23.

Chapter 5

Alec Motyer, Theological Hermeneutics and Isaiah

'Quis custodiet ipsum interpretem?'
Alec Motyer¹

'[I]t is now more acceptable than at any time in the last one hundred years to speak of a single literature'.
Alec Motyer²

Alec Motyer is included in the present study of Isa 53 as Christian Scripture, since he represents a vast number of the Church's contemporary readership and a particular evangelical commitment to the Old Testament. This constituency of robust, conservative evangelicals tends to adhere to an assertion of a single, 8th century authorship behind the book's composition,³ rooted in a theological concern for divine sovereignty over (and within) history. The affirmation of Isaiah's single authorship also informs (and is deeply informed by) a vision of prophecy that is capable of functioning 'long-term' – that is, well beyond the prophet's own life. Undoubtedly, this affects how one construes the nature of the text and its witness. Further, there is the shared evangelical assessment that much (if not all) 19th century higher criticism had a corrosive effect on holistic reading, and that it is the task of the theological interpreter to respond to this fragmenting with a fresh appraisal of the Old Testament's textual integrity.⁴ The keystone of this textual integrity is

¹ Motyer, review of Goldingay, 80.

² Motyer, *Isaiah*, 13.

³ The ascription of single authorship to Isaiah is not limited to Protestant evangelicals alone. Mel Gibson, a staunchly conservative Roman Catholic, opens his film *Passion of the Christ* with a (partial) quotation from Isa 53.5. Under the quotation is the date, '700 BC'.

⁴ Cf. Motyer's specific challenge on Isa 54, where he resists the discussion of the respective backgrounds of Isa 54.1-5, 6-10 and 11-17, on grounds that the hypotheses 'fail for lack of information'. Moreover, 'suggestions that we have here vestiges of a "promise of salvation" responding to a now lost "community lament" do not further our understanding of the material in its present integration' (*Isaiah*, 444). Those to whom he is responding are, presumably, Kissane, *Isaiah*; and Elliger, *Deuterocesaja*. Cf. Elliger, *Einheit des Tritojesaja*, 15ff.

not to be found in source-, tradition-, or redaction-criticism, nor in the text's 'Wirkungsgeschichte'. It is to be found, rather, in a historical affirmation of the single-authorship of the entirety of the book. Motyer comments:

The challenge to unity of authorship began over the issue of predictive prophecy. The rationalistic climate of the last century in which the ground rules of Isaiah-study were laid forbade anything so 'miraculous' as foretelling the future and the prophets became highly sophisticated commentators speaking out of and into their own times.⁵

It is in response to the 'rationalistic climate' of 19th century scholarship that Motyer seeks to respond. He is not alone: for O.T. Allis, E.J. Young, and J.N. Oswalt (evangelical adherents, in this regard, in a US context) this has been a central concern and contestation.⁶ For these three, as well, single authorship functions as an *a priori* assumption, rooted in concerns at home with evangelical theology and early twentieth century reactions to the advances of Modernity.⁷

The present chapter seeks to contextualize Motyer and those evangelical, theological concerns that come to bear directly on his reading of Isaiah generally, and chapter 53 specifically. Regardless of what evaluative judgments one may make on the approach and reading as a whole (as well as in specifics), Motyer presents a coherent and powerful presentation for the theological interpreter, which is not to be dismissed simply on grounds of disagreement with his overall structure.

I. Motyer and Evangelical Hermeneutics

Alec Motyer was born in Dublin, Rep. Ireland, and at sixteen years old converted to evangelical Christianity through the work of a Brethren mission. He studied theology at Trinity College, Dublin, and would eventually pursue ordination within the Church of Ireland. Having served as vice-principal of Clifton Theological College, Bristol, Motyer undertook a full-time ministerial role in London, after which he returned to Bristol to assume the position of principal of Trinity College. In both ecclesial and training contexts, Motyer pursued Old Testament work within an evangelical frame of reference, aimed

⁵ Motyer, 'Isaianic Literature', 32.

⁶ Allis, *The Unity of Isaiah*; Young, *Book of Isaiah*; Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah*.

⁷ See the Westminster Confession of Faith, I:i, vi, viii, ix. See Allis, *op. cit.*, 124-25; Young's *Studies* is a collection of articles originally published in the newly-formed *Westminster Theological Journal*.

primarily at training ministers for Anglican ordination and church service. His position as editor of the *New Bible Commentary* and *The Bible Speaks Today*, as well as his frequent speaking engagements at the Keswick conference, serve an evangelical lay and ordained audience.

It is noteworthy that Motyer, as well as certain evangelical contemporaries in Old Testament studies,⁸ never taught in a university setting; not to disparage the context, this fact simply illustrates that the kinds of questions Motyer felt compelled to address were not the same questions always at work in the secular arena of biblical scholarship. In short, he did not feel the pressures at work in a university context, and so was relatively free to make claims at odds with wider critical outlooks. To appreciate Motyer within the context in which he worked it is important to keep this location in mind.

Motyer's evangelical interpretation exists, not so much as a propositional syllogism, as a constellation of affirmations, interdependent and irreducible when read in relation to one another. By virtue of this, it is difficult to prioritize certain affirmations over others, so I supply a simple list of characteristics of Motyer's context and work.

I.1 *Beginning with Jesus*

A significant feature of Motyer's reading of the Old Testament as Christian Scripture is found within his contention that to rightly understand the Old Testament, one must 'start with Jesus'.⁹ Motyer intends the phrase not along the more sophisticated lines of the immanent Trinity's *ontic* presence in the Old Testament narrative, but rather that the Old Testament is read in light of the reading strategies of Jesus: what we find in the New Testament governs what we find in the Old, '[W]e should see the Bible as the book with the answers at the back'.¹⁰ Motyer entertains the notion of the two testaments as a 'two-act play', where both need the other for their sustained intelligibility. At the centre of this model is the belief that 'our authority for anything we believe is the Lord Jesus Christ'. Motyer continues, 'This great Lord Jesus

⁸ Young, for example, worked within the evangelical ethos of Westminster Theological Seminary, from 1936-1968; Oswalt, in an evangelical Methodist context, at Asbury Theological Seminary, from 1989-1999, and from 2009-present.

⁹ Motyer, *Roots*, 15-27.

¹⁰ Motyer, *Look to the Rock*, 19 (emph. removed).

came from outside and voluntarily and deliberately attached himself to the Old Testament, affirmed it to be the word of God and set himself, at cost, to fulfill it (e.g. Mt. 26:51-54).¹¹ The import of this reality for the Christian believer, according to Motyer, is that they would 'be made like the Son of God in all things – and this includes how he thought and what he thought'.¹² Further, 'It means following Christ's thoughts, his grasp and communication of the truth (John 15:15; 1 Cor. 2:16)'.¹³ The outcome is presented, 'When, therefore, we seek some sure vantage point from which to look at the Old Testament, *what better question can we ask than, "How did Jesus see it?"*'.¹⁴ Elsewhere, Motyer presents the reading model as that which 'stands beside the Son of God'.¹⁵ Christ and the early Church did not see the former's ministry as breaking with what came before, but continuing it in a linear fashion.

There is no apparent entertainment in this question over how the early Church reconciled the paradigm-shattering Christ-event with the ongoing validity of the Old Testament, 'It would not have surprised his disciples that our Lord affirmed the enduring validity of the Old Testament (Matt. 5:18)'.¹⁶ Nevertheless, 'Without the New Testament, the Old is going nowhere, it is only a might-have-been, an unsubstantiated longing. And without the Old, the New lacks explanation'.¹⁷

At the center of this two-directional movement, Motyer identifies a consistent messianic hope woven into the Old Testament story,¹⁸ one that reaches its clearest exposition in the book of Isaiah.¹⁹ In Isaiah, the messiah is viewed as 'endowed with Spirit and word',²⁰ there is a 'concept of

¹¹ Motyer, *Look to the Rock*, 21.

¹² Motyer, *Look to the Rock*, 21.

¹³ Motyer, *Roots*, 17. Cf. Motyer, *Discovering*, 8.

¹⁴ Motyer, *Roots*, 17. This is to be differentiated from the relation of Old and New testaments found in Watson, *Text and Truth*, 216, who is (in that context) critiquing Childs, *Biblical Theology* (esp. 719-27).

¹⁵ Motyer, 'Isaianic Literature', 53.

¹⁶ Motyer, *Roots*, 21. Cf. *Discovering*, 33-36.

¹⁷ Motyer, *Roots*, 21-22.

¹⁸ Motyer, 'Messiah', 988-89.

¹⁹ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 13-16ff.

²⁰ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 13. Cf. Isa 11.1-2, 4; 42.1; 49.1-3; 50.4; 59.21; 61.1-3. Curiously, only one of the pericopes cited (61.1-3) uses the language of *רוח*, and a notion of Yahweh's 'spirit' is absent in two others (49.1-3; 50.4). It is likewise curious that Cyrus is absent in the list, as the explicit mention of him as 'his anointed' (*משיח*), and the large-scale, subsequent description of his mission in 45.1 (cf. 44.28 and 61.4) would seem to have as much to do with Yahweh's authoritative, effecting 'word' as any of the passages cited above. The omission is very likely intentional: Motyer will view Cyrus as a *political* servant who 'dovetails' with the

righteousness' that is seen to run straight through the book,²¹ and a renewed assurance of the progeny of the Davidic throne.²² Further, the messianic hope opens to Gentile inclusion after first affirming its saving purposes for Israel.²³ Finally, the messianic hope is at root enigmatic, as the book of Isaiah depicts a messiah 'who is plainly man and truly God'.²⁴ Motyer's reading of Isaiah, as with the Old Testament more generally, 'begins with Jesus' in the sense of Lk 7.19, 'Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?'

I.2 Inspiration, Revelation, and Propositional Content

In a passage dealing with the book of Ezekiel, Motyer relates the prophet's experience in Ezek 3.1ff. to the Church today:

We can identify with so much of Ezekiel's experience: the Word of God, the holy Scripture, are God's gift to us, complete and entire, allowing neither addition nor subtraction, plain in meaning, to be read and understood, obeyed and loved. But Ezekiel, like all the prophets and apostles, was also unique, and in this we can rejoice but not identify with him. The Word of God was given to him in such a way that he was enable to 'speak my words...speak by means of my

spiritual servant of the servant songs (42.1-4; 49.1-13; 50.4-9; 52.13-53.12). Cyrus is the lesser of two servants here, and it would confuse Motyer's unifying program to mention him here.

²¹ See also Motyer, *Roots*, 22-23, on 'righteousness' as a two-testament theme. Sadly, Motyer does not give space to the numerous cognate literatures from the sixth century onwards that use the language of 'righteousness'. Cf. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 315-16, on Cyrus; 1QpHab 1:13 (cf. 4QpPsb [4Q173] fragment 1, 4; 2, 2) on the *נְדָקָה בְּיָדָהּ*.

Motyer observes that *נְדָקָה* is heralded in 9.7 (9.6 MT) as characteristic of 'throne and King', and that the messianic rule of the Davidic king finds its *modus operandi* in 11.4. In Isa 53.11, the servant, as well as those whose sin he carries (53.11), is identified with righteousness. For the latter, it is the gift from Yahweh to his 'servants' (54.17b). In 61.10 and 63.1, righteousness is both a constituent element of the messianic rule, as well as 'the outcome of his activity' (61.3, 11).

In reality, we might cautiously probe the observations. First, In Isa 9.7 (9.6 MT), the phrase *וּבְנֵי נְדָקָה וּבְנֵי שֶׁפֶט* is probably a hendiadys, signaling a kindness and faithfulness akin to Isa 16.5. This would accompany Isa 11.4a and 11.4b, the latter of which does *not* envisage the salvation of the nations. Motyer does not note *נְדָקָה* in 11.5. Moreover, the translation of *נְדָקָתָם* in 54.17 as 'their vindication' is preferable to 'their righteousness', within the wider context. Condamin, *Isaïe*, 348, goes so far as to render it 'l'apanage', though without justification for the translation. Cf. Weinfeld, 'Justice and Righteousness'; Scullion, 'Sedeq-Sedeqah'; Schmid, *Gerechtigkeit als Weltordnung*.

²² Isa 9.6 (MT); 11.1 (where *נִיזַע יִשְׁעֵי* is understood to echo 9.6); 55.3 (cf. 42.6; 49.8; 54.10); 63.1 (cf. 34.1-17; 2 Sam. 8.14; 1 Chr 18.13). The reference to Isa 63.1-3 is Motyer's, and not my own. There is a difficulty here, insofar as the voice of 63.1 ('Who is this who comes from Edom?') is *not* David, but Yahweh, 'It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save'.

²³ Isa 1.26-27 and 2.2-4; 11.1-9 and 11.12-16; 49.6; 52.13-53.12 and 54.1ff; 59.20-21 and 60.1ff. In Isa 11, however, the inclusion of the Gentiles takes place through a slightly different means than that of, e.g., Isa 55.4-5. Similar to Motyer is Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, 3:363.

²⁴ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 14. Cf. the depictions of Isa 9.5 (MT); 51.9; 52.10; and 53.1, with those of 53.2, 3. For readings of a less proximately 'truly God' variety, cf. Marti, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 93; von Rad, 'Das jüdische Königsritual'; Alt, 'Jesaja 8, 23-9, 6'; Kraus, 'Jesaja 9, 5-6 (6-7)'; Carlson, 'Is. IX 1-6'; Roberts, 'Whose Child Is This?', 129.

words'. This is the marvel and miracle of verbal inspiration, God's Word in God's [sic?] words.²⁵

That the various 'words' of Scripture can be identified as the singular 'Word of God' is a claim that only makes sense under a general rubric of revelation and inspiration. The Bible is regarded to be primarily authoritative in terms of its ability to *speak* to successive generations of those within the believing community, as it reveals the divine will for humanity.

'Speaking', of course, has all kinds of implications, not least of which is the affirmation of a specific content inherent to the biblical texts.²⁶ Indeed, as Motyer holds that 'inspiration' is best defined as God's preparatory work to enable 'human minds' to receive his self-revelation,²⁷ we find the notions of revelation, inspiration, and the 'Sache' of Scripture chiefly to concern *doctrine*.²⁸ Arising from a sort of theology of divine accommodation, revelation is propositional, and propositions communicate specific truths.²⁹ Succinctly, inspiration and revelation concerns 'God speaking: the God of truth articulating the truth of God'.³⁰ Motyer's understanding of propositional revelation functions to assign to historical events specific, enduring theological significance. So, for example:

There is nothing in the sight of the three crosses that would make an observer single out the centre cross, but behind the event lies the whole flow of predictive and interpretive scripture, the teaching of Jesus himself...and the propositional revelation granted to the apostles.³¹

What the cross 'means', and by extension what the events and 'predictions' of the Old Testament 'mean', are safeguarded, Motyer notes, by the propositional content by which the events are understood. Consequently, 'What the Bible is found to teach, I hold myself bound to believe'.³²

²⁵ Motyer, *Discovering*, 139-40.

²⁶ Cf. Kelsey, *Proving Doctrine*, 14-31, who discusses the Princeton theologian B.B. Warfield in this vein. Motyer's similarity to Warfield is readily apparent, notably in terms of a doctrine of plenary inspiration. See Warfield, *Inspiration and Authority*, 113.

²⁷ Motyer, *Roots*, 34.

²⁸ Cf. Frei's treatment of S.J. Baumgarten's *modus cognoscendi*, which bears many similarities to Motyer. Frei, *Eclipse*, 88ff.

²⁹ Motyer, *Roots*, 34-35.

³⁰ Motyer, *Roots*, 34.

³¹ Motyer, *Roots*, 34. Motyer cites Jn 14.26; 16.12-15; and 1 Cor. 2.7-16.

³² Motyer, *Roots*, 34. Whether or not this is too simplistic remains an open question. There is undoubtedly a measure of naivety in the assumption that Scripture functions so simply. What propositional account of the crucifixion, for example, can be assigned that covers the distinctive narratives of Mark (15.1-39) and Luke (23.1-49)? Cf. Moberly, 'Proclaiming Christ Crucified', 83-104.

Motyer shifts to the analogy of a piece of art, which presents, '...the same kind of problem as unfolding a long, sustained, interlocking argument. It is a proposition which, whether of few or numberless parts, is commended by a single unity of conception'.³³ The notion is expanded, through a favourable citation of T. Bradshaw,³⁴ for whom propositional theology is the most proper mode of approach for apprehending the soteriological significance of biblical texts.³⁵ So, for example,

The Bible, for traditional theology, contains a vast range of materials from centuries of time. Some is obscure and difficult to grasp; some is fairly plain. But whatever the type of literature in question, the mind can address it and seek to understand it...The texts do say something which we can *understand*, therefore they are 'propositional' in the sense that they make statements or 'propositions' which the mind can understand...Scripture therefore has a clarity and a content...Written words are written words, and they tell us something...they have a content with which we may agree or disagree. The devastatingly simple fact is that the whole Bible tells a story which is basically intelligible...[Jesus] interpreted himself to his disciples after his resurrection, according to Luke's account of the journey to Emmaus, with reference to a 'corpus of revealed propositional truths', which he claimed concerning himself.³⁶

Motyer finds Bradshaw to have 'set the scene' for his own evangelical approach to relating Christ to the Old Testament.

I.3 'Long-term Prophecy'

Motyer is not unaware of the important distinction between 'long-term' and 'short-term' prophecy, in older models distinguished between 'forthtelling' and 'foretelling'. Perhaps surprisingly, he is sensitive to the need to account for the contemporaries of the prophet as the target audience for specific oracles:

Just as we can make the mistake of restricting 'law' to legislation, so we can restrict 'prophecy' to prediction...[The prophets] were never 'fortune-tellers'. When they foretold, it was in order that those to whom they ministered might, firstly, know their God now in the light of what he would yet do, and, secondly, reform their lives now so as to be ready for his coming acts...This sums up the whole prophetic ministry of the Old Testament: revealing the Lord, ministering to the present, declaring the future. If we ask, then, 'were the prophets

³³ The quote purportedly stems from Churchill, *Painting as a Pastime*; its quotation may be found in Motyer, *Look to the Rock*, 20-21.

³⁴ Bradshaw, *Olive Branch*. Cf. Motyer, *Look to the Rock*, 17.

³⁵ Bradshaw, *Olive Branch*, 104, 151, 233, 292-95.

³⁶ Bradshaw, *Olive Branch*, 283-84, 289.

foretellers or forthtellers?' they were both, but their foretelling was part of their forthtelling.³⁷

The prophets were not concerned chiefly with eternal truths, or simply with events yet to come. As with the case of Malachi, Isaiah is concerned with 'crowd-response'.³⁸ According to Motyer, Prophetic speaking and writing concerned their contemporaries and their inner posture toward God.

Yet there is an immediate, potential difficulty with Motyer's comments. In short, has he presented an entirely accurate depiction of prophetic activity in Israel? As Motyer presents the prophetic mode of speech, we find the prophets summoning a present response in light of an impending *certitude*, where the response of the people has no consequential connection to the unfolding of historical events. But surely the call to repentance renders the coming judgment contingent upon the human response; the prophets understand, as it were, the inner mechanisms of the relationship between God, Israel and the nations, and so accordingly present Israel with the equation of 'If A, then B', etc. Moberly comments:

We are thus presented with a fundamental axiom about prophecy. On the one hand, what a prophet says on behalf of God with reference to the future of those addressed will not be realized in isolation from the response that is given. This means that whatever the precise words of the prophet, that which will take place cannot be predicted *tout court*; human attitude and action are integral to the divine unfolding of history. On the other hand, what the prophet says about God seeks a particular kind of response... Prophetic speech is response-seeking speech – in the first instance the purpose of pronouncing impending disaster is that the sinful respond by turning to God, but there is also the further prospect that God may then respond by withholding the disaster.³⁹

Moberly's comments come in the context of Jer 18.7-10, where the נָחַם of Yahweh is contingent upon the שָׁבוּ of the people (v. 8, 10). Yahweh's declaration – no small matter – intends to elicit a response from the people, according to which it will itself respond.⁴⁰

Taking this theoretical shortcoming on board, Motyer does manifest an exegetical sensitivity toward the prophet's ability to speak to his contemporaries. The juncture of Isa 2.2-4(/5) and 2.6-4.1 (Motyer's division)

³⁷ Motyer, *Roots*, 19.

³⁸ Motyer, 'Isaianic Literature', 23.

³⁹ Moberly, *Prophecy and Discernment*, 52-3.

⁴⁰ Cf. Jer 26.19; Ezek 33.12-16; Jonah 3.1-10. Similarly, cf. Gen 6.5-8.

stands as one example. Succinctly stated, what is one to do with the drastic change of voice, between a promises of hope (vv.2-4, 5) and threat of judgment (vv.6ff.)? While in theory Motyer does not allow for the divine word to be (in some sense) dependent upon human response, Isaiah is nevertheless portrayed as holding out the hope of a future 'ideal Jerusalem', as a means of compelling the 'actual Jerusalem' to change her course. Implicit in the reading is the assumption that the enticement of 2.2-4(/5) renders the judgment of 2.6ff. provisional. On 2.2-4 Motyer writes, 'In the present setting, Isaiah uses [2.2-4] to challenge the people to face up to what, possibly, they were singing with glib detachment'.⁴¹

Further, Motyer's understanding of the future-orientation of Isa 40-55 appears on a first read to fail to account for the prophet's contemporaries. The chapters are not taken to be a type of 'Fortschreibung' of Isa 1-39, or etiological explanation of the rise of Cyrus (Isa 41.2), but a simple future-oriented promise of eventual return from an eventual exile that stood some 200 years further down the timeline than Isaiah himself.⁴² But Motyer is quick to point out that the time span of 200 years stems from our perspective, and not his. That is, Isaiah of Jerusalem knew of a rising Babylonian power that could, potentially, rival the strength of Assyria:

It is not so much a matter of question such ability to predict so far ahead – that would be like penalizing a man for being good at his job! It is rather a matter of asking what *present* function such *remote* predictions would fulfil. Take, for example, the promise of a return from Babylon. Isaiah 40:1 says, 'Comfort, my people', but what sort of comfort would it be if Isaiah were saying, 'Don't worry, chaps, it will be all right in 200 years'? Cold comfort, indeed! The picture changes, however, when we note that Isaiah himself says nothing about a century or two centuries ahead. It is our knowledge of history that contributes these two time factors. We cannot even say if Isaiah himself knew anything about the length of time involved. He is silent on the subject. But even though Assyria was the superpower of his day, Babylon was a would-be superpower, and a force to be reckoned with. A prediction of Babylonian exile was a live contemporary possibility, and a valid message to the day. Likewise, the prediction of a sure and certain return would have been a very comforting reassurance, just as the undated but ever-imminent return of the Lord Jesus is to us. This is what we mean by prediction related to moral pressure.⁴³

⁴¹ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 53.

⁴² The number 200 is Motyer's shorthand for a historical distance that probably spanned something closer to 150-170 years.

⁴³ Motyer, *Discovering*, 151. Cf. Motyer, *Isaiah*, 28-29, 298, 352ff.

The comfort of Isa 40.1, according to Motyer, applied simply to the future, whether short- or long-term. The future orientation of Isa 40-55, if allowed, does not necessarily stand at odds with a contemporaneous call the prophet's contemporaries.⁴⁴ The same could be said of what Motyer holds to be a future-oriented, nascent messianic hope in the Old Testament.⁴⁵

I.4 *Structurism and Literary Unity*

Motyer's significance for this study arises not only because of his evangelical commitments to the theological priority of the teaching and perspective of Jesus,⁴⁶ nor solely because of his commitment to revelation, inspiration, and doctrine-as-content, nor solely because of his connected insistence on prophecy as carrying a long-term capacity, but because the combination of these affirmations leads to specific exegetical decisions, most notable of which (for our purposes) is the contention that the 8th century Isaiah of Jerusalem is responsible for the composition of book of Isaiah that we now possess. The affirmation is a hallmark of evangelicalism's response to an Enlightenment rationalism that sought to present the book's history as chronologically differentiated.⁴⁷ Motyer's *Isaiah* commentary finds single authorship to be manifest most apparently through the book's 'structurist' self-presentation.⁴⁸

The relation between the above evangelical commitments and 'structurist' readings is at first elusive. What relation does a literary claim have to propositional theological belief? Is not structurism an arbitrary, or at least provisional, affirmation, with little necessary connection to Motyer's other contentions? In short, structurism serves apologetically to secure a unity of revelation and its propositional content; it functions as a tool to demonstrate the literary unity of a book and its authorship – whether Isaiah,

⁴⁴ Seitz, 'Isaiah 1-66', 105-26.

⁴⁵ Motyer, 'Messiah (OT)', 988-89.

⁴⁶ It should be noted that Motyer also appreciates Peter and Paul as supplying interpretive leads. See Motyer, *Discovering*, 15-17.

⁴⁷ At its worst, note the comments of Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason*, §2.9, 'Whoever will take the trouble of reading the book ascribed to Isaiah will find it one of the most wild and disorderly compositions ever put together; it has neither beginning, middle, nor end; and, except a short historical part and a few sketches of history in two or three of the first chapters, is one continued, incoherent, bombastical rant, full of extravagant metaphor, without application, and destitute of meaning; a school-boy would scarcely have been excusable for writing such stuff; it is (at least in the translation) that kind of composition and false taste that is properly called prose run mad'.

⁴⁸ The phrase is Motyer's (*Isaiah*, 24), and possesses no formal links with structuralism's wider sociological and anthropological resonances, though cf. Patte, *Structural Exegesis*, and Barthes, et al., *Structural Analysis*, for potential similarities in content.

Zephaniah,⁴⁹ Haggai,⁵⁰ Amos,⁵¹ Exodus,⁵² the historical narratives,⁵³ or even the New Testament epistles.⁵⁴ Since scripture itself is divinely inspired and ‘authored’ in terms of propositional revelation, then alongside the demonstrative role of structurism emerges the more important role of communicating a unity of *content*.⁵⁵

In a review of Goldingay’s *Theological Diversity*,⁵⁶ Motyer expresses great sympathy for the wider aim of the book. Nevertheless, there is a criticism to be leveled:

Nineteenth century historical study shattered the earlier ‘one book’ view of the Old Testament, exposing ‘vast differences’ within the strata of material that it contains; and while neo-orthodoxy sought to reemphasize one ‘biblical faith’, more recent swinging of the pendulum affirms ‘the multiplex nature of the Old Testament tradition’, its ‘completely divergent “theologies”’ and ‘struggling contradictions’. While these quotations come from John Barr and not Goldingay...they do capture the spirit of the whole book *in which facets of Old Testament truth tend to become tensions, tensions diversities and diversities contradictions*.⁵⁷

Even at the level of ‘tension’ there seems to be a problem for inspired, propositional revelation, since at the end of the tunnel is the seemingly inevitable ‘contradiction’. Rather, Motyer employs a structuralist model to affirm both unity of author as well as a unity of content; indeed, Motyer will even call it a ‘very obvious unity’.⁵⁸ With ease, then, can he speak of the ‘great central truth’ behind various biblical books,⁵⁹ which then contribute to a larger ‘Mitte der Schrift’.

A lingering question throughout Motyer’s work (and especially his *Isaiah*) is whether or not these kinds of structures are actually ‘there’. Motyer addresses this question directly, in relation to a structuralist presentation of Zephaniah:

The question has to be faced whether such a detailed and integrated presentation of *Zephaniah* as this is ‘really’ there in the material itself or whether it is a product of structural enthusiasm on the part of a

⁴⁹ Motyer, ‘Zephaniah’, 897-962;

⁵⁰ Motyer, ‘Haggai’, 963-1002.

⁵¹ Motyer, *Amos*.

⁵² Motyer, *Exodus*, 23-26.

⁵³ Motyer, *Discovering*, 98.

⁵⁴ Motyer, *Philippians*.

⁵⁵ Motyer, ‘Unity of the Bible’, 11-23.

⁵⁶ Goldingay, *Theological Diversity*.

⁵⁷ Motyer, review of Goldingay, 79 (emph. added).

⁵⁸ Motyer, review of Goldingay, 80.

⁵⁹ E.g. Motyer, *Exodus*, 25-26.

commentator. The answer can only be reached, so to speak, on the ground—by detailed study of the text to see if these particular sections and sub-sections can be isolated, by noting parallelisms and identities of vocabulary associating section with section and so on, *but, in theory, the existence of such inherent artistry should be assumed rather than questioned.* After the performance of his Symphony ‘From the New World’, Dvořák wrote to a friend in Europe about the symphony and the way it had been received and commented additionally that another friend whom he named was at that moment ‘working on an analysis of my symphony’. In other words, at the level of musical inspiration there is more to a work of art than the composer holds consciously in his mind. *How much more may this be the case when one faces the gigantic human capacities of the Old Testament prophets and beyond, behind and through it all the inspiration of the Divine Spirit Himself.*⁶⁰

This is highly illuminating, and suggests three levels at work in Motyer’s understanding of structurism. First, with any great mind – whether musical, poetic, or prophetic – there exists an undeniable, inherent artistry that assumes a structural form. Second, the prophets were artists *par excellence*, in possession of ‘gigantic human capacities’, and so for Motyer it is not artificial to assume an artistic, structural form in their writing. Third, it is not simply that the prophets are greater than Dvořák on a human level, but they have, so to speak, God on their side. There is no question, therefore, over whether Motyer’s structurist reading is empirically ‘there’, in the authorial composition of the text, or whether it is indebted to a theological affirmation of God’s inspiration of biblical texts. The answer undoubtedly resides with the latter, though for Motyer this will, by necessity, subsume the former.

Yet this does not disqualify the model of reading, or even render suspect, *a priori*, the quality of Motyer’s exegetical ventures. It may in fact lead to insights missed in other reading strategies, whether ‘critical’ or ‘post-critical’. Prior to his ICC *Isaiah 1-5*, Williamson praises a contribution of the commentary, if only in a qualified sense:

Motyer not only defends the authorial unity of the whole book, but frequently goes his own way in his ‘structurist’ analysis of the text with inevitable consequences for interpretation. Critical scholars would be unwise to ignore this work, however. Motyer frequently shows himself to be a perceptive ‘reader’, *and in terms of the final form of the text he often proposes approaches which are more convincing and illuminating than a number of recent post-critical attempts to do justice to the present form of the book.* Furthermore, he has a good eye for literary structure; while sometimes his suggestions in this area seem to be

⁶⁰ Motyer, ‘Isaianic Literature’, 27 (emph. added).

contrived, they are certainly worth consideration, whether on a single paragraph or on larger sections of the book. Thus, while most readers of *VT* will be unable to share many of Motyer's presuppositions, his commentary deserves a hearing in these days when many of the issues which were determinative of an earlier stage in Isaianic research are being reconsidered.⁶¹

The review is noteworthy, insofar as it was published the same year as the release of Williamson's *Book Called Isaiah*, the thesis of which stood upon a differentiation of authorship: a conviction which Motyer attempted to combat in his commentary. Given such a context, it is high praise indeed! Structuralist reading and single authorship exist within a wider evangelical framework, and carry the potential to illumine the text.

Motyer's evangelical interpretive commitments maintain the constellation of concerns that I have outlined up to this point: interpreting the Old Testament 'alongside' Jesus, a strong insistence upon inspiration and revelation as primarily propositional, with a specific doctrinal content assigned those propositions, and a structuralist approach that secures at least from a literary perspective a unity of authorship, and thus a unity of content. Long-term prophecy no doubt takes its lead from 'beginning with Jesus' (and other New Testament authors), but it also is the *result* of structuralist, single-authorship interpretation; for, if Isaiah of Jerusalem did indeed write the entirety of the book, we would have numerous, significant 'foretellings' on our hands. It is now appropriate to turn to Motyer's structuralist and single-author approach to the book of Isaiah.

II. *Structurism and Single Authorship in Isaiah*

Motyer's commitment to a single, unified authorship behind the biblical material drives his attempt to unite the book of Isaiah, reading it as a 'holistic' text.⁶² Motyer certainly has peers who hold a similar reading of the book,⁶³ even if critical, historical work has not always arrived at the same conclusion.⁶⁴ Yet Motyer's readings frequently appear to be the better for it: they manifest a high degree of attentiveness to detail and intertextuality. The

⁶¹ Williamson, review of Motyer, 576.

⁶² Motyer, *Isaiah*, 25ff.

⁶³ One particularly thinks of Oswalt, *Book of Isaiah*, in the NICOT series.

⁶⁴ In both English and German speaking circles, one may note those engagements with Isaiah contemporary with Motyer's initial 1993 commentary on the book. See Kraus, *Unbekannten Propheten*; Seitz, *Zion's Final Destiny*; idem., *Isaiah 1-39*; Wildberger, *Jesaja 1-12*; Höffken, *Das Buch Jesaja*; Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39*.

conviction of a single authorship forces Motyer, in a sense, to have to reckon with textual affiliations throughout the Isaianic corpus. That Motyer often presents such 'good' textual reading raises the hermeneutical question concerning the place and enduring value of historical-critical questions for the exegetical task. That is, if a robust handling of the Isaianic text, in some sense of the phrase, is possible under the rubric of single authorship, then what abiding value will literary and historical breaks in the text lend to sustained readings of the book's constituent parts? Moreover, the problematic of Motyer again surfaces when we note that Duhm, Childs, and Motyer all regard their work as assisting, in various ways, the ongoing life of the church. While Motyer and Childs, for example, are of one accord in the import they assign to theology in the interpretation of Scripture, a key difference will emerge as concerns the value each places on modern knowledge and the advances of historical-critical work. A final, multi-faceted question will thus present itself: which of Motyer's concerns actually engender a heuristic engagement of the biblical text (and which of Childs do the same), to what extent does history (i.e. 'Historie') contribute to this, and in what way do these questions inform the wider intersection of scripture and theology?

If Bernhard Duhm functions in this thesis as a reader of Isaiah 53 from the perspective of one who is a 'historical critic', then Motyer will function as a counterbalance in the study, as one who does not find the advances of modern, critical analysis to be of much positive value. Motyer, too, is 'modern' in formal ways, though his reading is marked by numerous, interrelated evangelical commitments (above). In this sense his approach is *proximately* theological, in the sense of bringing dogmatic theological affirmations to bear on the immediate subject-matter of the text.

This chapter will principally treat Motyer's wider construal of the book of Isaiah under his structuralist rubric of single authorship. Subsequently, the next chapter will look specifically at 52.13-53.12, and how the interests below affect that reading. In the Conclusion, I will address what Motyer's framework for understanding Isaiah (and his reading of Isa 53) might imply for the relationship of historical-critical work on Isaiah to theological interpretation of the book.

Above, structurism featured as a component of Motyer's evangelical approach to Isaiah. Given that so much of his *Isaiah* commentary depends upon this affirmation, a more lengthy treatment is in order.

II.1 *Structurism in Isaiah*

In a basic sense, Motyer represents an attempt to read the Old Testament, and Isaiah in particular, theologically: he is, on any reckoning, a theological interpreter of Isaiah, standing in the Christian tradition. Yet two facets of his interpretive procedure mark him out as distinct amongst his contemporaries.⁶⁵ The first of these is an understanding of theological interpretation as embodying a direct correlation, or an 'immediate referentiality', between the words of the book of Isaiah and the subject-matter of Jesus Christ. This bears some relation to Childs and Barth.⁶⁶ Secondly, Motyer is distinctive as concerns his particular 'structuralist' approach to the Isaianic literature. This is perhaps less at home in contemporary theological interpretation than the last point, so it will require some justification.

Motyer is straightforwardly affirming of his approach as one that is 'based on concentrated "structuralist" study'.⁶⁷ At first glance this appears to undermine his wider attempt to read Isaiah holistically; for, as becomes quickly apparent, *chiasm* and *inclusio* occur extensively throughout the commentary, often to such an extent that it becomes a mental exercise in holding together disparate, simultaneous, poetic structures. One may note the example of 43.22-44.23, which in and of itself possesses five detailed chiasms.⁶⁸ This taken as a wider unit, however, is a four-part parallel, offering a 'spiritual redemption' in contrast to the 'national redemption' similarly outlined in 42.18-43.21.⁶⁹ This pattern of double-release is again reiterated in form in the move from 44.24-48.22 (political deliverance) to 49.1-53.12 (spiritual deliverance).⁷⁰ The former dichotomy of national/spiritual redemption highlights the 'promises of redemption', while the subsequent

⁶⁵ One may compare these facets with the general concerns of Oswalt, for whom the phenomenon of predictive prophecy as a chronological prediction of Christ, is the guiding concern of reading 'theologically'. See Oswalt, *Isaiah 1-39*, 46ff.

⁶⁶ See Driver, *Childs*, 235-37. Cf. Gignilliat, *Fifth Gospel*, 139ff.

⁶⁷ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 24. Cf. Motyer's handling of 'artistic patterning', in his 'Isaianic Literature', 26.

⁶⁸ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 338-51. Isa 43.22-24; 43.25-44.5; 44.6-8; 44.9-20; 44.21-23.

⁶⁹ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 327-225. Isa 42.18-25 (= 43.22-24); 43.1-7 (= 43.25-44.5); 43.8-13 (= 46.6-20); 43.14-21 (= 44.21-23).

⁷⁰ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 352-82; 383-443.

differentiating between political/spiritual deliverance highlights the ‘agents of redemption’. These act as the ground for the ‘Universal Consolation’ of 40.1-42.17, which is itself patterned in the ‘Universal Proclamation’ of 54.1-55.13.⁷¹ All of these thematic orchestrations take place within various large-scale and small-scale chiasms. As such it often becomes difficult to keep the ‘wood’ in view when the ‘trees’ are so scrupulously analyzed.

Chiasm and *inclusio* are abundant in the commentary, and this fact should not be minimized or relegated when assessing Motyer’s exegesis. In fact, Motyer does not simply assume this kind of literary structuring, but positively argues for it. For him, ascertaining the structure of Isaiah will become the primary task of the exegete – a conviction shared, in various forms, by recent readers of Isaiah.⁷² Moreover, analyzing the various structures within a book provides a ‘control, determining to a large extent the ambience within which exegesis may move’.⁷³ The language of ‘control’ is somewhat scientific in nature, though Motyer does not mean to insert into the book of Isaiah an extraneous, objective rule against which structures are read. Rather, he defines the controlling stylistic features from within the literature itself, and, significantly, finds structure to be the most apt tool for bringing out the text’s *sensus literalis*. With reference to *chiasm*, Welch has pointed out that (because of the difficulty involved in demarcating literary units) ‘evidence of chiasmus is not entirely objective and quantifiable’.⁷⁴ This need not debilitate Motyer’s reading, however; for, there is nevertheless the possibility of working within the macro-structures of Isaiah, as the literary units there are fairly clearly sectioned.⁷⁵ As regards *micro*-structures, we will

⁷¹ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 289.

⁷² For a brief survey, see Williamson, ‘Recent Issues’, 23ff. Though Williamson does not mention him, Seitz is perhaps a particularly noteworthy example of an interest in Isaiah as a ‘unity’. See Seitz, ‘The One Isaiah/Three Isaiahs’, 13-22; idem., ‘Isaiah 1-66’, 105-126; idem., *Prophecy and Hermeneutics*.

⁷³ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 24.

⁷⁴ See Welch (ed.), *Chiasmus*, 13.

⁷⁵ That Motyer generally works within traditional breaks in the literature is evinced by his acceptance of Duhm’s demarcation of the servant songs as distinct literary units. Further, many of Gesenius’ critical divisions are also accepted: 1-12; 13-23; 24-35 (24-27; 28-33; 34-35); 40-66. While Motyer reads Isa 38 as the beginning of the ‘Book of the Servant’, chapters 38-39 are only prefatory to the main body of that literature in Isa 40ff. This reflects Rosenmüller’s early reading of a break at Isa 40 (*Iesaiæ Vaticinia*, III:v). See also Gesenius, *Jesaia, ersten Theiles*, 145-46, 415-20, 444-45; 447-51; 756-61; 823-28; 904-909; 932-36; idem., *Jesaia, zweyter Theil*, 1-35.

have to say that the proof is in the pudding, and in this area, Motyer is as close a reader of MT Isaiah as any.⁷⁶

An example of an internal 'control' can be found in an Isaianic literary technique for which Motyer has coined a neologism – the 'extended doublet'. He defines the phenomenon as that which 'consists in covering the same area of truth in the same consecutive steps twice over'.⁷⁷ Examples are noted in Isa 7.1-9.6 (MT) and 9.7-11.16 (MT), which allegedly mirror one another, though they are told 'from two angles of perspective'.⁷⁸ Further, 28.1-29.24 is a statement of principles, the application of which is spelled out in 30.1-35.10.⁷⁹ Motyer notes the feature elsewhere in the book (e.g. in 42.18-43.21 / 43.22-44.23; 51.1-8 / 51.17-52.12),⁸⁰ though not in chapters 56-66. There, a different literary feature is exhibited – the 'arch' – which takes the shape of a large-scale *chiasm*, allowing for literary dynamic within a wider literary integrity.⁸¹ Added to this are the small-scale occurrences of unique poetic structuring,⁸² rhyme,⁸³ the 'Isaianic palindrome',⁸⁴ Isaianic 'assonance and alliteration',⁸⁵ and the frequent use of 'lists'.⁸⁶

⁷⁶ From a different angle, we might say that Motyer has brought together 'meaning' and 'form', in a way resisted by Gunn, 'Narrative Criticism', 193, for whom 'the interpretive move from form to meaning is redolent with difficulties'.

⁷⁷ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 24.

⁷⁸ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 24.

⁷⁹ Isa 28.1-29 emphasizes the rejection of Yahweh's 'word' (28.9-13) and 'covenant' (28.14-15), applied in 30.1-33 in the condemnation of the Egyptian alliance. In Isa 29.1-14 Yahweh acts (esp. vv.1-8), though further action is still required (vv.9-14), and this is applied in 31.1-32.20, where Yahweh's intervention in history is stretched out to include a 'perfect kingdom' that 'lies beyond' (32.1ff.). In 29.15-24 Yahweh is upheld as the sovereign of the world (29.15), whose purposes have a spiritual (29.18-19), moral and social concern (29.20-21). In 33.1-35.10 Yahweh's sovereignty is reiterated (33.3, 10), with a view to spiritual (33.24), moral and social (33.15) reform. Cf. Motyer, *Isaiah*, 228.

⁸⁰ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 326-337, 338-351, 402ff.

⁸¹ The structure of the 'arch' can be seen in Motyer, *Isaiah*, 461 (with reference to the macro-structure of Isa 56-66). See also Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*, 15. By 'dynamic', Motyer does not mean to suggest a fluid *social* situation behind the text, a critique of which in turn affects the formation of the book. In its more extreme form, this alternative dynamicity is proposed by Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39*, 83-92. See also idem., *Prophecy and Canon*, 139-47 (cf. 151-52). In modified form, dynamicity is proposed by Brueggemann, 'Unity and Dynamic'.

⁸² Motyer cites Isa 35.4 as an example of typical (i.e. a-b-a-b-c) structure, and Isa 4.2-6; 32.5-8 and 44.24-28 as examples of atypical structure (cf. 53.4-6).

⁸³ Motyer notes Isa 1.9, 13, 25; 5.14, 27; 6.11; 10.6; 17.10; 33.22; 41.2, 17; 46.11; 49.10, 19; 53.6; 57.6; 66.1.

⁸⁴ Motyer notes Isa 1.7, 18; 7.23; 11.13; 13.12; 14.25; 35.5; 40.19; 42.13; 49.13; 54.13; 57.1, 20-21; 60.16; 66.2.

⁸⁵ Motyer notes Isa 1.21; 5.7, 16, 30; 7.9; 8.12, 22; 14.23; 15.9; 24.1, 3-4, 6, 16, 23; 27.7; 35.9; 37.30; 40.31; 41.2; 50.4; 54.11; 58.12; 59.7, 11; 60.18. To this we may also add Isa 1.2, 4; 3.1; 24.16; 24.17. Cf. Alonso-Schökel, 'Isaiah'.

⁸⁶ Motyer notes Isaiah's 'penchant' for compiling things into lists: Isa 1.17-18 (a list of imperatives); 2.12-16 (a list of things exalted); 3.2; 10.9 (a list of names); 10.28-32; 11.11; 15.1-9 (a list of place names); 21.15 (a list of 'from's'); 24.2 (a list of comparisons); 24.7-12 (a list of 'items of sorrow'); 33.15-16 (a list of qualifications); 37.33 (a list of 'not's'); 41.11-12 (a list of

The fact that Motyer finds these features present throughout the book of Isaiah suggests for him that one author is the source of the (often idiosyncratic) techniques used. If one is to adopt a single-author framework for explaining the book's various literary styles, then it is at home to likewise adopt a literary, 'structuralist' approach to delineating the message of the book. Indeed, in this framework, Isaiah emerges as every bit the literary giant Motyer makes him out to be.⁸⁷ We might compare Motyer's outlook with that of Assis:

Chiasmus is first and foremost a stylistic device. Composing a unit chiasmically requires careful planning, determination of all components in advance, and word choice that is concordant with its context while resembling the parallel component of the chiasmus. The reader who apprehends such structures will appreciate the skillfulness of the author and the well-planned design of the composition. Awareness of the reader's response led biblical authors to employ chiasmus to reflect the inner world of a character.⁸⁸

Assis gives a pithy summary of the connection between 'structuralism' and a single-author theory of composition; the one will be reflected in the other.

With such 'structuralist' concerns in the background, Motyer states at the outset of the commentary that perhaps now, more than at any other time in the last hundred years, it is appropriate 'to speak of a single literature' in the book of Isaiah. That the book represents a single literature does not necessarily predispose him to any one mode of advancing his various interpretations: appeals for unified readings of Isaiah have recently taken numerous shapes.⁸⁹

'statements of overthrow'); 44.24-28 (a list of 'attributive clauses'); 52.7 (a list of participles); 65.11, 13-16 (a list of contrasts).

⁸⁷ One small qualification is that there is, as Blenkinsopp has noted, 'much that is, from the literary point of view, mediocre at best'. Blenkinsopp finds this to be the case especially with what he reads to be 'later phases of composition' and redaction. He will attempt to locate the development of Isaianic style in terms of the text's shifting sociological backdrops. See his *Isaiah 1-39*, 80-81.

⁸⁸ Assis, 'Chiasmus', 274. Quoted in Wright, 'Fallacies of Chiasmus', 143.

⁸⁹ In addition to Clements (cited below), one may note two BETL publications that marked a general change in approach to the book of Isaiah. The first is Vermeylen, *The Book of Isaiah – Le Livre d'Isaïe*; the second is van Ruiten and Vervenne, *Studies in the Book of Isaiah*. Attention should also be drawn to Rendtorff, for whom the methodological issues surrounding Isaianic passages grew out of wider hermeneutical concerns. See his *Canon and Theology*, 1-16, 46-65 (generally), and 146-189 (on Isaiah). Redactionally, cf. Clements, 'Patterns', 48-49; idem., 'Unity of the Book of Isaiah'; idem., 'Beyond Tradition History'; Williamson, 'Recent Issues', 23-30. For wider theological construals of 'unity', see Wolterstorff, 'Unity'. For establishing 'unity' with reference to historical ecclesial reading, see Louth, *Discerning the Mystery*, 130. Reading with a 'rule' can also be seen in Childs's *Biblical Theology*, 70-71, 88-89; idem., *Old Testament Theology*, 1-27.

While Motyer is undoubtedly 'theological' in his 'Preface',⁹⁰ his actual setting-out of the text is more similar to Childs than to purely redactional or more dogmatic schemes: he seeks to hear, from within the text itself, a witness from an overarching textual integrity.⁹¹ Yet Motyer is not dependent upon tradition history in the same sense as Childs. For Motyer, the 'unity' of Isaiah is to be found in the unity of a single author who, while standing in certain traditions (e.g. the Jerusalem cult?), nevertheless possesses a voice that can be ascertained without extensive recourse to these prior, inherited traditions. The relation of this author to a divine, inspiring agent is perhaps hinted at in the transparent closing of his preface, dedicated to 'him who alone is worthy of all praise, the Servant of the Lord, the reigning King and the coming Anointed Conqueror, Jesus Christ our Lord'.⁹²

I will try to make the case that Motyer does not stand or fall solely on this confessional basis. Certain of his wider convictions are open to question, yet the affirmation of a single author does not, curiously, preclude Motyer from producing a close and careful reading of the biblical text itself; in many ways, Motyer has his finger on the Isaianic pulse. While it may not be the pulse of the prophet himself, it arguably remains close to the literature that bears his name.

⁹⁰ By 'theological' I mean to imply, in some sense, confessional; so Hays, 'Practice of Theological Exegesis' (esp. criterion ii on p. 12).

⁹¹ So Childs, *Introduction*, 75-6. Seitz, *Prophecy and Hermeneutics*, 72, is similar.

⁹² Motyer, *Isaiah*, 10.

Chapter 6

Alec Motyer and Isaiah 53

'The Servant is thus a go-between, interposing between two parties, not as a barrier but as a bridge. In verse 6, the Lord put his servant in between, using him as a means of disposing that (our iniquity) which alienated him from us. Here the Servant comes voluntarily to stand with us so that when he had borne our sin he might bring us to God'.

Alec Motyer¹

Overall, Motyer seeks to highlight Isaiah 53 as an unprecedented text in the Old Testament, which stands simultaneously within and without its Old Testament theological context. At many points, the chapter appears to be more at home in a NT (Synoptic and Pauline) frame of reference. Elevating the poem as a *unique* revelatory moment ultimately serves to minimize the distance ('Zeitabstand') between Old and New Testaments – a distance sought by numerous historical-critical exegetes. Motyer can thus comment that within the chapter's center, 53.7-9, 'Old Testament *and* biblical soteriology reaches its climax'.²

I. Contextualizing Isaiah 53

Within Motyer's synthetic structuring of the 'Book of the Servant' (Isa 38-55), Isa 52.13-53.12 has a unique position. On the one hand, it witnesses to the 'completion' of the Servant's work, heightening the initial sufferings of 49. 4, 7 and 50.6, and giving the explanation of the intent and effect of those sufferings.³ In this sense it stands in a connection with what comes before, as what was previously unclear is *now* explained as the wounding and bruising

¹ *Isaiah*, 443.

² *Isaiah*, 433; *emph.* added.

³ 52.13 opens with an echo of 42.1: עבדי in 42.1 and ישכיל עבדי in 52.13.

of one who bore the sins of others'.⁴ Isaiah 53 clarifies and reveals, and as definitive revelation enjoys a place of prominence in reckoning with the identity of the servant.

On the other hand, the poem is read as standing in relationship to what follows, and cannot be too readily distinguished from it. The juxtaposition of Isa 53 and 54-55 would suggest, for Motyer, an internal, textual logic, 'On the basis of this sin-bearing work [of Isa 53], Zion is called into a covenant of peace (54.10) and the whole world into an everlasting covenant (55.3)'.⁵ While to many critical readers this connection would seem to import an unnecessary *ergo* between Isa 53 and 54-55,⁶ Motyer in fact finds an internal logic through the previous commission to the servant in 49.6:

'It is too light a thing that you should be my servant
to raise up the tribes of Jacob
and to restore the preserved of Israel;
I will give you as a light to the nations,
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth'.

Motyer's interpretative move takes its lead from a similar 'servant' context in Deutero-Isaiah, and extends the compositional possibilities of Isa 53-54/55, based on the theological outlook of that earlier text (49.6).⁷

The interpretive setting of 49.6 at the outset of the servant's work in 52.13-53.12 is central for the importance of the fourth servant song; for, according to Motyer, it is on the heels of Isa 53 that come the chapters dedicated to those to whom the servant is 'sent'. Reaching its peak in 53.4-6, 7-9, and 11, and the soteriological outworking of the accomplishment is applied in 54, to Zion, and 55, to the nations: it is a 'double task' of the Servant.⁸

⁴ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 422, emphasis added.

⁵ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 423. See below for Motyer's reading of 'behold' in 52.13 as the 'awaited explanation' of *how* a universal salvation would come about (cf. Oswalt, *Isaiah 40-66*, 413). Seitz also finds a connection, though in a more roundabout fashion than Motyer. See Seitz, *Isaiah 40-66*, 429-30, 459-60, 462, 471.

⁶ E.g. Laato, 'Composition of Isaiah 40-55', 222, distinguishes Isa 54-55 from 40-53, though allows for significance in the juxtaposition.

⁷ For a differing structuring based on Isa 49.6-7, see Melugin, *Formation*, 168. Melugin holds 49.7 and 52.13-53.12 to form an *inclusio* around 49.14-52.12. Melugin's centering of 49.14-52.12 is peculiar, however, in that the central concern there is the salvation and restoration of Zion, rather than the nations; for, just a few paragraphs earlier, Melugin has stated, '[The poet's] primary intention is undoubtedly to focus on *their* [i.e. the nations'] coming to know Yahweh's purposes' (167-68). For Melugin on the relation of 52.13-53.12, see *ibid.*, 169, 174.

⁸ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 444. Cf. *ibid.*, 422. It is perhaps noteworthy that in the 1999 re-release of the commentary (under the *TOTC* series) the section division is simply 52.13-55.13. Similar to this 'universal' contextualizing of the servant, cf. Schultz, 'Nationalism and Universalism', 139-40.

In Isa 49.6 interpretive possibilities exist, precisely with reference to the meaning of the initial clause נקל מהייתך לי עבר.⁹ The text may carry the potential of suggesting an eclipse of Israel for the sake of the Gentiles. Where the servant has failed with regard to Israel (נקל מהייתך), the Gentiles will provide a more fit plunder for the servant's work.¹⁰

However, Isa 49.6 does not have to be read to the detriment of Israel. Beuken has noted the high importance of Israel's restoration throughout Deutero-Isaiah's writings, and thus challenges the relegation of Israel to the background of the servant's ministry. One key aspect of this is the 'present' tense of 49.5, which would seem to suppose this wider assumption, 'Een presentisch tijdsaspect in de vertaling van vs. 5b is verantwoord, omdat het imperfectum, gevold door een perfectum, gebeurtenissen of toestanden kan schilderen die zeker plaatsvinden (Gen. 18:18) of het karakter van een gewoonte hebben aangenomen (Gen. 29:2v.; I Sam. 2:19...)'.¹¹ Ancient sources would seem to support Beuken's contention, and would thus counter the above 'eclipsing' reading: the LXX reverses the language of MT 49.6 (μέγα σοί ἐστίν) and 1QIsa^b,¹² the Targum¹³ and Kimchi¹⁴ all read הניקל, making the clause a (seemingly rhetorical) question ('is it too light a thing').¹⁵ Koole will read the 49.6 in light of 49.5b, suggesting that in comparison with the 'weight' of the servant there (כבד), 'Jacob's restoration is certainly not too "weighty", too heavy for him'.¹⁶ It is this manner in which Motyer reads 49.6. In relation to the mission to Israel *alone*, Motyer writes, 'The Lord speaks of it as by itself falling far below the capacity and dignity of his Servant... Therefore, a wider work is included in his vocation'.¹⁷

Further, a relationship between Isa 53 and 54 is not too difficult to establish: there is enough significant shared vocabulary between the chapters to suggest that even if Isa 52.13-53.12 at one point enjoyed an independent existence,¹⁸ it does so no longer. One may simply note the shared language between the two: 54.1 and 53.11 (רבים), 54.3 and 53.10 (זרע), 54.3 and 52.15 (גוים), 54.10 and 53.5 (שלים). There would appear to be a connection, at least along redactional lines, that suggests a re-appropriation of the socio-political summoning to 'return' in 52.11.¹⁹ Isa 52.13-53.12 acts, then, as a 'bridge text' that embodies a rather severe *relecture*.²⁰

These brief observations safeguard at least the possibility of Motyer's reading Isa 49.6 as an ongoing ministry of the servant, realized both in the call to Zion in 54.10 (cf. 49.6a), and to the Gentiles in 55.3 (cf. 49.6b). In this way he has, in fact, supplied a coherent reading validated by the text itself; the language of 'on this basis', used above for a logical connection between Isa 53 and 54/55, may be dispensable; but it may also serve to actualize a potential in the servant's work, as testified to in Isa 49, 53 and 54/55.

⁹ Koole, *Isaiah 49-55*, 20ff.

¹⁰ Cf. Acts 13.47; Calvin (on Isa 49.6), '[W]hen the preaching of the Gospel produced hardly any good effect on the Jews, and when Christ was obstinately rejected by them, the Gentiles were substituted in their room' (a marginal gloss cites Acts 13.47) (*Isaiah 33-66*). Also, Dillmann, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, 426; Duhm, *Jesaja*, 370 (following Dillmann); Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 299; Steck, 'Der Gottesknecht', 119ff.; Baltzer, *Deutero-Jesaja*, 387.

¹¹ Beuken, *Jesaja IIB*, 25. Just prior to this (24) Beuken has made his point with slightly more nuance.

¹² Cited in Hermisson, *Deuterojesaja*, 320. 1QIsa^a, on the other hand, follows the MT here almost verbatim.

¹³ Targum Isaiah reads:

ואמר הזעיר לכון האתון מתקרון עבדי לאקמא ית שבטי יעקב ונלות ישראל לאתבא.

¹⁴ Kimchi, *Commentarii in Jesaiam Prophetam*, 360.

¹⁵ For some of these sources, cf. Koole, *Isaiah 49-55*, 21.

¹⁶ Koole, *Isaiah 49-55*, 22. So again Beuken, who writes of the 'concentric circles' that weave 49.5 and 49.6 together (*Jesaja IIB*, 23), 'Op het eerste gezicht vertonen deze verzen [i.e. 49.5-6] een concentrische opbouw per regel... Neemt men echter de syntactische structuur in aanmerking, dan onstaat [such a concentric pattern]'. I have omitted Beuken's division of the verses here, as they require a diagrammatic demonstration of what is essentially a division and aligning of 49.5a with 49.6b, 49.5b with 49.6c, and 49.5c with 49.6a.

¹⁷ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 388.

¹⁸ Duhm, *Propheten*, 331.

¹⁹ Melugin, *Formation*, 169, 174. Koole, *Isaiah 49-55*, 347-48. On the relationship of Isa 54 and 55, see Melugin, *Formation*, 169-175.

²⁰ Melugin, *Formation*, 169, 74, for the phrase 'bridge text'.

If Isa 52.13-53.12 is to be contextualized with what comes after (Zion and the nations, in Isa 54-55), a similar contextual observation can be made that situates the poem with what comes *before*: three times (51.1-3; 4-6; 7-8) Israel is summoned to listen/hear (הקשיב / שמעו), a pattern which is then mirrored by three calls 'to enjoy the reality of the promised blessings' (51.17-23; 52.1ff.; 52.11-12): the call to 'awake' in the *hithpolel*, the call to 'awake' in the *qal*, and the summons to 'depart'²¹ in the *qal*.²² This phenomenon of calls to hear and summons to 'enter' raises what is for Motyer a fundamental question, as to what happened so as to enable Israel to enter such promises.²³

Isaiah 53 is thus situated by Motyer as a means of fulfilling 49.6, to bring Yahweh's saving work to both Zion (54.1ff.) and the world (55.1ff.), and as the key to the implied logic of the summons of 51.17-23, 52.1ff., and 52.11-12. Indeed, Motyer rounds off this contextualization with the observation that 52.12 is semantically parallel to 55.12 (i.e. כִּי לֹא בַחֲפוּזִין תִּצְאוּ and כִּי בַשְּׂמֵחָה תִצְאוּ), and 51.1-3 is conceptually parallel to 55.12-13. All of this combined leads Motyer to view 52.13-53.12 as a theological centerpiece. On any reckoning, Motyer has offered a serious intertextual argument.

There is another angle from which Motyer contextualizes 52.13-53.12, which has much to do with Motyer's reading of an implicit, though tacit, question as to how Israel is able to 'enter' the promises to which she has been summoned in 51.17-23; 52.1ff.; and 52.11-12. The question it raises for Motyer

²¹ Motyer notes the resonances of Ex. 12.31 here, in *Isaiah*, 420 (cf. *Isaiah*, 300; Isa 35.8; 42.16; 43.16-19; 48.17-21; 55.12). On Exodus imagery, see Baltzer, *Deutero-Jesaja*, 487ff.; Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 252-53; Anderson, 'Exodus Typology'; Muilenburg, *The Book of Isaiah*.

²² However, associating 52.1ff. with 51.17-23 and 52.11-12 is questionable, at the very least on lexical grounds. Motyer reads 51.9-16 as a unique comment on the 'arm of the Lord', before which comes the threefold summons to hear, and after which follows the threefold summons to 'enter' the promises just enunciated. But the second threefold pattern, while possessing some similar features (e.g. a two-fold opening admonition), does not manifest a convincing uniformity: 51.17 begins with the admonition to 'awake', הִתְעוּרִי, in the *hithpolel*; 52.1 begins similarly, though simply as a *qal*, עוּרִי; and 52.11, while following the previous two-fold opening pattern, has a verb of a different category, again in the *qal*, טוּרִי. The difference of category might be accounted for through the need to pattern the (mirrored) threefold structure on that of 51.1-8.

But an issue concerning the division itself arises, when one notes that what is seen to be central to the wider structure (i.e. the admonition of 51.9) is in fact present elsewhere (52.1). David Wright has recently noted such a problem, labeling it a 'chiastic interference' (Wright, 'Fallacies', 145-6). In other words, Isa 52.1ff. is said to belong to the second set of three admonitions, but its use of עוּרִי reflects much more that of 51.9, a verse that is supposed to be quite distinct from the threefold patterns that surround its present location. That is to say, what stands at the center of the rather chiastically structured 51.1-52.12 is in fact present in one of the 'arms' of the chiasm.

²³ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 422-23.

grows out of his particularly sequential, linear reading of the chapters that come before.²⁴ Motyer reads Israel to be in two kinds of bondage: political (42.18-43.21) and spiritual (43.22-44.23). To the former of these, Yahweh plans to use Cyrus as an agent of deliverance (44.28; 45.1), and indeed, through Cyrus Israel is to make a hasty escape from Babylon (52.11-12), as Babylon itself is doomed (46.1-2). This is met with hostility, however, for in the very chapter that announces Cyrus' liberating declaration,²⁵ Israel is apparently capable of doubting Yahweh's liberating purposes (45.9-13). The struggle continues to mount, until 46.8, wherein Israel is called *בושעים*.²⁶ Motyer reads 'rebels', which in his framing of the wider context does better justice to the role of 46.8 (cf. 46.12; *אבירי לג הרחוקים מצדקה*). Even amidst the triumphant calls to leave Babylon (48.14-16) Israel is still called 'wicked' (48.22), an apt summary of the resistance to Yahweh's plan exhibited there (48.4, 5, 7, 8, 18). A deeper problem persists, and a 'greater task awaits the greater [i.e. spiritually atoning] servant'.²⁷

II. *Isaiah 53*

While Motyer has a high regard for prophetic literature as source of predictive hope, Isa 53 functions literarily, within its present context.²⁸ Any predictive element in the chapter, realized ultimately in Christ, is left in the background: Motyer is not interested in chronological, apologetical situatings of prophecy-fulfillment.²⁹

Isaiah 52.13-53.12 is central in the unfolding of Isa 40-55, and has itself a structural center. Motyer is not alone in finding a literary structure for the poem,³⁰ but where some lay emphasis on differing *perspectives* here (i.e. that of

²⁴ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 352.

²⁵ Cf. II Chr 36.22-23; Ezr 1.1-3.

²⁶ Note *פושע* in 53.5. For Motyer, *פושע* (as opposed to *הטא* or *עון*) highlights a particular need for atonement, beyond that which the levitical system could offer.

²⁷ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 353.

²⁸ Cf. Schildenberger, 'Die Gottesknecht'.

²⁹ He will prefer the term 'realization', in *Roots*, 21.

³⁰ König, *Das Buch Jesaja*; Scullion, *Isaiah 40-66*; Berges, *Das Buch Jesaja*; Hermisson, 'Das vierte Gottesknechtslied', 10; Oswalt, *Isaiah 40-66*, 376; Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 400ff.; Beuken, *Jesaja IIB*, 193; von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, II:255-56, Begrich, *Studien*, 56ff.; Zimmerli, 'Vorgeschichte', 213ff. See also Barth, CD IV.1, 30. *Contra* Whybray, *Thanksgiving*, 110-11; Orlinsky, 'The So Called "Suffering Servant"'. Probably correct, however, are the judgments of Koole, *Isaiah 49-55*, 259, that a chiasmic overlap between the two sections suggests they remain together.

God's pronouncements versus that of a penitent community's reflection³¹) the difference in style is for Motyer one of 'describing' and 'explaining' the meaning and significance of the event.³² The very structuring of his exegesis bears witness to this concern: 52.13-15 is titled 'Enigma', after which we find 53.1-9 to be the 'Revelation' on which we may finally arrive at the 'Solution' of 53.10-12. This structuring illustrates that Motyer reads the concern of the chapter to be particularly doctrinal, corresponding to a rubric of sin, propitiation and restoration. Indeed, Motyer reads *בדעתו* in 53.11 as referring to 'the *knowledge* which [the servant] alone possesses (and we need) regarding what God requires in relation to sin and what to do about it'.³³ Coming to a right theological understanding of this event is central.

Concerning doctrinal content, Motyer regards the poem's theological centerpiece as residing in 53.4-6, provides an 'explanation' or 'answer' to what is read to be an implicit question in 52.12-53.3 and 53.7-11: 53.4-6 'forms the heart of the poem, the revelation without which...the Servant cannot be understood'.³⁴ This theological center is structurally surrounded, such that we find the following literary shaping:³⁵

A1

הנה ישכיל עבדי ירום ונשא ונבה מאד
 כאשר שממו עליך רבים
 כן־משחת מאיש מראהו ותארו מבני אדם
 כן יזה גוים רבים עליו יקפצו מלכים פיהם
 כי אשר לא־ספר להם ראו ואשר לא־שמעו התבוננו

B1

מי האמין לשמעתנו וזרוע יהוה על־מי נגלתה
 ויעל כיונק לפניו וכשרש מארץ ציה
 לא־תאר לו ולא הדר ונראהו ולא־מראה ונחמדהו
 נבזה וחדל אישים איש מכאבות וידוע חלי
 וכמסתר פנים ממנו נבזה ולא השבנהו

³¹ Notably, Childs, *Isaiah*, 414; Janowski, *Der leidende Gottesknecht*, 38-40; idem., *Ecce Homo*, 55; Beuken, *Jesaja IIB*, 193-98); Melugin, *Formation*, 167; Weippert, 'Die "Konfessionen" Deuterоjesajas', 110.

³² Motyer, *Isaiah*, 423-24. For Motyer, then, 'what actually took place' (or, 'wie es eigentlich gewesen') on the surface of the servant's sufferings (i.e. despised, rejected, afflicted, taken away, etc.) does not lend a theological significance in and of itself, apart from its theological context. Bultmann, curiously, approached the Old Testament from a similar angle. Cf. Young, 'Bultmann's View of the Old Testament' (*contra* Grant, 'The Problem with Demythologizing', 49).

³³ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 441.

³⁴ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 424.

³⁵ Berges, *Jesaja*, 404, has given the poem a similar shaping, noting the parallel of *זרוע* in 53.1, and *בידו* in 53.10d.

B2

אכן חלינו הוא נשא ומכאבינו סבלם
 ואנחנו חשבננו נגוע מכה אלהים ומענה
 והוא מחלל מפשענו מדכא מעונותינו
 מוסר שלומנו עליו ובחברתו נרפאלנו
 כלנו כצאן תעינו איש לדרכו פנינו
 ויהוה הפגיע בו את עון כלנו

B3

נגש והוא נענה ולא יפתח פיו
 כשה לטבח יובל וכרחל לפני גזייה נאלמה
 ולא יפתח פיו
 מעצר וממשפט לקח ואתדורו מי ישוחח
 כיננזר מארץ חיים מפשע עמי נגע למו
 ויתן אתרשעים קרבו ואתדעשיר במתיו
 על לאיחמס עשה ולא מרמה בפיו

A2

ויהוה חפץ דכאו החלי אסתשים אשם נפשו
 יראה זרע יאריך ימים וחפץ יהוה בידו יצלה
 מעמל נפשו יראה ישבע בדעתו
 ויצדיק צדיק עבדי לרבים ועונתם הוא יסבל
 לכן אחלקילו ברבים ואתדעצומים יחלק שלל
 תחת אשר הערה למות נפשו ואתדפשעים נמנה
 והוא חטא רבים נשא ולפשעים יפגיע

Motyer's justifications for the chiasmic structuring are numerous. First, A1 and A2 are read as parallel, as the speaking subject in 52.13-15 and 53.10-12 is Yahweh, in contrast to 53.1-9, where the predominant voice is that of the writer/ community. The assignment of 53.10 to Yahweh is difficult, as the change in subject is most clearly seen in 53.11b, signaled by the use of עבדי. Motyer allows for substantial flexibility, however, in the difficult תשים; if one reads it as a 3fs (referring to נפש), in conjunction with what follows, Yahweh may be the speaker (Motyer allows for this).³⁶ Second, both sections exhibit the use of רבים, occurring only at the front and back of the poem (52.14a.; 52.15a; 53.11b; 53.12a, c). Third, the use of מלכים in 52.15 could be read in connection with the language of עצימים in 53.12. And finally, Motyer follows many in reading ישכיל (52.13) in connection with יצלה and בדעתו (53.10b, 11a), which would appear to bracket the poem with the servant's success.

³⁶ For the difficulties in demarcating Yahweh's second speech, see Kaiser, *Der königliche Knecht*, 87; Melugin, *Formation*, 74.

Moving inwards, B1 (53.1-3) and B3 (53.7-9) are both concerned with the biographical material of the Servant's life – his birth, growth, trial, and death. Similes likewise mark B1 ad B3: in 53.2a he is like a יונק and a שרש; in 53.7, a שח and a רחל. But it is 53.4-6 that is of utmost importance to Motyer: it is the necessary revelation, a right understanding of which gains one the poem's hermeneutical key.³⁷ While Motyer does not supply any lexical observations that make this center stand out *as unique from* the remainder of the poem (as above), his decision to single out these verses fits a wider hermeneutical concern with revelation-as-explanation. For Motyer, 'explanation' in this sense is tantamount to 'understanding' the mechanics of propitiatory sacrifice, taken to be the 'Hauptsache' of our poem. As 53.10-12 likewise manifests this 'revelatory' nature,³⁸ he notes some closely read parallels with the closing stanza: Isa 53.4a and 53.10a both reference חלי, and 53.5a and 53.10a, רכא. Likewise, the progression of נשא to סבל in 53.4a is matched and inverted in 53.11b and 53.12b. Moreover, one may note the two uses of פניע in 53.6b and 53.12c, itself a theologically suggestive observation.

II.1 *Enigma* (52.13-15)

Motyer's exegesis, then, will center on the pull of 53.4-6; the entirety of his exegetical work will seek to illuminate how the various texts theologically support the revelatory affirmation of the servant's work as being somehow 'for us' (לינו; 53.5b). The 'enigma' of the poem is seen in 52.13-15, a perennially difficult stanza; but Motyer nevertheless shows an ability to navigate and negotiate the difficulties with theological creativity.

Motyer's acceptance of the critical demarcation of the four servant songs (42.1-4; 49.1-6; 50.4-9; 52.13-53.12)³⁹ allows him to note that here, in 52.13, we have a 'behold' that matches that of 42.1, bringing to a 'rounded climax' the 'revelation of the Servant' (הנה ישכיל עבדי / הנ עבדי).⁴⁰ Motyer's

³⁷ Motyer, *Isaiah* 424.

³⁸ Though this is not to suggest a change in the author's perspective that substantially affects the chapter's emphases. On such a change, generally, note Janowski, *Ecce Homo*, 55.

³⁹ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 14-15, 289, 318-21, 383-89, 398-401.

⁴⁰ Certain syntactic parallels between the two songs are worthy of note. Yahweh has put his spirit *on him* (עליו; 42.1b), and kings shut their mouths *over him* (עליו; 52.15a); the servant will bring *justice* (משפט) to the nations (גוים; 42.1b, 4), and it is 'by' *judgment* (משפט) that the servant is taken away, ultimately leading to his effect on the nations (גוים; 53.8; 52.15a); the silence of the servant 'in the street' (42.2) is likewise similar to the scarcity of thought paid him after his death (53.8).

language at this point is similar to that used previously for the place of the fourth song in Isaiah 40-55: here we have the ‘awaited explanation’ for *how* the universal blessings of Isa 51.1ff. would (even *could*) come to fruition; it provides the answer to a question that is raised by a dramatic, sequential reading of the text.⁴¹

According to Motyer, Isa 52.13 heightens how the blessings of 51.1ff. are able to come about, through the threefold exaltative clause,

יְרוֹם וְנִשָּׂא וְגִבָּה מֵאֲדָר. The dramatic unveiling continues as the curtain is progressively being drawn back to reveal something/someone, ‘The threefold exaltation...expresses a dignity beyond what any other merits or receives and is surely intended as a clue leading to the identity of the servant’.⁴²

Presumably the author has something/someone in mind which, being temporarily withheld from the audience, creates a sense of anticipation.

Though the reader may be held in suspense, the threefold exaltative clause of Isa 52.13 leads Motyer to comment that is ‘is impossible not to be reminded of the resurrection, ascension and heavenly exaltedness of the Lord Jesus’.⁴³

The statement is perhaps vexing at the outset of an exegetical section on Isaiah 53, not least because a robust relationship between the two testaments should certainly take place on a sturdier ground than being ‘reminded of’. With reference to Isa 49.16,⁴⁴ Thompson makes a similar interpretive move, ‘Christians can hardly fail to see the parallel with the wound marks of Christ, indelible evidence of divine love’.⁴⁵ Yet, as Moberly notes with reference to Thompson’s reading, this kind of connection ‘is hardly borne out by the evidence’.⁴⁶ This might be applied to Motyer as well, insofar as no commentators I have read (save Calvin, in a limited sense), mentioned 52.13 in relation to ‘the resurrection, ascension and heavenly exaltedness of the Lord Jesus’. Nevertheless, the threefold language of 52.13 is perhaps noteworthy, even unprecedented in its description of a *person* as יְרוֹם וְנִשָּׂא.

Williamson has noted the relationship of the terms יְרוֹם וְנִשָּׂא in Isaiah 6.1,⁴⁷ to other locations in the book. In 2.12 we have a striking feature of the terminology: Yahweh has a day ‘against all that is proud (גָּבַהּ) and lofty (יָרִים); against all that is lifted up (נִשָּׂא) and high’.⁴⁸ This

⁴¹ This phenomenon of sequential reading is interesting, though it is not without its own difficulties. At the very least, the imperative of 54.1 (רִנְיִי...בְּצִדִּי...וְיִצְהַלֵּי), as well as the further use of הָן at 59.1, suggests a privileging of Isa 52.13-53.12 through a criterion that, in actuality, moves across the grain of the wider literary context.

⁴² Motyer, *Isaiah*, 424.

⁴³ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 424. Again, this is similar to Barth’s handling of Isa 53 in *CD II/1*, 665-66.

⁴⁴ NRSV: ‘See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me’.

⁴⁵ Thompson, *Isaiah 40-66*, 81.

⁴⁶ Moberly, ‘Preaching Christ from the Old Testament’.

⁴⁷ It is not immediately clear from the context whether Yahweh himself or the throne is envisaged as ‘high and lifted up’. I would suggest that יְרוֹם וְנִשָּׂא most likely refers to the more proximate ‘throne’ (כִּסֵּא), rather than ‘Lord’ (אֲדֹנָי; *contra* 57.15), supported as it is by the LXX (ἐπὶ θρόνου ὑψηλοῦ καὶ ἐπρημένου) as well as the Vulgate (‘super solium excelsum et elevatum’).

⁴⁸ שָׁבַל poses a particular difficulty for the translator, as it seems to break the line of thought that leads up to it (‘proud’ - ‘lofty’ - ‘lifted up’ - ‘low’). See Williamson, *Book Called Isaiah*, 246-7, ‘שָׁבַל is...out of context, it disturbs the parallelism, and, lacking as it does a

pattern continues in the verses to follow: ‘against all the high mountains; and against the lofty hills; against every high tower, and against every fortified wall’. Thus, ‘It seems that any challenge to the Lord’s unique exaltation’, Williamson writes, ‘expressed by this stereotyped pairing, will *ipso facto* be brought low’.⁴⁹ The description of the Lord’s throne in chapter 6 as רם וינשא would appear to leave no room for any other to assume this exaltation, and the phrase seems to be used in 2.12ff. to highlight this very point.⁵⁰

Williamson then rightly suggests a literary dependence of Isa 52.13 on the exaltation theme of 6.1. The verbal parallels between 52.13 and 6.1 (יָרוּם וַיִּנְשָׂא; and with נָבֵה, 2.12ff.) would suggest an exaltation of the Servant that henceforth in the book has been reserved for Yahweh alone. Whereas in 2.12ff. we find a laying waste of anyone (or anything) that assumes the preeminence that Yahweh alone is due (6.1), in 52.13 we find that the Servant is elevated in that very manner.

Thus, while it is *not* ‘impossible not to be reminded of the resurrection, ascension and heavenly exaltedness of the Lord Jesus’,⁵¹ Motyer’s observation on the uniqueness of the exaltative clause certainly may open to New Testament resonances.⁵²

The centrality of 53.4-6 gains clarity through Motyer’s reading of 52.14-15. Where Duhm and Marti move 52.14b to after 53.2, Motyer leaves the text as it stands, structuring the clauses to make sense of their halting poetic progression.⁵³ Isa 52.14a is ‘elaborated by a double explanation’ in 52.14b, c, and 52.15b ‘also has a double explanation’, seen in 52.15c, d:

A1 - 52.14a	
כַּאֲשֶׁר שָׁמְמוּ עָלֶיךָ רַבִּים	
B1 - 52.14b	B1^a - 52.14c
כַּן־מִשַּׁחַת מֵאִישׁ מֵרֵאשִׁי	וַתִּתְּאוּרֵם מִבְּנֵי אָדָם
A2 - 52.15b	
עָלִי יִקְפְּצוּ מַלְכִים פִּיהֶם	
B2 - 52.15c	B2^a - 52.15d
כִּי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־סָפַר לָהֶם רֵאשִׁי	וְאֲשֶׁר לֹא־שָׁמְעוּ הַתְּבוֹנִנִּי

proper subject, it is not integrated into the syntactical flow of the passage’. See his comments there for further explanation of the possibilities for the insertion/confusion of שָׁפַל, including an important reference to Isaiah 40.4.

⁴⁹ Williamson, *Book Called Isaiah*, 39. It does not emerge in Williamson’s study in what way the various terms here are ‘paired’. For a reading of the successive adjectives as ‘stages’ (‘Stadien’), see Baltzer, *Deutero-Jesaja*, 498. To take the terms as simple synonyms, see Bonnard, *Le Second Isaïe*, 270.

⁵⁰ For a further exploration of Isa 6 in relation to 52.13-53.12, see Gosse, ‘Isaïe 52,13—53,12 et Isaïe 6’. Gosse semantically links the commission of Isa 6.9 with Isa 41.20 and 44.18, through the use of רָאָה, יָדַע, שָׁכַל, and בֵּין – all of which occur, in some form, in 52.13ff. Motyer, strangely, has no mention of thematic or literary resonances in 57.15 with either 6.1 or 52.13. Cf. Stromberg, *Isaiah After Exile*, 165, and Sommer, *Prophet Reads Scripture*, 91-2.

⁵¹ *Isaiah*, 424.

⁵² Cf. Targum Isaiah’s addition of מְשִׁיחָא after עֲבָדֵי. The LXX’s language in 52.13 (ὕψωθήσεται καὶ δοξασθήσεται σφόδρα) does not parallel 6.1 exactly (ὕψηλοῦ καὶ ἐπηρμένου), but there are resonances present (e.g., Gosse, ‘Isaïe 52,13—53,12 et Isaïe 6’; Hofius, ‘Zur Septuaginta-Übersetzung’).

⁵³ Isa 52.15a will be treated below. In short, it stands above the other constituent clauses of 52.14-15.

The relation of these constituent pieces is spelled out.⁵⁴ A1 begins with the ‘human observation’ of the onlookers of the Servant’s sufferings. On the grounds of this ‘human’ observation, revulsion follows. In contrast to this, A2 begins a response that is no longer ‘human’ in its origins, but revelatory; here, ‘a very different reaction arises from understanding what he has done’.⁵⁵ Kings shut their mouths, ‘overwhelmed by the Servant’, in a way that stands in direct contrast to the ‘revulsion’ and pulling away of 52.14. Both leading clauses (52.14a and 52.15b) are followed by ‘double explanations’ that elaborate on human responses to the debasedness and exaltation of the servant.

For the former of these – the servant’s debasedness – the servant suffers in a way that estranges him from both himself and his community. Motyer suggests that מַאִישׁ stands for ‘individuality’, while מִבְּנֵי אָדָם for ‘common humanity’.⁵⁶ There is warrant for the move, given Motyer’s wider relating of the ‘universal’ with the ‘particular’ in Isa 40-55: the ‘particular’ and ‘universal’ of 52.14b stand in some affinity with the ‘particular’ outworking of the Servant in Isa 54, and the ‘universal’ outworking of Isa 55.⁵⁷

On the servant’s exaltation, that which the kings see and hear, which causes them to ‘shut their mouths’, is of a completely different nature from that which effected revulsion in the many: it is of a revelatory sort, and the kings consequently manifest a right response to the divine revelation brought about by the servant’s suffering *and* exaltation. That ‘kings and nations’ are the embodiment of the ideal reception and repentance is no surprise to Motyer, for ‘Isaiah’s Messianism is intrinsically universal’ (an observation highlighted by the use of נִיִּים רַבִּים). Further, following Snaith, the possibility of reading קָפַץ פָּה as signifying a repentant posture has remained open.⁵⁸ For Snaith, there are two possible ways of ‘showing the utmost most reverential respect’. One way is to ‘rise to one’s feet’ (‘the more quickly, the better’), and

⁵⁴ Motyer does not supply a key by which to apply verse subdivisions. Generally speaking, a two-part breakdown will correspond to the division of the *athnach*, and a four-part breakdown to other various disjunctive markers (*zaqeph*, *zaqeph katon*, *rebia*). For uneven divisions Motyer’s method is not clear, though he generally appears to observe the *segolta* as significant.

⁵⁵ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 425.

⁵⁶ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 425.

⁵⁷ For various ‘universalist’ and ‘particularist’ interpretative in Isaiah 40-55, see Wilson, *Nations in Deutero-Isaiah*, 1-10. Wilson notes the ‘complementarity’ of universal and national concerns in Deutero-Isaiah’s theology.

⁵⁸ Snaith, ‘Isaiah 40-66’. See also Clines, *Isaiah 53*, 14-15; Couroyer, ‘Mettre sa main’.

the other to 'be silent, close one's mouth and clasp it with one's hand'. Snaith takes the twofold response from the similar language of Job 29.7-9.⁵⁹ There, the placing of one's hand over the mouth (כף ישימו לפיהם) is to 'place the hand over the mouth and clutch it, grasp it in the closed hand' in an act of reverential respect – in Motyer's paradigm, this is what takes place when the kings and nations witness the transformation of the servant from lowliness to exaltation.⁶⁰

But what one readily notices in the diagram above is the absence of 52.15a. Such a central clause, along with the perennially difficult נזה, is given a central position, above its immediate context: it forms the heart of the stanza, in much the same way that 53.4-6 forms the heart of the poem (and also very similar to how 52.13-53.12 forms the hermeneutical key to Isa 51ff.). A cultic, legislative, substitutionary atonement resides at the center of poem's opening stanza, and so functions as an important key for understanding the servant's person, work, and place in the book of Isaiah.

It comes as no surprise, then, when Motyer translates נזה (52.15a) as a cultic 'sprinkling' (נייה), and consequently designates the servant's work as 'priestly'.⁶¹ Whereas it has often been pointed out that נזה is here lacking the direct object which usually accompanies its cultic parallels,⁶² and while Motyer tentatively notes that Lev 4.16-17 stands as a deviation from how the verb is most often used in cultic literature, he refrains from entertaining the possibility of it being anything other than a cultic signifier.⁶³ The verb's syntactical deviation from usage elsewhere (save, potentially, Lev 4.16-17) is not a problem for Motyer, as 'Isaiah...could well have used it so, intending to

⁵⁹ Job 29.8-9, '...the young men saw me (ראיני) and withdrew, and aged rose up and stood (קמו עמדו); the nobles refrained from talking (עצרו במלים), and laid their hands on their mouths (כף ישימו לפיהם).'

⁶⁰ Snaith, *Studies*, 161. The language is not synonymous, which is a reason for lack of clarity in the precise meaning of 52.15. Nevertheless, cf. Vanoni's comments, 'sym', 103.

⁶¹ Though he will disagree with the reading, Beuken notes that in the history of interpretation this rendering 'heeft...een grote rol gespeeld', and that it 'is een steunpilaar geworden voor het priesterlijk beeld van de Knecht'. See Beuken, *Jesaja IIB*, 203.

⁶² E.g. Exod 29.21; Lev. 4.6, (17); 5.9; 8.11, 30; 14.16, 27, 51; 16.14, 15, 19. These represent only a cursory survey, but all carry a prepositional כ or בן plus the direct object (whether it be blood [דם] or oil [שמן]). Num. 19.4 carries forward this pattern, and verses 18 and 19 of that chapter make clear from the context a similar usage. 2 Kgs 9.33 likewise manifests a בן, as above. Isa 63.3 is idiosyncratic in its usage, and, surprisingly, does not stand in immediate relation to our discussion.

⁶³ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 426n.3.

increase the sense of enigma, which marks this stanza, about how the unique exaltation and unique suffering belong together'.⁶⁴

Here again we find the question of 'how' the servant's work is efficacious, '[M]any nations receive his priestly ministry, but what is the purifying agent?' As noted elsewhere, Motyer's framing of these questions sets forth a dramatic unfolding of the chapter – while the chapter is not technically narratival (indeed, the chapter has resisted any assignment to conventional genre), Motyer nevertheless finds that positioning oneself toward the chapter as if it *were* a narrative to be the most illuminating commencement for reading the chapter theologically. The enigmatic use of נִיחָה heightens this, as does the poem's treatment of the servant through the reactions of his onlookers, as does the lack of description as to what his exaltation looks like. At this point, all is enigma in need of revelation.

II.2 Revelation (53.1-9)

To understand Motyer's framing of the revelatory nature of Isaiah 53.1ff., it is important to note, negatively speaking, the lack of perception that marked the servant's onlookers. For Motyer, revelation is limited, special, and communicated only to those who recognize and believe a key 'propositional' truth about the servant.⁶⁵ By the same token, to be deprived of revelation is to see something purely in terms of 'human experience'. The latter of these modes of perception is what characterized the contemporaries of the servant before they came to believe (הַאֲמִינִי) who he was.⁶⁶ In short, this messianic figure appeared to his onlookers as 'a man among men', 'not outstanding', with the consequence that 'it was not easy to believe that he could be the Lord come to save'.⁶⁷ His origins were not 'divine', but earthly:

וַיֵּלֶד כִּיּוֹנָק... וּכְשָׂרָשׁ מֵאֲרֶץ צִיָּה (cf. Matt. 13.55); that he grew up before 'him' (לְפָנָיו; i.e. Yahweh) would suggest that this person is someone distinct from

⁶⁴ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 426.

⁶⁵ For 'propositional' revelation, see Motyer, *Roots*, 34-6.

⁶⁶ Motyer notes that הַאֲמִינִי is to be taken as a belief in 'facts'. He cites Gen. 45.26 and Deut. 9.23 as instances of this, though with the latter the issue is not a belief in facts but a willingness to respond to a divine command. Belief as an assent to propositional, factual revelation fits within his wider paradigm, but there is reason for pause here concerning this assumption, if for no other reason than that in our context one would expect for this meaning the construction הַאֲמִינִי כִּי (BDB 53; cf. Ex. 4.5; Hab. 1.5; Job 9.16).

⁶⁷ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 428.

Yahweh himself;⁶⁸ and finally, ‘there was no evidence of any speciality or distinctiveness’ in the servant.⁶⁹ In short, this was not the servant they were expecting.⁷⁰

One might pause here to note that while Motyer emphasizes the servant’s lack of adherents as owing to a lack of attractiveness, he says nothing of a change in *perspective*, which would go a long way to explain the dramatic change of tone in the poem, namely, that change present in 53.4b.⁷¹ Motyer does note, passingly, ‘At some point a believing company came into existence, but there was a time when even they esteemed him not’.⁷² But as an interpretative key, or at least *lead*, this is given no prominence. The change in perspective of the servant’s contemporaries is here granted by virtue of a revealed truth, without which the sufferings are perceived along the lines of a premature (and false) judgment – that the suffering experienced was owing to the sins of the servant. Thus on 53.3b Motyer writes, ‘When all that the human eye saw and the human mind apprehended was added up the result was zero’.⁷³ Revelation is thus needed not only on grounds that the servant himself was an enigmatic figure, but that his onlookers are marred by an inability to perceive what is *truly* present in his activity. This lack of insight demands ‘divine revelation’, and in a sense the opposite is true; for to elevate the revelatory significance of the poem generally, and 53.4-6 specifically, demands a lowering of the expectation of the onlookers’ ability to perceive what is at work. For Motyer, a lowering of the expectation means to come to grips with a sharp distinction between the human and the divine, particularly in terms of humanity’s sinful nature:

With this word [53.1-3], Isaiah completes a diagnosis of our human condition, which he has been unobtrusively pursuing throughout these three verses: to see the servant and find *no beauty* in him (2cd) reveals the bankruptcy of the human emotions; to be one with those who despise and then reject him (3ac) exposes the misguidedness of the human will; to appraise him and conclude that he is nothing condemns our minds as corrupted by, and participants in, our

⁶⁸ Motyer thus keeps the difficult לַפְּנֵי. Alternatively, cf. Volz, *Jesaja II*, 170 (לֵא יִפְרָה); Schwartz, ‘wie ein Reis vor ihm’, 255-56 (מִפְּנֵה); Elliger, *Verhältnis*, 6-7; Kaiser, *Der königliche Knecht*, 86; Preuß, *Deuterjesaja*, 97; Clines, *I, He, We, and They*, 15 (לַפְּנֵי).

⁶⁹ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 427.

⁷⁰ Cf. Motyer, *Roots*, 205; idem., *Isaiah*, 318, 386.

⁷¹ Cf. Duhm, *Jesaja*, 397-98, where אִכֵּן (v. 4a) is read as a concessive.

⁷² Motyer, *Isaiah*, 427.

⁷³ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 429. The comment treats חֲשַׁבְנֵהוּ וְלֵא.

sinfulness. Thus every aspect of human nature is inadequate; every avenue along which, by nature, we might arrive at the truth and respond to God is closed. Nothing but divine revelation can make the Servant known to us and draw us to him.⁷⁴

Emotion, will, and mind act as a merism for the totality of a human nature in need of divine action.⁷⁵ The reader readily finds a reading in which there is an immediate referentiality to the Church; Motyer does not feel the need to address mediating issues of historical particularity, canon, affiliative and figural reading, etc. Here, as elsewhere, Motyer reads as a Christian theologian (insofar as the categories of 'sinfulness', 'human nature', and 'revelation' are explicated in the first-person voice). This lends an immediacy to the text that presses its relevance to the centre of systematic, theological reading. While this may seem at home with older models of systematic theology (dissociated as they often were from biblical textual rooting), the question of whether it satisfies the 'canons' of biblical theology at this point in history of the text's reception will have to be treated later. But it is no small thing that Motyer's reading is imbued with what one might call theological 'presuppositions'. They do, in fact, guide much of his interpretation.

To see the servant 'as he truly is' requires a revelatory act of God; the content of this revelation is explicated in 53.4-6. In the wider chiasm of 52.13-53.12 (above), 53.4-6 were afforded a central literary, structural position in the poem. The verses are here further organized:

4a אכן חלינו הוא נשא
 4b ומכאבינו סבלם
 4c ואנחנו חשבנהו נגוע
 4d מכה אלהים ומענה

5a והוא מחלל מפשענו
 5b מדכא מעונותינו
 5c מוסר שלומנו עליו
 5d ובחברתו נרפא־לנו

6a כלנו כצאן תעינו
 6b איש לדרכו פנינו
 6c ויהיה הפגיע בו את עון כלנו

⁷⁴ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 429.

⁷⁵ Choosing a threefold distinction appears rather arbitrary. Yet perhaps something more formative resides in the background for Motyer – e.g. Deut. 6.4-5 (cf. Matt. 22.37-38)?

Immediately one sees v.6 to be the literary ‘odd man out’: v.4 and v.5 each have a balanced, four-part rhythm and parallelism to their confession of what Yahweh has done in their midst. Motyer does not here follow the lead of the Masoretic punctuation for verse divisions, which reads v.4b α as simply *וַיִּנְחַמנו חֲשַׁבְנָהוּ*, and which breaks v.6b, by use of the *zaqeph qaton*, into *וַיְהוּהָהּ הַפְּנִיעַ בּוֹ / אֶת עוֹן כָּלְנוּ*.⁷⁶ Numerous older textual emendations sought to remedy the rhythmic inconsistency of v.6b.⁷⁷ But Motyer reads the verse as breaking the prior rhythm so as to grab the reader’s attention (cf. his reading of 52.14, above).⁷⁸ The result is that, ‘abruptly, the emphasis of the whole stanza falls on [v.6c]’.⁷⁹ Here, Yahweh is the high priest who lays the corporate sin of the people on the ‘Victim-Servant’, in a manner like that of Lev. 16 (vv. 21-22). There, the scapegoat departs into the wilderness (הַמִּדְבָּרָה), into a remote area (אֵל-אֶרֶץ גִּזְרָה). For Motyer, the parallel *חֲשַׁבְנָהוּ* in v.3b β and v.4b α witnesses to such an isolation.⁸⁰ Abandonment is part of the atoning process (and thus explains Motyer’s failure to cite Jer. 20.7ff., where the prophet is isolated in a non-atoning sense), an image of substitution ‘drawn straight from Leviticus 16’.⁸¹ Motyer here avoids reading the language of *דָּרַךְ* in connection to Isa 42.16 (cf. 52.11ff.), where one might be tempted to find their itinerancy as simply political, i.e. not sharing the exilic hope of a return from Babylon. The *דָּרַךְ* of v.6 rather, is read in light of Isa 55.7 (cf. Ps 1.6; Isa

⁷⁶ My versification here follows the MT.

⁷⁷ MT versification. Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, 197n.2, felt the need for strict parallelism in the verse, and so for the accusative particle *אֶת* substituted *הַאֲחִירָהוּ*. Elliger likewise offered serious reconstruction, ‘Textkritisches zu Deuterjesaja’. Both Mowinckel and Elliger, however, approach the stich woodenly, and do not allow for syntactical flexibility. Duhm represents a more balanced approach, simply calling the ending of 53.6 ‘etwas unbefriedigend,’ *Jesaja*, 361.

⁷⁸ Elsewhere, however, Motyer shows concern for parallelism. Cf. his reading of *לִי עֶבֶד* in parallel to *יְשׁוּעָתִי לַיהוָה* (*Isaiah*, 388). One may also note Motyer’s freedom to emend the text where it seems to be faulty, in his changing of *בְּשִׁמּוֹשׁ* in Isa 38.8a, to *הַשִּׁמּוֹשׁ* (*Isaiah*, 291n.2).

⁷⁹ *Isaiah*, 429. Similarly, Beuken, *Jesaja IIB*, 219, who reads Motyer’s 53.6c (*וַיְהוּהָהּ...כָּלְנוּ*) as ‘the third element in the development’ of the confession (‘het derde element van de uitwerking’), ‘The most important thought in the sentence is that the causal relationship between the sin of the speakers and the suffering of the servant is traced back to God’. (‘Het belangrijkste van de zin is dat het oorzakelijk verband tussen de zonde van de sprekers en het lijden van de Knecht nu tot God herleid is’).

⁸⁰ Vitranga’s reading, though more extreme, is similar, ‘medium se ponit inter oves et feras bestias’. Cited in Koole, *Isaiah 49-55*, 298.

⁸¹ *Isaiah*, 429. Motyer also reads *נָגִיעַ* (53.4c) in connection with Lev. 13-14, where the verb is used sixty times. One should note, however, that the stem there is only ever nominal in form (*נָגַעַ*), and is perhaps not used synonymously throughout the levitical corpus; neither, moreover, is the nominal or verbal form found in Lev. 16. For these observations, see Spieckermann, ‘The Conception and Prehistory’; Janowski, ‘He Bore Our Sins’, 68.

42.24; 48.17), which symbolizes a turning away from God in a harmful, rebellious sense.⁸²

The substitutionary nature of the servant's death is seen by Motyer to be strengthened in reading the מן of 53.5a, b (מעונתינו, מפשענו) as an indicator of a penal substitutionary atonement, '[V]erse 4 demands the noun "substitution", and verse 5 adds the adjective "penal"'.⁸³ While Motyer here is at odds with numerous more resistant proposals for the meaning of many of these keywords (e.g. נשא, נגע, עון, אשם),⁸⁴ he does not stand alone. Zimmerli's 'Vorgeschichte' does not endorse the language of 'penal' substitution, but upholds a notion of vicarious suffering in Isa 53, drawn from the imagery within עון.⁸⁵ Further, Childs himself is critical of recent challenges to 'vicarious' readings, subtly leading the reader to a support of a vicariousness in the poem.⁸⁶ Indeed, readings of vicariousness remain a lively possibility for the chapter.⁸⁷

As already noted, Motyer seeks to ground the author's (i.e. Isaiah's) theological frame of reference in relation to Isa 6.5-7. There, Isaiah witnesses an atoning for sin that has no relation to the death of an individual, à la the suffering servant. Isaiah witnesses Yahweh seated upon the throne, and his own inadequacy for the vision presses him to despair (6.5). The atoning work that followed – the burning coal (רצפה) taken from the altar (מיזבה) with a pair of tongs (מלקחים) – said nothing of an individual *suffering* (6.6-7). Thus Motyer surmises that 'somewhere between the profoundly real experience of [Isa 6.7] and the vision of the substitutionary role of the Servant in 52:13-53:12 the awareness dawned that...the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sins'. The paradigm shift moved away from a cultic paradigm, and toward

⁸² An emphasis of Kimchi in his *Commentarii in Jesaiam Prophetam*, 385. In this light, Koole relates the תעיני of 53.6a to Ezek 14.11; 44.10. See his *Isaiah 49-55*, 297.

⁸³ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 430.

⁸⁴ Whybray remains an appealing alternative to substitutionary readings. See his *Thanksgiving*, 60ff.

⁸⁵ Zimmerli, 'Vorgeschichte', 216-17. Zimmerli comments on עון ('In עון ist der ganze Prozeß von Unrecht-Schuld-Strafe umschlossen'), then moves on to cite Lev. 16.22 and 10.17 as comparable Old Testament examples of the language here. In 16.22 and 10.17 the 'Sündopferbock...' "trägt" die Verschuldung der Gemeinde und schafft dadurch Sühne' (op. cit.).

⁸⁶ See Childs, *Isaiah*, 415-16.

⁸⁷ Though there have been numerous recent objections to reading Isaiah 53 in relation to Leviticus 16, Zimmerli, 'Vorgeschichte', remains a powerful synthetic reading of the Priestly texts and Isa 53. A middle ground is sought by Westermann, who does find levitical language throughout the poem, though in a subversive sense. Cf. Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 268.

something unprecedented (52.15b; Motyer cites Heb 10.4).⁸⁸ It was not that Isaiah's contemporaries were necessarily *deficient* in their sacrificial understanding, but 'it took a man of remarkable insight to see that something greater and better was needed'. This man was Isaiah, and it is in our poem that his genius is seen.⁸⁹

But as profound as 53.4-6 may be, they nevertheless require a nuance. Motyer moves from the 'revelation' of the efficacious nature of the servant's sufferings in 53.4-6, to 53.7-9, where we find a correlating revelation.

Motyer categorizes 53.7-9 under categories of the servant's suffering, death, and burial. While he does not mention a patterning after the Apostolic Creed here ('suffered, died and was buried'), his reading of the text certainly mirrors it. As Westermann has pointed out, this threefold patterning highlights the individual nature of the servant addressed herein, 'no further arguments are required'.⁹⁰ First, as concerns the servant's suffering, Motyer notes that not only did the servant suffer and die efficaciously, but he did so in full consent. In these verses we gain small access to the 'Servant's own consciousness' – similar to that seen in 50.5ff. – which to Motyer is 'a very sacred spot indeed'.⁹¹ The nuance is simply the *willingness* that the servant manifests. Motyer finds a correlation between the sacrificial victim and the persons on behalf of whom it is sacrificed, and central in this exchange is the difference between sin as 'failure' (חטא), sin as 'moral defect' (עוון), and sin as 'transgression' (פשע).⁹² The last of these is what the Old Testament could not account for, according to Motyer.⁹³ Transgression, as willful disobedience, requires a willful sacrifice. In broader terms, the older sacrificial system could account for sins of 'omission', but not adequately for sins of 'commission', for while people sin of their own accord, no animal so goes to the slaughter. Motyer here appears to identify Isa 53 as a conceptual (and in some sense, *actual*) *aporia*, that puzzlingly undermines the system that has come before it

⁸⁸ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 432.

⁸⁹ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 432.

⁹⁰ Westermann, *Isaiah 40-55*, 264. Westermann also correlates Isa 53.3 with 'was born' in the Apostolic Creed.

⁹¹ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 432.

⁹² Motyer, *Isaiah*, 433; idem., *Discovering*, 79.

⁹³ A text such as Lev 16, however, complicates this distinction. There, misdeeds of the people are paid for without any apparent difficulty: the goat atones 'for all the iniquities [עוונות] of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions [פשעיהם], all their sins [הטאתם]' (v. 21; cf. v. 16).

and the system within which it situated.⁹⁴ As such, it embodies the very concerns of that system, but paradoxically signals a breaking down from within (note again Motyer's reading of the servant's work as preeminently 'priestly'⁹⁵). While it would be too strong to associate Isaiah, in Motyer's reading, with a kind of Derridean deconstruction, the phenomenon is not dissimilar.⁹⁶ Here, in what Motyer calls Isaiah's moment of 'towering theological genius',⁹⁷ we have the priestly traditions both affirmed and undermined in one central theological contention: the novelty of the servant's death is found in his willing acceptance of this fate. The fact that Isaiah does not use the cultic 'goat' (עֵז),⁹⁸ but rather aligns 'sheep' (שֶׁה; v.7b)⁹⁹ with the near *hapax* רָחַל (cf. Songs 6.6), begins to signal the novelty of the event at hand.¹⁰⁰

Second, as concerns the servant's death, Motyer takes מַעֲזָר וּמִמְשַׁפֵּט to be a sort of hendiadys, alluding to a legal formula.¹⁰¹ The reading dovetails with לִקָּח, which he reads as 'taken out to die' – Prov 24.11 and Ezek 33.1-4 act as a guide for this. Thus after some legal proceeding the servant was removed from the sight of his contemporaries, who in turn gave little thought to him – whether these contemporaries were the general onlookers, or a smaller group of associates, is not clear.¹⁰² Adams finds it possible that דִּיר 'constitutes a

⁹⁴ Westermann (*Isaiah 40-66*, 268) reads the suffering and sacrifice of the servant here as a severe criticism of the cult.

⁹⁵ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 426.

⁹⁶ Cf. the comment of Gasché, in his 'Infrastructures and Systematicity', 4, 'Deconstruction must be understood...as the attempt to "account," in a certain manner, for a heterogeneous variety or manifold of nonlogical contradictions and discursive inequalities of all sorts that continues to haunt and fissure even the *successful* development of philosophical arguments and their systematic exposition'. Motyer's placement of the servant in a priestly context, while somehow undermining that context without logically contradicting it, dovetails nicely with Gasché's definition of the *aporia*'s ability to 'haunt and fissure even the *successful* development' of, e.g., the priestly tradition. Cf. Barclay, 'Living on the Fault-Line', 6.

⁹⁷ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 432. Cf. Motyer, *Roots*, 77, on the 'genius of Isaiah'. Similarly, Duhm, *Propheten*, 339.

⁹⁸ Cf. Lev 1.10; 3.12; 4.23, 28; 5.6; 7.23; 9.3; 16.5.

⁹⁹ Cf. Lev 5.6

¹⁰⁰ Text-critically speaking, Motyer's decision to retain the MT of 53.7 is significant for his proposal. Rather than move the ו to precede נִנְיָה (cf. Morgenstern), it remains in place to highlight the willingness of the servant to suffer. Cf. Beuken, *Jesaja II/B*, 187, 220-221.

¹⁰¹ Here he follows Payne's speculation of 'some fixed legal idiom', 'The Servant of the Lord', 131-43 (cf. North, *Second Isaiah*, 65). Motyer and Payne differ from Beuken, *Jesaja IIB*, 221-22, and Childs, *Isaiah*, 416, who take the phrase to mean 'through oppressive judgment' (cf. Beuken, 'Door een onderdrukkende rechtszaak'). Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 265, is diplomatic in the decision, 'In whatever way [the terms] are taken, the words speak of violent action by others against the Servant within the context of a court of law'.

¹⁰² Motyer thus reads דִּיר as 'contemporaries', with textual support in the LXX (τῆν γενεάν αὐτοῦ), and Vlg ('generationem eius'). The first-person לִנָּה in the Targum suggests a

narrower, [more] specific group than merely general contemporaries'.¹⁰³ If this is in fact the case, then it serves to highlight the author(s) of the poem's radical change in perspective: where once this community did not regard the servant (53.2b-3, 4b), they now see him with new eyes (52.15b-53.1). They belonged, at one point, to the contemporaries that 'did not consider' the revelatory significance of his sufferings (53.8b).¹⁰⁴

This in turn lays much greater emphasis on the following נגזר מארץ חיים.¹⁰⁵ If it were a simple reference to his death, there would have been numerous people who 'considered' this fact; for, as Motyer has decided that in v.8a we see a legal proceeding (מעצר ומשפט), there would have been (presumably) crowds to witness the servant's subsequent death. But the indirect quotation, which כִּי introduces, stretches beyond the simple fact of the servant's death, and includes the 'revelatory' significance of this death: מפשע עמי נגע למו.¹⁰⁶ The possessive noun, עמי, is retained as an Isaianic interjection, echoing the lament of Isa 6.5. Similarly Motyer keeps למו, which is read as either singular ('for the transgression of my people, the blow was to him'), or taking its lead from Isa 30.5, read as plural ('for the transgression of

similar understanding. This does put some pressure on the preceding אֵת. Though it has a history of being read as the *nota accusativi*, this would not make sense in Motyer's reading. He thus leans on a semantic flexibility of the particle, citing it as a particle of 'emphasis'. See GK §117a (n.4), l-m. Despite the fact that he views 'poetic' uses of אֵת as representing a 'somewhat more archaic stage of the language than prose' (a comment at home in early German romanticism), Gesenius is valuable on this. See also Saydon, 'The Particle אֵת', 192-93; MacDonald, 'The Particle אֵת'. For its flexibility in Mishnaic Hebrew, Mandaean and Samaritan, see Saydon, 'The Particle אֵת', 193n.2.

¹⁰³ Adams, *Performative Nature*, 183.

¹⁰⁴ The reading here would align the confessing community behind the poem with those who acted in 53.9, even as complicit in the servant's death.

¹⁰⁵ Motyer, unsurprisingly, resists Whybray's metaphorical reading (*Isaiah 40-66*, 177). Whybray's resistance to a literal reading is owing, in small part, to his wider decision to see Deutero-Isaiah as the author of the four servant songs (he likewise opts to remove 52.14-15 from the fourth song). See also Orlinsky, *Studies*, 62; Torrey, *The Second Isaiah*, 420. Orlinsky finds an ANE parallel in *Ludlul bel nemeqi*, where a lament is delivered by a 'righteous sufferer' who is, in a sense, dead but not yet dead. From the *Ludlul* Orlinsky cites Tablet II, lines 114-15, and there are other resonances with Isa 53. For example, Tablet I, lines 90-91, 'When someone who knows me sees me, he passes by on the other side', is strikingly similar to Isa 53.3, '...as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not'. The dating of the *Ludlul* (10th c. BCE), however, is sufficiently earlier than Isa 52-53 to make a direct dependence rather tenuous. Further, the language of the latter, including a movement from life (53.2-3) to death (53.8-9) to life again (53.10b-12 [cf. LXX Job 42.17a]), would find an easier ANE parallel in the Baal Cycle, though this originates even earlier than the *Ludlul*. See Smith, *Ugaritic Baal Cycle*, 64-73, 99-100. See also Young's citation of the Baal Cycle in his *Studies*, 132ff.

¹⁰⁶ Adams, *Isaiah*, 183-4n., extends the indirect quotation to the end of v.9. The decision is perhaps impossible to definitively support or reject, though Driver gives a similar proposal, 'The Servant of the Lord', 104. Here Adams, *Isaiah*, 184, seems to misread Clines as supporting his proposal when in fact he appears to do just the opposite.

my people, to whom belonged the blow [i.e. who were deserving of it]).¹⁰⁷ Whichever way one interprets this difficult line, Motyer finds it inescapable that ‘the Servant endured the punishment which should, and otherwise would, have fallen on “my people”’,¹⁰⁸ and that this was a punishment that took place without the consideration of his contemporaries – as noted above, the substitutionary nature of the death required absolute abandonment and isolation.

As seen in Childs’s and Duhm’s handlings of 53.9a (ויתן את־רשעים קברו ואת־עשיר במתיו),¹⁰⁹ numerous difficulties confront the interpreter regarding the servant’s burial – most obvious among them is the translation issues surrounding רשעים, עשיר, and במתיו. Initially, Motyer avoids any detailed engagement with the first two of these terms, taking them as a simple biographical note that ‘in the burial of the servant, wicked people and a rich man were somehow involved’.¹¹⁰ Similarly, במתיו is left open to its meaning, and Motyer does not seem to disagree with differing proposals to understand the MT’s pointing of its consonantal text. For example, GK §124c-e offers the ‘plural of extension’¹¹¹ and the ‘plural of amplification’;¹¹² and Henderson, following R. Jarchi, finds the plural to emphasize ‘force’ / ‘intensity’.¹¹³ Neither of these are resisted, and thus we find that ‘[t]he only thing remarkable about the plural...is our surprise at finding it’.¹¹⁴

Yet the ambivalence over textual decisions and the lack of investigation into the terms turn out to be a kind of epistemological foil, keeping us in

¹⁰⁷ Here the ל is possessive (cf. GK §117n). The translational issues around Isa 30.5 are not easy, but the sense of למו as a corporate identity is plain enough.

¹⁰⁸ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 435.

¹⁰⁹ Childs, *Isaiah*, 416-417; Duhm, *Jesaja*, 401-402.

¹¹⁰ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 435.

¹¹¹ Thus, here, ‘deaths’ = ‘graveyard’ (cf. Job 17.1; 21.32; 2 Chr 16.14; 2 Kgs 22.20).

¹¹² Thus, here, ‘exalted grave’ (cf. Deut 32.28; 1 Sam 2.3; Isa 27.11; 40.14, 26; Ps 68.7; etc.).

¹¹³ Cf. Henderson, *Book of the Prophet Isaiah*, 403-404. R. Jarchi (cited in Henderson, 404), read כל מיני מות, and Delitzsch noted a ‘*plur. exaggerativus*’, signifying ‘a violent death, the very pain of which makes it like dying again and again’ (*The Prophecies of Isaiah*, II:328-329). Cheyne explicitly rejected this reading (and with it its recourse to Ezek 28.10), citing poetic meter as his criterion. Cheyne, *Book of Isaiah*, 192-93.

¹¹⁴ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 436, who rejects the obvious option to simply re-point the vowels to read בְּמִתּוֹי, ‘his high place/burial mound’, on the grounds that there is ‘no indication’ that בְּמִתּוֹי could have this meaning (436n.1). Against Motyer, cf. Lowth, who translates it ‘*excelsa sua*’, citing Pope’s translation of a section from *The Odyssey* (xii. 14), ‘A rising tomb [τρυμβον χελευντες], the silent dead to grace, fast by the roaring of the main we place: the rising tomb a lofty column bore, and high above it rose the tapering oar’. Lowth finds this verse (53.9), in connection with Isa 22.16, to stand behind the tradition of Jesus’ burial upon a hill in Jerusalem.

uncertainty until the advent of Christ, 'Like the other enigmas of this Song, this too is written so that when the turn of events provides the explanation we shall know for certain that we stand in the presence of the servant of the Lord'.¹¹⁵ Or put in other words, the ambiguity of what the terms mean (on the surface) is retained, in order to keep open a clear referentiality between this text and the event that will ultimately make sense of it. One thinks, for instance, of Matthew's account of Joseph of Arimathea, where the latter is described as an ἄνθρωπος πλούσιος, who takes the body of Jesus and buries it in his 'own new tomb' (ἐν τῷ καινῷ αὐτοῦ μνημείῳ; Matt 27.57-60).¹¹⁶

II.3 *The Servant Triumphant* (53.10-12)

Unlike 53.7-9, the final three verses of the poem, a 'reservoir into which flow all the main lines of thought developed throughout the poem', pose for Motyer fewer textual difficulties, and so more prolonged theological reflection.¹¹⁷ 53.10-12 mirrors 52.13-15 in numerous ways, which here forms a 'true inclusio' around the central proclamation of 53.1-9. Parallel to the servant's exaltation in 52.13 we find: 53.10b, where he 'prolongs his days' and prospers according to Yahweh's will; 53.11, where he is 'satisfied'; and 53.12, where he takes the 'many' as spoil (cf. 52.15a). Motyer will later note a connection between ישכיל in 52.13 and בדעתו in 53.11b, where the latter fills out in detail what was only implied in the former. The latter, along with 53.4-6, is the right doctrinal *content* of the former.¹¹⁸

Yet two nuances are needed. First, as just seen, this bracketing on either side is not disconnected from the core of the poem – the suffering and atoning work of the servant in 53.4-6 *explains* what is seen in 52.14-15 and 53.10-12. Here we find 53.4-6 as a mediating text. The disfigured, marred

¹¹⁵ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 436.

¹¹⁶ Delitzsch glosses the verse to dovetail with Matt 27.57, 'He was to have lain where the bodies of criminals lie, but he was really laid in a grave that was intended for the corpse of a rich man' (*Prophecies of Isaiah* II:328). LXX Isa 53.9 does use the substantival adjective, τοὺς πλουσίους, though obviously in the plural. Matthew's use of term, then, appears to manifest a conflation of the MT and LXX (or perhaps only the MT). On this one may note Barrick, 'The Rich Man from Arimathea'. Barrick's rendering of the verse, based on a semantic reconstruction of the language of 1QIsa^a 53.9, is rather dubious (239), but his attention to the varied receptions of Isa 53.9 in Matthew and Mark is insightful (236; an emphasis on the עָשִׂיר is found in Matthew, that of בְּנִתְיָי, in Mark).

¹¹⁷ Hermisson, 'Das vierte Gottesknechtslied', 18, finds the most engaging aspect to be the servant's re-integration ('wieder...integrieren') into the community of Israel after his isolation, 'Auffällig und beachtenswert ist, daß er nun auf einmal nicht mehr isoliert ist!' See also Hermisson, 'Der Lohn des Knechts', 285-87.

¹¹⁸ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 441. Cf., in some measure, Berges, *Jesaja*, 404.

semblance of the servant in 52.14 (in the first divine speech), reiterated in 53.10a (the second divine speech),¹¹⁹ is that of a suffering on behalf of others – disfigured and made ill for the sake of the community (53.4-6). Westermann views this form-critically as a rhetorical rubric for the lament Psalm, whereby two differing perspectives are given toward one event in the past. The discrepancy he notes is between 53.3-6 and 53.7ff. (cf. Ps 22).¹²⁰ The result of this form-critical reading is that both aspects of the servant’s suffering become *types* of suffering more generally, and are consequently not to be read ‘as a literal, true to life description’.¹²¹ But as we have seen above, Motyer’s commentary is consistently marked by a *sequential* reading, so that to collapse one description into another, and to consequently view both descriptions as somehow typological, runs the risk of losing the centrality of 53.4-6 as a significant revelatory text.

Second, while we may find a literary *inclusio* between 52.13-15 and 53.10-12, we do not find one that is theological or revelatory: 53.10ff. is a deepening of 53.4-6, and not simply a restatement of 52.14-15. We begin with human observation (52.14-15), move to a believing community’s kerygmatic confession (53.1-9), and arrive finally at the divine perspective of not just what *will* happen (52.13; cf. 53.10b-12), but what has happened in the sufferings described already (53.10a), creating ‘one of the fullest statements of atonement theology ever penned’.¹²² The suffering experienced by the servant in 53.3b (וַיִּדְוֶה חַלִּי), and subsequently carried in 53.4a (וַיְהוּא מַחֲלֵל), is heightened in 53.10a as Yahweh now stands behind its very infliction (הַחֲלִי). The series of descriptors in 53.4-6, which relate to the disfiguring of 52.14, reach their pinnacle in 53.11a (מִמַּעַמְלֵי נַפְשׁוֹ), a ‘suffering penetrating to his innermost being’.¹²³ And finally, 53.10a heightens 53.4-6 through the use of אִשָּׁם: what is only hinted at in 52.15a (כִּן יִזְהָ גֹיִים) is developed in 53.4-6 (with נִשָּׂא and סָבַל),¹²⁴ and, for Motyer, revealed clearest of all in 53.10a.¹²⁵ In this verse, and in the entirety of 53.10-12, Motyer finds the ‘uniting doctrinal theme’ to be

¹¹⁹ Motyer *Isaiah*, 436-37 (cf. 423-24). As noted above, this is not technically the beginning of the divine speech, which in fact commences at 53.11b with the reiteration of עֲבָדִי. See Beuken, *Jesaja. Deel IIB*, 197-200.

¹²⁰ See Gunkel and Begrich, *Einleitung in die Psalmen*.

¹²¹ Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 265.

¹²² Motyer, *Isaiah*, 442.

¹²³ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 437.

¹²⁴ Used again in 53.11d, 12d.

¹²⁵ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 437.

'the understanding of the Servant's death as a guilt offering..., a sin-bearing sacrifice which removes sin and imputes righteousness, and as a voluntary self-identification and interposition'.¹²⁶ His exegesis of the parts is informed by this theological construct.

Motyer's exegesis of the verses begins with an emphasis on Yahweh as the central interest of the affirmation. It would seem fitting, as in 53.2 the servant is said to grow up before Yahweh (inferred in *לפניו*), in 53.4 he is struck by Yahweh (*מכה אלהים*), and in 53.6 it is Yahweh that has laid iniquity upon him (*ויהוה הפגיע בו את עון כלנו*). Yet what was only inferred there is now explicitly stated: Yahweh was behind the unfolding of the events surrounding his life (53.2), suffering (53.4), death (53.8), and ultimately his resurrection (53.10b-12).¹²⁷

It is Yahweh, then, that coordinates what is a Levitical process of atonement in 53.10, central to which is *אשם*: a 'guilt offering'.¹²⁸ Motyer understands the term's Levitical context to inform its usage here.¹²⁹ Likewise, that which is being sacrificed is the servant's *נפש*, a term also employed in cultic literature. Most interesting is Motyer's handling of the verb *שים*, which is not employed in cultic literature in relation to sacrifices. He accounts for the unique occurrence here:

Possibly, Isaiah found the customary verb 'to bring' [*הביא*] unacceptable as the Lord is not 'bringing' the sacrifice for he *is* the sacrifice. We are not 'bringing' the sacrifice but coming to that which has been provided on our behalf. Was it for this reason that Isaiah found a different word and, being fully aware of the ambiguities inherent in what he was saying, was nevertheless happy to leave it so?

Motyer's answer is 'yes'. There are numerous ambiguities that he is happy to leave as such, with rather important theological implications. In the clause *אשם-תשים אם*, the *אם* is taken to mean 'when' (in an open sense), leaving the following two words open to further definition. It could be translated either in the second person: 'When you [Yahweh], make', or 'When you [reader]

¹²⁶ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 437. In his *Roots*, 22-23, Motyer distinguishes between a 'righteousness of life exhibited in obeying the Bible's commands', and a 'deeper righteousness...a righteousness of the character and person'.

¹²⁷ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 438-39, 440-441.

¹²⁸ For a survey of different translations of this vexing term, see Kutsch, *Sein Leiden und Tod*, 186-87.

¹²⁹ The stem *אשם*, in verbal, adjectival and nominative forms, occurs 38 times in Leviticus alone. Cf. Fohrer, *Studien*, 24-43.

make'; or in the third person (feminine), relating to the soul itself: 'When his soul makes'.¹³⁰ For the first, 'The Lord, who alone knows what reparation...is required, delights in his servant as the one who fully meets the need'.¹³¹ For the second, the poem reaches out to the reader, who is inevitably a 'sinner needing the reparation-sacrifice'. In this case, the reader is able to re-appropriate the poem's theology of atonement in a personal, individual sense.¹³² A third way of reading— where the נפש offers itself as the sacrifice – stresses the servant's willingness and self-offering as the means of reparation, 'The Lord's pleasureable commitment to his will...is thus matched by the Servant's "whole-hearted" involvement in what the Lord required of him'.¹³³ Any of these three, Motyer states, is fitting (and thus to designate 53.10 [as opposed to 53.11b] as the beginning of Yahweh's second speech in the poem is not problematic).

The transition from the servant's death (53.10a) to his unique life-after-death (53.10b) hinges on the fact that 'the Servant's death is never a bare event but always a purposeful act'.¹³⁴ In a very real sense, he dies *in order to be* raised again. It is this life-after-death that is the 'prolonging of days' (יארִיךְ יָמַיִם), and it is in this period that those who appropriate the servant's death – his offspring (זָרַע) – are gathered to him. What makes the servant stand out is his unique role in the process of substitutionary suffering and death:

The Old Testament testifies uniformly that the dead are alive, and in this sense it is no surprise to find the Servant alive after death. But things are said about him after death that set him apart from all others. Jacob, for example, 'sees his children' (29:23) like the servant 'sees his seed' (10c). Not so the Servant! He who was crushed under the will of the Lord lives as the executor of that will...In the case of the Servant...death ushers him into sovereign dignity and power,

¹³⁰ Motyer does not engage the translation issues involved with the noun נפש, though elsewhere he has allowed for flexibility in translation. On 1.14, שָׂנְאָה נַפְשִׁי is translated 'I hate with all my heart'; on the somewhat awkward הַנֶּפֶשׁ בְּרִי of 3.20, Motyer reads 'high collar' (*contra* BDB, 661); on 10.18 Motyer accepts some kind of dichotomy between נפש and בָּשָׂר. Yet on 14.8-9 we find what is perhaps his most succinct statement, '[I]n biblical understanding human beings are embodied souls/besouled bodies, but at death this unity is sundered and the body falls into the ground. How, then, can the spirit in Sheol be a complete person? The Old Testament awaits Jesus and the illumination of immortality (2 Tim. 1:10) to fulfil its hints of the resurrection of the body...' It is this kind of dichotomy, presumably, that undergirds Motyer's possible reading of נפש as 'soul' in 53.10.

¹³¹ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 439.

¹³² Motyer, *Isaiah*, 439-440.

¹³³ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 440. Cf. Isa 50.7, where the servant 'sets' (שָׂמַח פָּנָיו) his face; Lev 5.17, where the נפש is the one bringing the sacrifice.

¹³⁴ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 441.

with his own hand administering the saving purposes of the Lord, and as victor taking the spoil (verse 12...).¹³⁵

The servant is not bound for Sheol, but something much greater. Where suffering and death – here described as עמל נפשו – pulled him down, this is only temporary. Motyer resists accommodating the MT to the LXX's addition of φως,¹³⁶ reading יראה and ישבע as a pair that signifies that the servant will be 'satisfied with what he sees'.¹³⁷

The 'knowledge' of the servant, and the consequent 'making righteous' of the many, fit remarkably well within Motyer's general hermeneutical and theological concerns in the chapter. He takes בדעתו to imply an awareness of a theological truth that was not disclosed beforehand; it is an awareness of the right *content* of revelation.¹³⁸ As Motyer reads it in connection with שכל in 52.13, it is fitting that the present phrase is interpreted in light of the earlier.¹³⁹ The verb of 52.13 'combines wisdom and effectiveness; the wisdom of true prudence, not in the weak sense of caution but in the true sense of knowing exactly what to do in order to bring about the intended result'.¹⁴⁰ It is 'the knowledge which he alone possesses (and we need) regarding what God requires in relation to sin and what to do about it'.¹⁴¹

The decision to accept דעת as a knowledge which is able to be 'possessed' is surely indebted to a wider concern for the propositional nature of the communication and effecting of God's redemptive work. We may note Motyer's description of the biblical narrative as representing '...the same kind

¹³⁵ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 440-41. The assertion, that 'the Old Testament testifies uniformly that the dead are alive' is a remarkable overstatement. Levenson, *Resurrection*, has much to say on the topic, and even his thesis (which stands at odds with Motyer's comment here) is a response to the well-worn scholarly opinion that resurrection is *not* present in the Old Testament until extremely late dates (e.g. Dan 12).

¹³⁶ Cf. 1QIsa^a: מעמל נפשו יראה אור.

¹³⁷ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 441.

¹³⁸ A precedent can be seen in Calvin's comments on 52.15b ('they shall understand'), 'By this word he shews that faith consists in certainty and clear understanding. Wherever, therefore, knowledge of this kind is wanting, faith is unquestionably wanting'. See Calvin, *Isaiah* 33-66, 109. Presumably Calvin would say the same of 53.11, though there he is busy creating an apologetic for a Jewish audience.

¹³⁹ This is, unsurprisingly, not without controversy. For varying views of בדעתו, one may consult Gelston, 'Knowledge, Humiliation or Suffering'. Thomas acted as a catalyst for a host of interpretations on this verse, in 'Consideration of Isaiah LIII'. Thomas attempted to translate ידע in light of an Arabic cognate, *wd*, 'to become quiet, to rest'. Numerous scholars have followed Thomas in turn: Whybray, *Isaiah* 40-66, translated the noun in 53.11 as 'humiliation'; Williamson, 'Da'at in Isaiah LIII 11', also followed Thomas. Gelston followed suit, 'Eclectic Text'. The reading, however, has faced critics in Johnstone, 'YD' II', and Emerton, 'Further Consideration'.

¹⁴⁰ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 424. Cf. 1 Sam 18.30.

¹⁴¹ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 441.

of problem as unfolding a long, sustained, interlocking argument. It is a proposition which, whether of few or numberless parts, is commended by a single unity of conception'.¹⁴² He says, 'Could the Bible be better described?'¹⁴³ This propositional understanding will undergird the entire structure of his *Look to the Rock*, as the subtitle (and the individual chapter titles) suggests: *An Old Testament Background to Our Understanding of Christ*.¹⁴⁴ For Motyer, all Old Testament texts are soteriological, though only by virtue of their ability to conform to certain dogmatic convictions, propositions, and/or presuppositions. While this is perhaps problematic on theological and philosophical grounds,¹⁴⁵ it also makes for a striking reading of Isa 53.

Motyer's insistence on the priestly character of the suffering servant only makes sense if there was a structure in place that *did*, at some time, account for the atonement of sin (e.g. Lev 16). Above he outlined the work of the servant as exposing the failure of the Levitical code to adequately account for sins of commission (my wording); for only in this is the *willingness* of the servant efficacious for the recipients of his work. Thus the 'knowledge' that the servant possesses must be closely aligned with this priestly understanding. But for the novelty of the servant to remain as such, he must have possessed some deeper understanding of what the sacrificial system was lacking.

In addition to the propositional knowledge possessed and disbursed by the servant, Motyer finds a twofold function in the specific reference to the 'righteousness' of the servant. First, the designation of the servant as 'righteous' (צַדִּיק) underscores his 'moral fitness' for the task. More importantly for Motyer, however, is the second function of this righteousness: the servant will 'justify' the 'many' (יַצְדִּיק... לְרַבִּים). Here we pick up the second divine speech, signaled with the use of עֲבָדִי. The language slowly gains momentum for Motyer: not only does the servant 'make' the many righteous, but given that the verb is followed by a ל, indicating an indirect object, he

¹⁴² Motyer, *Look to the Rock*, 20-21.

¹⁴³ Motyer, *Look to the Rock*, 21.

¹⁴⁴ 'Understanding' here is to be read as in part historical, but likewise propositional (with reference to time, '[m]easurement is circular, understanding is linear', *Look to the Rock*, 167). Thus Motyer, while outlining his reading of the Old Testament, aims to shape 'our understanding of Christ'. See Motyer, *Look to the Rock*, 23.

¹⁴⁵ Both propositional theology and philosophical foundationalism have been critiqued in numerous ways since the work of Karl Barth and his subsequent influence on the postliberal theology. On Barth, see Diller, 'Theology of Revelation', 7-53; on postliberal theology generally, Lindbeck's *Nature of Doctrine* remains a classic.

translates the phrase as 'bringing righteousness to the many' – righteousness, then, is a gift bestowed.¹⁴⁶

A surprising move takes place here – Motyer reads back to Isa 51.1, where the remnant were characterized as those who 'pursue righteousness' (רדפי צדק), who 'seek Yahweh' (מבקשי יהוה). While there they are instructed to look *back*, in retrospect, to Yahweh's Abrahamic covenant, the language nevertheless has a forward-pressing movement by virtue of its resonance with Isa 53.11. To those addressed in 51.1, Motyer can simply affirm that 'the Servant is the end of their quest'. In 51.5 Yahweh declares that his 'righteousness [צדקין] draws near', and that his 'arm' (זרוע; cf. 53.1b) will judge the people. 'Here', Motyer writes, 'are the hidden depths of that promise'.¹⁴⁷ He continues, 'Who could have known without revelation that the Lord would make available a righteousness of God, a righteousness on which he has already set the seal of his approval by saying "that righteous one, my Servant"'.¹⁴⁸ As we saw in 53.4-6,¹⁴⁹ so we see here: for Motyer, a certain notion of revelation is central to understanding the chapter's message. More provocatively put, understanding the theological dynamic at work in the poem, as something that makes a demand upon the reader, is reliant on prior revelation.¹⁵⁰

This *positive* aspect of the servant's work – his giving of the 'gift' of righteousness – is met by the *negative* aspect of sin-bearing in 53.11c, read here as the grounding of the giving of righteousness, 'The provision of righteousness arises from the bearing of sin'.¹⁵¹ This relationship, between the positive and negative aspects of 53.11, leads Motyer to affirm that the verse 'is one of the fullest statements of atonement theology ever penned'.¹⁵² Indeed, on Motyer's reading, it would be hard to disagree.

Finally in his exegesis, Motyer offers a fresh reading of 53.12. The servant does not stand on equal footing with 'the many' and 'the strong', but stands exalted above them. Thus in the phrase אהקל-לו ברבים, Motyer

¹⁴⁶ The language here is similar to that of Luther and later Reformed notions of 'justification'. One may note, for example, Luther's lectures on Galatians, in Pelikan (ed.), *Lectures on Galatians*, 396; Calvin, *Institutes* III.xiv, 19-20.

¹⁴⁷ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 442.

¹⁴⁸ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 442.

¹⁴⁹ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 424, '[53.4-6] forms the heart of the poem, the revelation without which...the Servant cannot be understood'.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Barth, *CD* I.2, 738.

¹⁵¹ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 442.

¹⁵² Motyer, *Isaiah*, 442.

translates the ם as a *beth essentiae*, allowing רבים to function as the direct object.¹⁵³ Thus the ‘many’ become the apportionment for the servant, and similarly (though here not with the *beth essentiae*) the ‘strong’ become that which he divides.¹⁵⁴ The decision finds clear precedent in LXX, (ἀπὸς κληρονομήσει πολλούς), and possibly in the Vulgate (‘dispartiam ei plurimos et fortium dividet spolia’).¹⁵⁵ Numerous commentators have followed the reading.¹⁵⁶ The spoil of the servant are ‘all those [Yahweh] has redeemed’, including the ‘many’ and ‘kings’ of 52.14-15.¹⁵⁷ The servant is thus not ‘given’ the many by another, but he takes them for himself, ‘by his own superior power and disposes of them according to his own pleasure’. And this on the basis of his willingness to die and his identification with those for whom he suffered (53.12aβ), his substitutionary work (53.12bα), and his intercessory role (53.12bβ). The last of these – the servant’s intercessory work – Motyer reads as the flip side of the coin of 53.6 (ויהוה הפניע בו את עון כלנו). Isaiah 53.6c, as the center of the poem, notes the divine offering of the servant. Here, in 53.12, the servant ‘makes intercession’, which Motyer takes as affirming the servant’s role as that of a ‘bridge’, a ‘go-between’, ‘interposing between two parties’. He continues, ‘Here the Servant comes voluntarily to stand with us so that when

¹⁵³ This usage, however, functions primary as a liaison, or emphatic particle, in a copulative clause, thus highlighting the predicate. A classical occurrence is Ex 6.3: ויאר אלהיהם אל-יצחק ואל-יעקב באל שדי (cf. Exod 3.2[?]; 18.4; Deut 26.5, 14; 28.62; Job 23.13; Ps 54.6 [MT 54.4]; Isa 40.10). On this see, ironically, Motyer, *Revelation of the Divine Name*, 14. For the formal statement of the partical one may consult GKC §119a. Perhaps it is simply a matter of vocabulary, as GKC §119k accounts for ם as introducing the object in some transitive clauses, especially in verbal cases of ‘touching, striking, reaching to...something’ (akin to, for example, *an-* verbs in German: *anfassen, anrühren, anstreichen*, etc.). Here we might also be able to categorize חלק in 53.12.

¹⁵⁴ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 442. Thus Motyer reads the ם of 53.12a as a direct object marker. This potentially disturbs a syntactical parallelism in the first half of the verse, where an object is first introduced with ם, and secondly with ם. But one may also note the similar (/cognate) language of 33.2-4.

¹⁵⁵ Kimchi handles the verse similarly, reading it in light of Zech 14.14, and identifies the ‘many’ and the ‘strong’ with Gog and Magog; this presumably on the grounds of Ezek 38.2-6, where ‘many peoples’ (populique multi) come against Jerusalem (38.6). This resonates with the Vulgate’s 53.11, in which the ‘many’ (multos) are justified, and 53.12, where the ‘very many’ (plurimos) and the ‘strong’ (fortium) are taken as plunder. Kimchi’s interest in Jerusalem may also be informed by the Targum, which reads 53.12a as בכין אפליג להי בית עמון סניאין ויה נכסי כרכין תקיפין יפליג עראה. The use of בית is interesting, and may come as an expansion of the MT’s curious prefix ם ברבים.

¹⁵⁶ E.g. Muilenburg *Isaiah 40-66*, 631; Koole, *Isaiah 49-55*, 336. For those against the reading, see Duhm, *Jesaia*, 405 (‘an Vielen’); Beuken, *Jesaja IIB*, 188, 233-34 (‘onder de velen’); Westermann, *Isaiah 40-55*, 255.

¹⁵⁷ On רבים here, see Duhm, *Jesaia*, 405.

he had borne our sin he might bring us to God'.¹⁵⁸ The resonance with 1 Pet 3.18 is unmistakable, and perhaps rightly so: in both passages a 'righteous' individual (53.11) suffers on behalf of the 'unrighteous' (53.12, i.e. 'transgressors'), with an intercessory role of bringing those unrighteous 'to God' (53.12).¹⁵⁹

In conclusion, Motyer has read Isa 53 as an unprecedented text, one that breaks away from typical Old Testament expectation. It embodies an enduring messianic hope, but provides what was lacking in the stereotypical vision of Isa 6: a self-aware, willing, sacrificial victim. It thus meets an enduring need from within the established priestly traditions of Jerusalem – a need picked up in New Testament soteriology. The evangelical concerns of beginning with Jesus, propositional revelation, long-term prophecy, and structurism situate the reading: the singular importance of the chapter derives from the New Testament resonances, its contents focus upon a right doctrinal understanding of the nature of atonement and soteriology, it opens with an 'unmistakable' allusion to the life of Christ, and literarily draws our eye to the doctrinal centerpiece of vv.4-6. Further, the propositional content is highlighted through the affirmation of single authorship; for, on Motyer's reading, it is the same Isaiah at work in chapter 6 as in chapter 53 – the central question that emerges, then, is in what way the singular author's vision has changed.

Motyer has provided a *tour de force* in his reading of Isa 53 as Christian Scripture. It is theologically coherent, exegetically interdependent, and has been given a place in the wider book of Isaiah and the Old and New testaments that represents serious theological and interpretive reflection. I will offer evaluative comments on Motyer in the Conclusion, but we may say at this point that the scope of his reading, as with his wider commentary, and the attention to textual detail, have produced what one struggles *not* to identify as a serious contribution to theological reading of Isa 53.

¹⁵⁸ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 443. Motyer takes the verb in נמנה וְאֵת־פְּשָׁעֵינוּ to be a *niph'al tolerativum* (GKC §51.c), akin to the Greek middle voice, 'he let himself be numbered', highlighting the willingness of the servant. This stands at odds with the LXX, which views the servant passively in the clause: ἐν τοῖς ἀνόμοις ἐλογίσθη.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Wolff, *Jesaja 53 im Urchristentum*, 102; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 12n.114.

Chapter 7

Conclusion: Hermeneutics and Isaiah 53

‘Erst nachdem man sich auf diese Art einen vollständigen Begriff von dem Charakter eines Uebersetzers gemacht hat, wird man seine Erklärung in einzelnen Fällen richtig würdigen’.

W. Gesenius¹

‘People feel that they are being pushed into a corner in which they are obliged to take up more extreme positions and express them more stridently than they otherwise would wish. Only the extremes get a hearing, but truth seldom lies there’.

H.G.M. Williamson²

The dissertation at hand has aimed toward a deeper self-understanding, and more robust practice, of the hermeneutics of theological interpretation of the Old Testament. In the Introduction, I touched on an interest within present theological hermeneutics, that of the relation of confessional commitment to a history approached through critical analysis. Simply stating that there is such a relationship poses nothing new: the phenomenon exists in the patristic and later medieval formation of multiple ‘senses’ of Scripture. Beyond this, while embodying Luther’s anti-scholastic mantra of *sola scriptura*, 19th and 20th century biblical scholarship often picked up the relationship either under philosophical categories – e.g. the resurgence of neo-Kantianism in the Marburg school³ – or under more explicitly theological concerns – e.g. the relationship between ‘Geschichte’ and ‘Historie’ in Kähler.⁴

But insofar as recent theological hermeneutics have developed in express disillusionment with modernity’s interest in ‘objective’ history, it remains to be seen in what way this is a real disillusionment, or merely a rhetorical reaction to what is perceived to become a threatening normative

¹ Gesenius, *Commentar über den Jesaia*, ix.

² Williamson, ‘History of Israel’, 23.

³ Cf. Saarinen, *Gottes Wirken*; Yeago, ‘Costs of a Construal’.

⁴ Cf. the uses of ‘übergeschichtlich’ in Kähler, *Der sogenannte historische Jesus*, 19, wherein he sharply critiques a 19th century ‘Leben-Jesu-Forschung’ that was interested in a Jesus of history in positivist, rationalist categories. On various readings and uses of Kähler, see Leipold, *Offenbarung und Geschichte*. Bultmann would pick up the use of ‘übergeschichtlich’, in his ‘Geschichtliche und übergeschichtliche’.

interpretative frame of reference. So far, I have treated the general approaches of three figures representative of prominent hermeneutical models that may be deemed 'theological': Duhm, Childs, and Motyer. The dissertation has operated from a standpoint that takes the concerns of each interpreter seriously, whether it be the historical particularity of Duhm, the dialectical and theological approach of Childs, or the evangelical, propositional reading of Motyer. That each approach represents a valuable contribution to interpretation is taken as read, and in no need of prolonged *apologia*.

What is significant to note is that at the centre of each approach is a rhetorical positioning *away from* a perceived threat to theological reading. For Duhm, there is a move away from a teleological reading of the prophets in relation to the 'Erscheinung Christi';⁵ for Childs, theological reading is a move away from 19th century liberalism's mooring to 'Historie', and consequent 'anthropocentric' struggles to reconnect to the New Testament the disconnected Old Testament; for Motyer, theological reading embodies that which Duhm resisted, as he reads the prophets both in relation to Christ's 'messianic' appearance (central to the integrity of this activity is establishing an 8th c. setting for the book of Isaiah as a whole), as well as in relation to the first-century (and contemporary) Church.

Isaiah 53 has been chosen as a chapter against which to sample these respective approaches, and its value is seen in the numerous difficulties with which it presents the interpreter: textual, redactional, and *historische*. Obviously, the selection goes beyond the chapter's potential to confound differing interpretive approaches; it is, unmistakably, the most striking Old Testament parallel to the synoptic portrayals of the passion of Christ, and as such stands as the *locus classicus* for the Church's theological interest in the Old Testament. For this reason, Isa 53 presents the theological interpreter with numerous theological problems, culminating with the question of what value we attribute to the historical phenomena behind the poem (in some sense, the question of 'wie es eigentlich gewesen?').

As seen in the introductory chapters on Duhm, Childs, and Motyer, each is aware that their wider hermeneutical concerns stand at some odds with their interpretive interlocutors (whether real or imagined). This inevitably creates, in addition to distinct exegetical decisions, substantial

⁵ Duhm, *Propheten*, 5.

rhetorical prolegomena. The precise difficulty with this rhetorical outlining of opponents is that it often bears limited actual relation to the people or movements in mind. The wider concerns of Duhm, Childs, and Motyer do not stand only on their disagreement with their proposed interlocutors, but they do largely begin there.

What follows in this chapter comprises four sections. Section I renders more explicit the connection between the general hermeneutical interests presented in each interpreter, and their specific readings of Isa 53. Section II will try to locate the hermeneutical difficulties for each interpreter in light of their exegesis of Isa 53. The chapter, I suggest, exceeds the scope of any one singular hermeneutical model/approach/framework. This will involve specific judgments on particular hermeneutical and exegetical decisions made by each interpreter.

Section III then raises the precise issue of rhetorical distancing in the interpreters at hand. The selected interlocutors and foils of each are indicative of their respective hermeneutical interests. Each model of distancing is not without serious inherent difficulties, and this emerges especially when shared interpretive structures and/or interests between the interpreters are highlighted. David Kelsey is brought in, to provide a model of hermeneutical comparison that relates hermeneutical 'systems' to the content of those systems.⁶ To highlight the failure of rhetorical force to bear out in exegesis, I bring each interpreter into contact with the other, in terms of Kelsey's framework, noting striking similarities in the exegetical (and often theological) task. Finally, in Section IV, I provide some brief reflections on how, from a theological interpretative perspective, one ought to regard what has easily come to be titled 'historical criticism', as it pertains to Isa 53.

I. On Isaiah 53

I.1. *Revisiting Duhm's Hermeneutics*

If one takes a 'religionsgeschichtliche' context to be concerned chiefly with the kind of historical work advocated by Wrede, then Duhm will be anomalous to

⁶ Kelsey, *Proving Doctrine*.

that context.⁷ Duhm was too deeply impressed by Hegelian and Kantian dialectics to regard 'eigentliche Geschichte' as something to be objectively accessed. It is only within a dialectic between 'Historie' and prior epistemological construct that theological reading of the Old Testament is possible. One functional outcome is that for Duhm, a division of labor between 'historical' and 'theological' work on the Old Testament is neither appropriate nor possible.⁸

In a sense there is nothing here that is particularly novel regarding 19th century Old Testament hermeneutics: 'religion' is a transcendent category that governs one's reading of the biblical texts. Much here is indebted to Schleiermacher's *Reden*, as is the general hermeneutical outcome of that project: religion becomes the universal feeling of dependence on the divine, a conviction fully at home with Duhm, '[W]ir betrachten die Religion als ein Verhältnis des Menschen zu Gott', a conviction worked out in his understanding of 'covenant' in the Prophets; namely, as 'ein Verhältnis Gottes zu den Menschen und der Menschen zu Gott oder besser den Verkehr zwischen beiden'.⁹ What makes Duhm exceptional in his reliance on the religious *a priori* is not that he had such an *a priori*, but that he had it *and acknowledged it* as a presupposition brought from within his own interpretive framework, and placed upon events without. Duhm was acutely aware of Germany's 'Kulturprotestantismus', and accordingly exercised a discernment in its application to the biblical interpretive endeavor.

What does this look like in Isa 53? To begin with, a central dialectic exists between the historical nature of the text and Duhm's acknowledged presupposition of a 'religious *a priori*' that governs his work. In order to appreciate the contribution of both sides of this tension, the interpreter must uphold the text's historical referentiality as somehow positively contributive, and must also take seriously the act of reading a text teleologically; that is, despite a text's historical referents, it nevertheless possesses an inherent *telos* that reaches forward, or upward.

⁷ Cf. Lessing, *Geschichte*, 281, 'Religionswissenschaftliche und theologische Arbeit sind daher nicht zu trennen. Sie bilden eine Einheit. Vor allem für die systematischen Erwägungen innerhalb der religionsgeschichtlichen Schule ist diese These eine Herausforderung'.

⁸ Cf. especially Duhm, *Über Ziel*, 28-31.

⁹ See Duhm, *Theologie*, 74. For examples of specifics exegetical moments of this, cf. *ibid.*, 60, 224-25, 290, 306.

In Isa 53, Duhm seeks to heighten the historical particularity of a suffering person in Israel's past, as far as possible for the historian and text critic.¹⁰ The means by which this is carried out is to read the chapter in terms of the themes of debasement and exaltation, since these themes reside at the center of the poet's vision of the servant. Highlighting these themes gives us access to the poet's own reflection and future hope, and thus leads to a greater grasp of the question Duhm poses at the outset of his exegesis, 'was wird denn mit dem Gottesknecht geschehen?'¹¹ Emphasizing the historical particularity that these themes engender aligns perfectly with Duhm's insistence that Israel's history must have something *positive* to contribute to Christian theology; where the historical referent of this text is eclipsed by teleological connections to Christ, theology will suffer. For this reason, concerns of both 'higher' and 'lower' criticism are central to the interpretive task. Duhm's *Jesaia* commentary is a magisterial demonstration of the attempt to take both seriously – perhaps especially at the point of Isa 53. Duhm's closing reflections on the poem in his *Jesaia* begin only after an 'em dash' has been inserted,¹² that is, he felt the need to reflect theologically only in a subsequent fashion to his historical- and text-critical work. Yet the division is somewhat artificial, since the foregoing work sought to highlight the diachronic dimension of Isa 53 in all its distinctiveness. Duhm's historical distancing of Isa 53 from the Christ-event in these reflections was not an optional appendix – it was already well underway in his prior exegetical moves.

For Duhm, there is also always the danger of historical positivism; i.e. an approach that fails to reckon with the chapter's teleological relationship with the Christ-event and its account in the New Testament (à la Wrede).¹³ With reference to Isa 53 specifically, this touches on the center of Duhm's theological reading of the chapter. The poem cannot be read as corresponding to the Christ-event, since that which the poet has in mind essentially 'läuft doch all seine Arbeit auf die Herbeiführung eines glücklichen Diesseits

¹⁰ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 406, '...wir in ihm ein Individuum und kein Collectivum zu sehen haben. *Es geht weit über die Bedürfnisse des dichterischen Individualisierens hinaus...*'

¹¹ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 395.

¹² Duhm, *Jesaia*, 406.

¹³ It is curious that Joachimsen, *Identities in Transition*, 15, identifies Duhm as operating from a 'positivistic point of view'.

hinaus'.¹⁴ Further, the poet (who is not to fault, Duhm notes) has not yet found 'den Sinn der Religion in der Rettung der unsterblichen Seele und ihrem ewigen Fortschreiten von einer Verklärung zur andern'.¹⁵ Simply put, we cannot equate the poet with the 'Männern des Neuen Testaments', and 'seinen Meister' with 'ihrem Meister'.¹⁶ The poet's champion in the person of the servant is not the same champion of the New Testament writers.

What, then, does this mean for that teleological reading that Duhm sought to uphold? It retains a teleological connection precisely in terms of a *negative* relation. The suffering servant of Isa 53 is negatively related to the Christ-event of the New Testament in terms of its inability to realize the transformation of a world-ethic that the Christ-event inaugurated. The negation of Isa 53 serves to heighten the Christ-event's novelty. In his closing reflections to Isa 53, in his *Jesaia*, Duhm portrays the negative relation between the poem and the Christ-event. What remains most miraculous is,

...daß ein alttestamentlicher Dichter ein Bild zeichnet, das nach Jahrhunderten zur Wirklichkeit wird, mag es auch hinter dieser Verwirklichung in manchen und wesentlichen Zügen zurückbleiben. Es zeigt sich darin die innere Verwandtschaft der alttestamentlichen Religion mit dem Christentum, allerdings auch ihre Inferiorität, sofern sie den höchsten Gedanken denken, aber nicht verwirklichen kann.¹⁷

It is remarkable that Duhm allows the poem of Isa 53 to be realized ('zur Wirklichkeit werden') centuries after its original composition. How could Duhm affirm this, in light of his statements elsewhere on the sharp bifurcation of witness? It would only seem to make sense in light of a realization that is negative in orientation; the poem falls short, in major respects, of the 'Verwirklichung', a phenomenon that is itself theologically charged. For Duhm, there will always exist an 'innere Verwandtschaft' between 'der alttestamentlichen Religion' and Christianity, but it is one marked by 'Inferiorität'. Following this comment comes the crux of Duhm's understanding of the relationship of Isa 53 to Christian theology: the Old Testament can think 'den höchsten Gedanken', but 'nicht verwirklichen kann'.¹⁸ The small auxiliary verb in this clause – 'können' – is explosive. The

¹⁴ Duhm, *Propheten*, 344.

¹⁵ Cf. II Cor 3.18 (Luther's translation has 'von einer Herrlichkeit zur andern').

¹⁶ Duhm, *Propheten*, 345.

¹⁷ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 406-7.

¹⁸ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 406-7.

Old Testament is understood to be *inherently* unable to actualize theology's highest, most profound acts of self-reflection.¹⁹ It represents for Duhm an inferior world of thought. Strangely, however, it is a necessary 'Inferiorität', required as a precursor to what would come about 'nach Jahrhunderten' in Christ.²⁰

In sum, Duhm's proposal of a dialectical reading, between 'eigentlich Geschichte' and teleology, acknowledges that the interpreter can only make sense of the 'raw materials' of history in terms of an organizing presupposition, or imaginative contextualizing move.²¹ In Isa 53, this dialectic functions largely negatively, in the attempt to establish a sharp historical 'Zeitabstand' between the poem and the Christ-event, and yet to keep the chapter moored to that event.

I.2 Revisiting Childs's Hermeneutics

Two areas of hermeneutical interest, for Childs, were outlined in a previous chapter. Firstly, there was the concern for the ontological plane, on which the ongoing function of Israel's Scriptures depended. Secondly, Childs approaches the interpretive task from the vantage point of a *Christian* theological interpreter, standing alongside those interpreters who have gone before.²² For Childs, the move from the ontological plane to a 'trinitarian *res*' is constitutive of the theological interpretive enterprise.²³ Yet what might it mean for the contemporary theological interpreter to affirm that 'Calvin and Drusius, Rashi and Ibn Ezra, belong among the giants' of interpretation,²⁴ whilst also affirming that they 'need to be heard in concert with Wellhausen and Gunkel'?²⁵ Or, put slightly differently, 'allegory is constitutive of patristic interpretation. But how then is one to proceed when standing at the beginning of the twenty-first century?'²⁶ For Childs, it will raise and

¹⁹ Here Duhm follows his reading of Paul (in contrast to Hebrews) in *Pauli Apostoli*, 29, 36ff.; cf. *idem.*, *Theologie*, 26.

²⁰ In some sense, this is similar to Bultmann, 'Significance of the Old Testament', esp. 31.

²¹ Cf. Orlinsky, *Studies*, 91, on the very designation of Isa 53 as a 'Lieder', '[O]ur passages and sections are anything but "Songs," and it would have occurred to no one to designate passages such as ours "Songs" had it not been for the Christian aura that was cast upon them'.

²² Cf. Childs, *Exodus*, xiii.

²³ Cf. Childs, *Exodus*, ix-x.

²⁴ Childs, *Exodus*, x.

²⁵ Childs, *Exodus*, x.

²⁶ Childs, *Struggle*, x.

accentuate a central task of the interpreter, realized in the 'dialectical nature of history'.²⁷

That history is understood dialectically presents no new challenge, *per se*, to contemporary interpretation; though some recent proposals have sought to marginalize 'Historie' to the point of its near-complete subsumption under 'Geschichte',²⁸ there persists 'family resemblance'²⁹ through the centuries in the kinds of questions put to the nature of history, notably in terms of 'outer'/'inner',³⁰ 'linear'/'participatory',³¹ 'horizontal'/'vertical',³² or 'secular'/'confessional'.³³ The issue is in no small measure philosophical,³⁴ though Childs notes that it does emerge from the Old Testament itself – particularly within prophetic eschatology.³⁵ When Isaiah sees Yahweh seated upon the throne, what is on one level a shift in political leadership, is on a deeper level a 'turning point in God's history with his people'.³⁶ It presents, 'above all... a wholly different dimension of history'.³⁷

In Childs's reading, the dialectical nature of history is borne out in Luther's formulation of Letter-Spirit/Law-Gospel,³⁸ less so in Calvin's 'theology of divine accommodation',³⁹ and was largely lost through the Enlightenment.⁴⁰ Grotius and Calov represent, in some measure, the early release of the dialectic,⁴¹ and though Vitranga and Cocceius made considerable advances in recovering history's dialectic,⁴² the wheels were already coming off. Nevertheless, with the contributions of Kähler, Schlatter, and von Rad, a

²⁷ Childs, *Struggle*, 317ff.

²⁸ E.g. Paddison, *Scripture*, 20-21, 24-25.

²⁹ Cf. Childs, *Struggle*, ix.

³⁰ E.g. Irenaeus' *Demonstration*. Cf. Daniélou, 'La théologie de l'histoire', 227-31.

³¹ E.g. Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*, on which see Levering, 'Linear and Participatory History', 175-196. See also Boersma, *Nouvelle Theologie*, 191ff.

³² See the recent treatment of Aquinas and Duns Scotus in Levering, *Participatory Biblical Exegesis*. In reality, Levering seems more interested in the fruitfulness of a participatory/vertical dimension to history than that which is horizontal/linear. He is, at any rate, an improvement on the recent monograph of Paddison (*Scripture*), which does not afford a positive contribution for 'Historie'.

³³ E.g. Kähler, *Der sogenannte historische Jesus*.

³⁴ Cf. Dupré, *Enlightenment*, 187-228; Lamb, 'Eternity and Time', 195-214.

³⁵ *Struggle*, 318; 'Retrospective Reading', 373.

³⁶ Childs, *Isaiah*, 54-55.

³⁷ Childs, *Isaiah*, 55.

³⁸ Cf. Ebeling, 'Anfänge', 172-230; Childs, *Struggle*, 195-8; Helmer, 'Luther's Trinitarian Hermeneutic'.

³⁹ Cf. Battels, 'Human Capacity', 19-38; Childs, *Struggle*, 213-15.

⁴⁰ Childs, *Struggle*, 318-19.

⁴¹ Cf. Kuenen, 'Grotius', 161-85; Tholuck, 'Calovius', 73-77; Childs, *Struggle*, 230-35. Pickstock, 'Duns Scotus', 543-74, locates the break much earlier.

⁴² See also Childs, 'Vitranga', 89-98, where an attempt is made to distance Vitranga from Grotius and Cocceius.

dialectical view of history was retained, in which 'God's unique action in history cannot be fused with empirical history, nor can it be separated'.⁴³

Throughout his survey of theological reading of Isaiah, Childs highlights at numerous points the role of Isaiah's prophetic eschatology for penetrating into the dialectical nature of history. He points out those theological interpreters for whom this was a central contention: Irenaeus,⁴⁴ to some degree in Eusebius,⁴⁵ Chrysostom,⁴⁶ Cyril of Alexandria,⁴⁷ Theodoret of Cyrus,⁴⁸ and Luther.⁴⁹ Yet Cocceius, as noted above, is singled out for his attempt 'to recover the radical eschatological nature of God's action in history'. For Cocceius, 'this was not an extension of human events; it was qualitatively different'.⁵⁰ The 'year that king Uzziah died' is a prime example, '[W]ithin this real history... there is the entrance of another history and another time. The nature of God's rule which has been revealed to Isaiah obtained long before the death of Uzziah'.⁵¹ Indeed, 'The subtlety of the book of Isaiah turns on the dialectical relationship of this interaction'.⁵² Eschatological visions are not simply foretellings of what will, some day, come to pass, but they are indicative of a present view of *the nature of history itself* as standing under, and thereby superintended by, God. Thus, in Luke 4.14ff., when Jesus adopts the eschatological wording of Isa 61.1-2, he himself becomes the full realization of both levels of history.⁵³

How does this methodological approach come to bear upon reading Isa 53? First, there is the general 'ontological' observation that for Childs, Deutero-Isaiah has been loosed from particular historical settings, and relocated to a literary context. An immediate outcome of this is that historical personages cease to be figures of the past, but rather become 'types' – whether to Babylon, Cyrus, or other major historical figures, Childs applies the phenomenon of typification all the same. But what is especially noteworthy in this case is that in Childs's reading, the servant likewise stands within the typifying movement: where once the servant was an individual, the present literary context has shifted the referent away from a historical person, and toward a theological affirmation of God's eschatological plan. Isaiah 42 addresses implicit questions raised in 41,⁵⁴ and after a long deliberation Childs concedes that 'in some way Israel is the servant who is named in 42:1. No one else is named'.⁵⁵ Yet the commission does not rest with Israel, but is transferred to an individual in 49.3,⁵⁶ after which the personal testimony of

⁴³ Childs, *Struggle*, 320.

⁴⁴ Childs, *Struggle*, 53.

⁴⁵ Childs, *Struggle*, 82.

⁴⁶ Childs, *Struggle*, 107.

⁴⁷ Childs, *Struggle*, 114, 117-18.

⁴⁸ Childs, *Struggle*, 133.

⁴⁹ Childs, *Struggle*, 185-95, 198-200.

⁵⁰ Childs, *Struggle*, 319.

⁵¹ Childs, 'Retrospective Reading', 373.

⁵² Childs, 'Retrospective Reading', 373.

⁵³ Childs, *Struggle*, 14.

⁵⁴ Beuken, *Jesaia IIA*, 106-8.

⁵⁵ Childs, *Isaiah*, 325.

⁵⁶ Child, *Isaiah*, 383-5.

50.4ff. is introduced.⁵⁷ Isaiah 53 rounds out these passages in their context, addressing not only the questions raised by the servant's onlookers, but the questions raised by the literary context of Isa 40-55. The servant of Isa 53 is transposed into a context much larger than he was originally viewed to inform.

Second, Childs's emphasis on the theological role of the servant for the reflection of Israel's posterity attempts to honor both the poem's discrete compositional history – 'outer history' – as well as its theological witness to the relationship between God and his people – 'inner history'. The poem will reside always between these two realms, and will have meaning for the believing community only to the degree that that community affirms both an event in history, as well as the translation of that event into an enduring theological significance – notably, what it reveals about God's eschatological plan of redemption.⁵⁸

Isaiah 53, then, is situated within a 'lengthy prophetic narrative extending from chapters 40-55 and climaxing in the sequence that follows in chapters 49ff. *God intervenes to end the exile and to usher in his eschatological reign*'.⁵⁹ Whatever historical origins the poem originally had, it now resides within an unfolding *eschatological* drama that, by nature, is dialectical: the historical event of the servant, like the death of Uzziah, now bears witness to an enduring theological confession, like Yahweh seated upon the throne.

Finally, as a Christian theological interpreter, moving from the ontological plane to the Trinitarian context of Isa 53 is a necessary move for Childs. He closes his reflections with the relation of the chapter to the early Church's reading. Though Childs has patristic reading primarily in mind,⁶⁰ we could extend his insights beyond that era, to scholastic reading as well: for the Fathers, as well as for scholastic interpreters, an ontological relation between the suffering servant and the person of Christ needed no prolonged defense. Even Calvin, who in certain key respects challenges his interpretive

⁵⁷ Child, *Isaiah*, 394-6.

⁵⁸ Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 382, '[T]he Old Testament voice of Isaiah 53 cannot be correctly heard if this witness is directly identified with the passion of Jesus Christ... Yet to know the will of God in Jesus Christ opens up a profoundly new vista on this prophetic testimony to God...'

⁵⁹ Childs, *Isaiah*, 410 (emph. added); cf. *Isaiah*, 323.

⁶⁰ Childs, *Isaiah*, 422-23; cf. Childs, *Struggle*, x.

forebears,⁶¹ nevertheless carries forward a tradition of associating the servant of Isa 53 *simply* with Christ.⁶² For Calvin, a linear, chronological relationship of prophecy and fulfillment does not sanction theological reading, but a more immediate identification of that which Childs calls ‘substance’, or ‘res’: the true subject matter of Isa 53 resides not principally in the historical events of an individual suffering and dying, nor even in the community’s reflection, *per se*. For Childs, the deepest witness of Isa 53 resides at the *ontic* level of Trinitarian association between the economic and the immanent: the subject matter *must* concern the triune God, because the Christian interpreter stands in a tradition inaugurated by the triune *kerygma*.⁶³

In conclusion, Childs appropriates a dialectic for understanding history, derived from the Old Testament itself, particularly Isaiah’s prophetic eschatology. Duhm likewise proposed a dialectical procedure for interpreting the Old Testament, and though the general form of this approach is analogous between Duhm and Childs, the content of the dialectic shifts: it is no longer between ‘wie es eigentlich gewesen’ in the Old Testament context and that of the New, but between ‘wie es eigentlich gewesen’ in the Old Testament context and the *theological* context of prophetic eschatology, realized in the person of Christ. Theological formulation and reflection on Isa 53 possesses, for Childs, a positive potential for the Church’s own formulation and reflection. Contrary to Duhm’s neo-Romantic interest in ‘Historie’, Childs finds originary circumstances often inaccessible,⁶⁴ a pursuit of which stands at odds with the text’s most ‘literal’ sense.

I.3 Revisiting Motyer’s Hermeneutics

In both Duhm and Childs, the phrasing of dialectic was employed to emphasize that for both, the interpretive procedure is neither simple nor

⁶¹ Frei, *Eclipse*, 18-37, notes Calvin’s context at length. Interestingly, in the cases of Gen 3.15 and Isa 7.14 – two classic ‘messianic’ texts – Calvin distances himself from directly relating the passages to Christ (Frei, *Eclipse*, 25-6).

⁶² On 52.13, e.g., note Calvin’s ease of use of ‘Church’ and ‘Christ’, in Calvin, *Isaiah* 33-66, 106 (cf. his comments on 53.1, on p. 111). Cf. Muller, ‘The View from the Middle Ages’, 8; Gignilliat, *Fifth Gospel*, 44-46.

⁶³ Childs, *Isaiah*, 423. Cf. Jn 1.1; Col 1.15; Rev 13.8 (all of which Childs cites often). Similarly, Moberly, ‘Isaiah and Jesus’, 242-43.

⁶⁴ Childs, *New Testament*, 23, ‘[T]he function of canonical shaping was often precisely to loosen the text from any one given historical setting, and to transcend the original addressee. The very fact that the canonical editors tended to hide their own footprints, largely concealing their own historical identity, offers a warrant against this model of historical reconstruction’.

straightforward. For Motyer as well, the interpretive process is not simple, nor is it always straightforward; but what immediately stands out in a reading of his work is the lack of the term ‘dialectic’ (or its conceptual counterparts). Rather, Motyer’s approach to history is informed by a particular understanding of God’s sovereignty, and a view of God’s condescension to humanity that renders God’s involvement in history – if not always easy to formulate – accessible. Similar to various ‘Heilsgeschichte’ movements throughout history,⁶⁵ the biblical record is regarded first and foremost as divinely inspired, and revelatory of God’s character in its propositional content. Despite his criticism’s of G.E. Wright’s framing of forthtelling/ foretelling, Motyer shares the concern that what is theologically *constitutive* of God’s revelation is his constant guiding of, and involvement in, history. History is a realm of events that either did, or did not, happen. At the center of Christian faith is the proclamation that God has intervened in history – throughout the Old Testament, and decisively in the New.

With reference to Isaiah in particular, this claim seems to trample on the wider field of ‘modern knowledge’ and critical epistemology, as it manages to dismiss many years of delicate and searching work on the history of the book’s sixty-six chapters. What relation, then, does Motyer have to what we might call modern knowledge, or critical inquiry’s advances? The answer is somewhat complicated.

Contrary to recent formulations of non-foundational hermeneutics,⁶⁶ Motyer is still very much interested in the questions of ‘wie es eigentlich gewesen’ – not merely in the text’s ongoing development (one of the great advances of the last century), but in the history behind those texts:

...[I]t is history which rescues theology from the realm of make-believe. To remove historical veracity and reality from the Exodus complex of events is to consign Exodus ‘truth’ to the realm of the religious idea of ancient Israel with the story-component introduced as an illustration... This is the place of history in the Old Testament. It is a rock-foundation laid beneath the edifice of revealed truth.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ In many ways, Motyer’s wider construal of the biblical story’s narrative unfolding, alongside the affirmation of the unity of the ‘Old Testament Church’ and that of the New, bears striking resemblance to Irenaeus. Particularly, one may note Irenaeus’ *Demonstration*, §17-40.

⁶⁶ Though examples of such proposals are too many to cite here, one may note Caputo, *Philosophy and Theology*, who represents a general ‘postmodern turn’ (cf. pp. 44-50).

⁶⁷ Motyer, *Look to the Rock*, 40. Motyer draws upon Wenham, ‘History and the Old Testament’, 13-73. Moberly engages this kind of reading throughout his ‘Story in the Old Testament’, 113ff.

The straightforward dichotomizing between ‘history’ and ‘make-believe’ should not suggest that Motyer senses in ‘Historie’ a secular control upon theological content (as in Wrede); rather, the history in question is a realm governed by God’s providence, and so inherently in possession of a specific theological content. In this sense he shares a view of ‘history’ in common with what Frei calls ‘pre-critical’ exegesis.⁶⁸ The divinely-orchestrated history recounted in Scripture is the only real history to begin with, and so ‘wie es eigentlich gewesen’ is not regarded in terms of modern historical-critical investigation.

This does not eclipse the language of ‘fact’, but recasts it away from the realm of scholarship, and into the biblical witness. ‘Facts’ remain foundational for theological work and the Church’s faith. The disagreement will come precisely at the juncture of what facts actually are regarded as ‘true’. The single authorship of Isaiah is one such ‘fact’, though it fits into a wider constellation of evangelical concerns, coordinate with ‘long-term’ prophecy (e.g. Isa 44.24ff.; 45.1) and the revelatory inspiration of historical authors within history (cf. 1 Pet 1.10-12). The affirmation distances Motyer from someone like Wrede, for whom pre-Easter ‘facts’ need winnowing from post-Easter chaff.⁶⁹ For Motyer, there can be no such winnowing – not because of any epistemological difficulty in reaching those earlier historical moments, but simply because what happened in biblical history happened under God’s guidance:

This is the mystery of the divine government of history, whether on a national, domestic, or individual level: the great and loving God is in control, and because he is truly sovereign he works out his purposes in his way, not ours (Isa. 55:8).⁷⁰

A presupposition of divine providence, then, undergirds Motyer’s regard for history. Elsewhere he comments:

[T]he Old Testament historians selected their information *so that we would know how the Lord rules in history*, orders it so as to achieve his

⁶⁸ Frei, *Eclipse*, 17-50. In this light we can appreciate Motyer’s praise of Childs’s *Struggle*, in which Motyer specifically notes the book’s closing chapters on ‘Postmodern Interpretation’ (291-98) and ‘Hermeneutical Implications’ (299-324), calling them ‘two really great chapters’. The praise is remarkable, given Motyer’s distance from Childs’s ‘dialectical understanding of history’. See Motyer, review of Childs, 57-58. One wonders how closely Motyer read Childs in this instance!

⁶⁹ Wrede, *New Testament Theology*, 69-70. On Wrede’s conceptual naiveté in this regard, see Moberly, ‘Bultmann and Augustine’, 8n.12.

⁷⁰ Motyer, *Exodus*, 19.

purposes – in a word, reveals himself through what he does. *This does not, of course, mean that any facts were made up of falsified or twisted out of shape in order to make them tell God's story. The Lord was revealed along the grain of events as they happened. History itself is a revelation of God, his story. This is why Bible history is 'prophecy'*.⁷¹

God is who he is known to be through historical events, and for this reason 'Historie' becomes a field of the highest strategic importance: if this battle is lost, Motyer will contend, theology proper – in any and every sense – has no sure ground on which to stand. Motyer's position à la the development of book of Isaiah (or lack thereof) is only one example of the outworking of this kind of presupposition. Motyer's positions on Genesis⁷² and Exodus,⁷³ in relation to source-criticism especially,⁷⁴ bear a similar effect.⁷⁵

The result is that Motyer enjoys a strange relationship with 'modern knowledge'. On the one hand, history is of fundamental importance, guarding against theology's proclivities toward 'make-believe'.⁷⁶ Yet on the other hand, the history of which we speak is the specific 'Heilsgeschichte' of the Bible, and as such is immune from certain critical analyses. Not that Motyer would use such language, but the affirmation of a single 8th century author of the book of Isaiah suggests that the book of Isaiah is exempt from the advances of modern knowledge – or that such advances have come about in the first place.

How does this bear upon Isa 53? First, Motyer's insistence on a particular reading of history avoids two potential positivistic pitfalls. On the one hand, he avoids a lapse into describing the servant of Isa 53 in purely historical terms, sidestepping the well-worn debates of who this servant 'actually' was, *in history*. On the other hand, Motyer likewise avoids the pitfall

⁷¹ Motyer, *Discovering*, 90 (emph. added). The 'prophecy' to which Motyer refers is the collection of 'former prophets'. The leading question in context was why historical books are called 'prophecy'. Cf. Motyer, *Isaiah*, 21, 'The history recorded in the Bible is history with a message, not because of a tendentious selection of available facts but because it isolates the grain which runs right along the wood'.

⁷² Motyer, review of Westermann, 77, '...Massive learning, great potential and deep disappointment'. In another review, Motyer has referred to 'the current and plainly mistaken view' that Gen 2.5ff. is a 'second account of creation'. See Motyer, review of Goldingay, 80; *idem.*, *Roots*, 44-47.

⁷³ Cf. Motyer's reading of the crucial Exod 6.2, 3, where שְׁמִי יְהוָה is translated 'in the character expressed in my name Yahweh'. The concern is to present 'a synthesis of Genesis and Exodus different from that of the documentary theory, a way which allows for a truly biblical progressive revelation'. See Motyer, *Divine Name*, 12. Cf. Moberly, *Old Testament*, 51ff.

⁷⁴ Motyer, *Roots*, 44-47.

⁷⁵ Cf. Motyer's handling of other prophetic material, in his 'Zephaniah', 897-962; *idem.*, 'Haggai', 963-1002.

⁷⁶ Motyer, *Look to the Rock*, 40.

that often accompanies evangelical interests in the prophets – that of a linear model of prophecy-fulfillment. It is striking that Motyer's only comment, in the context of Isa 53, that *directly* touches on the person of Christ, is in relation to 52.13, 'It is impossible not to be reminded of the resurrection, ascension and heavenly exaltedness of the Lord Jesus'.⁷⁷ The language feels similar to that of Childs, 'For those who confess the Lordship of Jesus Christ there is [in Isa 53] an immediate morphological fit'.⁷⁸

To be 'reminded of', like a 'morphological fit', avoids mechanically chronological situatings of prophecy-fulfillment. Rather, Isa 53, alongside the Old Testament's wider 'messianic hope', is 'realized' in Christ,⁷⁹ a word frequently used by Motyer. He expands on what is implied by this term:

[I]t is like a perennial. The first year's flowering begins to show what is there, but years of maturing bring the flower to perfection far greater than the first year's almost tentative display. Yet nothing is new; it is what was always there... Carpenters might like a different illustration: the surface grain of a fine piece of timber displays its beauty and quality; the end-grain shows the depth and fullness that has always been there. Jesus is the 'end-grain' of the prophetic Scriptures. He is what was there and intended from the start.⁸⁰

Motyer's assertion that Christ *was* always there, and *was* intended from the start, casts 'realization' in partially historical categories. For this reason, the 'was always there' is to be differentiated from the 'was always there' of Childs's *ontic* assertions concerning the immanent Trinity in the Old Testament. Yet neither is 'realization' strictly historical in its construal of the significance of Isa 53 for Christian theology. Something deeper is at work, identifiable only in light of a theological, confessing context.

Second, throughout Motyer's reading of Isaiah there is a framing of the text within sequential categories – the text of Isaiah is an unfolding drama that functions as a call and response between prophet and contemporaries. This sequential reading is not construed along the lines of intertextuality (à la Childs and Beuken), but is cast in historical categories: the implicit questions raised by the present text are questions located within an 8th century context. It is not entirely foreign to the Old Testament to assume that an audience could have certain expectations, or be asking specific questions of God that a

⁷⁷ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 424.

⁷⁸ Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 382.

⁷⁹ Motyer, *Look to the Rock*, 36.

⁸⁰ Motyer, *Roots*, 21.

prophet seeks to address. Motyer notes Israel's expectations for a king, and the ensuing narratives surrounding Saul and David. In light of the tacit assumption of Jdg 17.6 and 21.25, a king 'would be the solution to religious, political, moral and social evils'.⁸¹ The failure of Saul ('politically'), David ('morally') and Solomon ('religiously') only served to deepen a certain expectation of Israel, 'The passing years...made the promise grow until it not only outgrew the capacity of any foreseeable member of David's line to fulfil it but also the capacity of any mere human being'.⁸² The topic at hand concerns monarchical expectation, though the hopes are carried forward in Israel, and for Motyer are not easily distinguishable from prophetic activity.⁸³

Motyer has commented that the book of Malachi 'is entirely based on crowd-response, questions the prophet himself faced'.⁸⁴ In light of his various readings of Isaiah, we could say that the same is true for the book of Isaiah, and that the question-response model is one adopted from Israel's long-awaited kingly messiah: the prophet's written work follows closely the expectation and response of his audience, both in terms of the questions posed by the audience, as well as in terms of the audience's reaction to the prophetic word (whether positive or negative).⁸⁵ Motyer's sequential reading is thus historically, rather than literarily, oriented.

Third, locating Isa 53 within the historical context of an 8th century Isaiah of Jerusalem, and stressing the questions and expectations of Isaiah's contemporaries, highlights that the nature of the questions posed by the contemporaries was not only political, but also doctrinal in nature. The 'messianic hope' that Motyer locates throughout the book of Isaiah is not limited to political hopes,⁸⁶ but over the book's highly textured witness there emerges in Motyer's reading a complex nature of the messianic office. The messiah is (in some sense) Davidic, marked by righteousness, is 'truly man and truly God', and offers salvation to Israel as well as the world. The 'King rules in righteousness over a righteous community (32:1-8), but how can he do so until the Servant provides righteousness for the Lord's servants (53:11; 54:17) and the Conqueror effectuates righteousness and overthrows their

⁸¹ Motyer, *Look to the Rock*, 28.

⁸² Motyer, *Look to the Rock*, 31.

⁸³ Motyer, *Look to the Rock*, 34-35.

⁸⁴ Motyer, 'Isaianic Literature', 23.

⁸⁵ Cf. Motyer, *Roots*, 19.

⁸⁶ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 13-16.

enemies (63:1-6)?⁸⁷ The reading locates the expectations of the literature in terms of Isaiah's historical audience, unites the book thematically in line with these expectations, and assigns specific doctrinal content to the prophet's writing – especially in the context of Isa 38-55.⁸⁸

Finally, the content-oriented questions of the prophet's contemporaries reaches its high point in Motyer's presentation of the servant's death as efficacious in terms of penal substitutionary atonement. In Isa 53.4-6 the deepest questions of the book as a whole are addressed, 'verse 4 demands the noun "substitution", and verse 5 adds the adjective "penal"'.⁸⁹ The outcome of this atoning work is the imputation of righteousness: in the servant there is 'perfect substitution', and a 'perfect sin-bearing' that gives 'a perfect righteousness before God'.⁹⁰ The priestly work of the servant, according to Motyer, provides a vicarious atonement for those implicated in v.6. Numerous exegetical and interpretive decisions support this reading: נִזָּח (52.15a) as 'sprinkle', אֲשָׁם as 'guilt offering', and דַּעַת as 'knowledge' of propositional content.

In conclusion, Motyer is distinct from Duhm and Childs in numerous ways. The space of distance established by Duhm and Childs – whether historical or theological – between Isa 53 and Christian theological appropriation is to some extent collapsed by Motyer: the historical dimension of the Old Testament is largely the same as that of the New (e.g. the ongoing messianic hope), and core theological affirmations are shared by the testaments.⁹¹

II. *The Struggle of Hermeneutics and Isa 53*

So far I have addressed the approaches of Duhm, Childs, and Motyer in a largely sympathetic fashion. At this point, however, some of the difficulties of each interpreter's approach to Isa 53 will be touched on.

⁸⁷ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 16.

⁸⁸ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 289ff.

⁸⁹ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 430.

⁹⁰ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 442.

⁹¹ Motyer, *Look to the Rock*, 38.

II.1 Duhm and the Growth of Prophetic Tradition

In my outline of Duhm's methodology I noted the theological assumption in his work, that Israel's ongoing development and progression most often embodied a movement of ossification – away from the radical and charismatic word of the prophet, and into a cultic framework of lifelessness and rigidity. Israel's 'Entwicklung' was thus not coterminous with its 'Fortschritt'.⁹² The theme forms the backbone of nearly all of Duhm's work, and is simply taken for granted that any late tampering with the original prophetic message scarcely, if ever, resulted in a positive theological contribution.⁹³ Though the immediate contemporaries of Isaiah faithfully managed the prophet's oracles (Isa 8.16),⁹⁴ beyond them we find (until Jesus) only the slow death of the original message.⁹⁵ The book of Isaiah is not exempt.⁹⁶

Yet it is surely curious that Duhm operates from this model of understanding the growth of the prophetic corpus, and yet affords the 'Ebed-Lieder-Jahwe' such a high, prominent place. Duhm writes, 'Muß man nicht eine Religion hochstellen, die eine Gestalt von solcher Berufstreue, solcher Opferfreudigkeit, solcher duldenden Sanftmut gegen die Menschen, die nicht

⁹² Cf. Duhm, *Theologie*, 73-91. In Duhm, 'Entstehung', 17-18, 'canon' is regarded as a negatively constraining force.

⁹³ E.g., Trito-Isaiah is regarded as a 'Theokratiker vom reinsten Wasser', and held in highest regard the concepts of 'den Tempel, das Opfer, das Gesetz, den Sabbath, u.s.w.'. This is, according to Duhm, situated in a time when 'die jüdische Gemeinde längst gegründet, Jerusalem bewohnt und der Tempel gebaut, aber alles in kläglichster Verfassung, sowohl innerlich wie äusserlich' (*Jesaia*, 418-19). Consequently, a sharp line is to be drawn between Deutero- and Trito-Isaiah, 'Als Schriftsteller unterscheidet sich Tritojesaia von Deuteriojes. so stark wie möglich' (*Jesaia*, 419).

Similarly, Duhm regarded Ezekiel as deserving 'das Verdienst, die Ideale der Propheten in Gesetze und Dogmen umgesetzt und die geistig freie und sittliche Religion vernicht zu haben' (*Theologie*, 263). In Ezekiel, especially in Ezek 40-48, we have a literature that 'hat schon nichts mehr mit der prophetischen Religion zu thun; wir befinden uns schon in der Luft des Judaismus und des Talmud' (*Theologie*, 263).

Duhm's painful comment on Judaism and the Talmud was unfortunately at home in his cultural and academic milieu; cf. Wellhausen, *Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte*, 179-191, 360-380, 381ff. Fortunately, alternative readings of Ezekiel's relationship to the cult abound. See Davis, *Swallowing the Scroll*; Wenham, 'Purity', 383ff; Patton, 'Ezekiel as a Literary Construct', 73-90.

⁹⁴ Duhm, 'Entstehung', 13.

⁹⁵ Cf. Duhm, *Propheten*, 1-14.

⁹⁶ An example is seen in that the ongoing role of Isa 6.9-12 in the formation of the book of Isaiah received no treatment; in the cases of Isa 42.16 (p. 318); 43.8 (p. 323); and 44.26 (pp. 338-40), Isa 6 does not feature. On 42.18-19 Duhm does note Isa 6, but the former passage is not considered 'originell' to Isaiah, and so is not 'geschichtlich fruchtbar' (*Jesaia*, 318). At work is a conceptual rationalization that inhibits the book from functioning intertextually; at the very least, the rationalization inhibits a diachronic appreciation of the text's historical development, a development that is undoubtedly 'geschichtlich fruchtbar'.

wissen was sie tun, hervorzubringen vermochte?’⁹⁷ We would have every reason to suspect that, for Duhm, a post-exilic poem (in his estimation) that has been inserted into earlier Isaianic material would serve to do little more than serve the general trend of calcifying the original Isaianic message. Presumably something of a conceptual parallel within the Christ-event (‘die nicht wissen was sie tun’) leads Duhm, a Christian, to place the poem on such a high level; but it is a placement dissonant with his wider assumptions. Isaiah 53 captures his imagination, but in so doing challenges his wider patterns of thought.

Further, we could pause to question Duhm’s sharp polarity of Deutero-Isaiah’s general tenor with that of the servant songs, a key factor in isolating the latter as discrete compositions. For Duhm, two criteria seem to be at work in making this judgment: one the one hand, there is the general difference in tenor between Deutero-Isaiah and the poet of the servant songs. The former is marked by ‘stürmende Begeisterung’ and is ‘gern laut’,⁹⁸ the latter is marked by ‘demütige Geduld’.⁹⁹ As far as this distinction goes, it is provisionally valuable. In Isa 40.12-17, Yahweh’s strength manifests itself in opposition to the strength of the nations; in 41.2 (cf. 25) Yahweh stirs up Cyrus to trample those before him (a conquest that belongs to Yahweh alone: 45.2ff.); and Yahweh visibly humiliates Babylon (47.1ff.). The examples could extend. The servant songs, however, are quiet: the servant is not marked by oppressive force (42.1ff.); he does not stand above others, but is often exhausted by them (49.4); he even lets himself ‘lose’ to his opponents (50.5-6), a loss that ultimately results in his death (53.7-9).

On the other hand, in addition to tone there is the ‘means’ of salvation in view. For Deutero-Isaiah, according to Duhm, the pronouncement of forgiveness in 40.1-2 is possible on the socio-political terms of Cyrus’ upcoming liberation. Hence, the means of forgiveness for Israel in Deutero-Isaiah is that people are trampled (‘Völker zertrümmert’), and kings are ‘dem Schwert des Welteroberers ausgeliefert’.¹⁰⁰ Deutero-Isaiah is consequently unable to bring about ‘die entscheidende Wendung im Geist der

⁹⁷ Duhm, *Propheten*, 336.

⁹⁸ Duhm, *Propheten*, 343-4; idem., *Jesaia*, 311.

⁹⁹ Duhm, *Jesaia*, 400.

¹⁰⁰ Duhm, *Propheten*, 343-4.

Menschheit'.¹⁰¹ The outlook of the poet, however, is primarily spiritual, '[E]r rechnet mit geistigen Mitteln, denn auch die Wirkung der göttlichen Machttat, der Auferweckung, ist geistiger Art'.¹⁰²

Yet to what extent are these differentiations (between tone and 'means of salvation') sustainable in such sharply differentiated categories? It does not take long to encounter the pastoral voice of Deutero-Isaiah (e.g. 40.1-2, 11), nor to encounter the complex and involved nature of transgression and forgiveness in his writing. What do such passages as Isa 48.25-28 and 55.1ff. mean, if Deutero-Isaiah had a strict socio-political framework for understanding the forgiveness of sin?¹⁰³ While various recent attempts have been made to highlight the distinctiveness of the suffering servant songs as independent compositions (in the wake of Duhm),¹⁰⁴ others have noted the affinities between the songs and their Deutero-Isaianic context.¹⁰⁵

Finally, it is worth questioning what heuristic value may be attached to a teleologically negative construal of Isa 53. For Duhm, the Christ-event created a rupture in world history, so that what came before (i.e. the Old Testament) could never fully witness to what came after (i.e. the New Testament). With Christ a 'new' history begins, with a new existential orientation. Yet there remains the large question of *why* the New Testament authors used Isa 53 as a resource for their description of the Christ-event. Surely, insofar as the early Church recognized Christ's work to mark a definitive break in world history, they did not describe that work *ex nihilo*. Attempting to articulate this relationship well is a theological struggle that Duhm did not feel compelled to undertake. Nevertheless, the resonance of Isa 53 in the evangelical and epistolary New Testament literature indicates, if nothing else, that those closest to the Christ-event felt the poem to supply a narrational and theological backdrop for theological reflection.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ *Propheten*, 343-4.

¹⁰² Duhm, *Propheten*, 343-4.

¹⁰³ Leclerc, *Yahweh Is Exalted*, 5ff., 107ff.

¹⁰⁴ E.g. Hermisson, 'Einheit und Komplexität', 309ff.; Steck, 'Aspekte', 33n.39.

¹⁰⁵ A more conservative position in this regard is seen in Barstad's insistence that 'the myth of the "Servant Songs" is long, long overdue for demolition'. See Barstad, 'The Future of the "Servant Songs"', 270. Cf. Mettinger, *Farewell*, 18ff., and Janowski's review of Mettinger, 304-7. Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 20, 29; Clifford, 'Isaiah', 499ff.; and (partially) Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 365, suggest Deutero-Isaiah as author. Cf. Williamson's comment in response to Hermisson's 'qarob-Schicht', that 'we are not yet in the position where we can with confidence abandon the usual understanding of Isaiah 40-55 as an essential unity' (*Book called Isaiah*, 24).

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Hengel, 'Wirkungsgeschichte von Jes 53', 27-48; Watson, 'Mistranslation and the Death of Christ', 215-250.

II.2 Childs, Exegesis, and the Struggle of 'Ontic' Reading

Childs's various methodological concerns and his reading of Isa 53 correlate neatly into a single exegetical, hermeneutical project. Concerns for the 'ontological plane', alongside a Trinitarian 'res', both with an eye to a confessing, worshipping posterity, manifests itself in Isa 53. As impressive as the reading is, however, there are both exegetical and hermeneutical difficulties with what Childs proposes.

II.2.1. Exegesis

Childs's wider *Isaiah* commentary and his reading of Isa 53 share the negative feature of exegetical indecisiveness in specific decisions. This applies to text-critical, as well as interpretive, decisions. Text criticism is, for Childs, theoretically recast in light of his wider hermeneutical concerns,¹⁰⁷ but it remains a necessary undertaking nonetheless. On Isa 53, the comments are introduced with the following, 'Even to engage the textual problems is a formidable challenge in itself. The decisions in establishing a critically responsible reading of the Hebrew text can greatly influence the interpretation'.¹⁰⁸

Yet throughout his comments on Isa 53, Childs rarely lands on specific decisions. On the notion of 'vicariousness' in vv.5 and 8, Childs discusses the use of ב in v.5b (וּבְחֵבְרָתוֹ נִרְפָּא לִנְיָ). Having distanced himself from anachronistic categories of vicariousness,¹⁰⁹ Childs likewise responds to the work of Orlinsky, Whybray, and Hanson,¹¹⁰ who each, in their own way, resist readings of a 'vicarious' nature. Childs's concern is to uphold 'the vicarious role of the servant', since only here do we find 'the exegetical key that unlocks the awesome mystery of [Isa 40-55]'.¹¹¹ Yet at the crucial moment of vv. 5 and 8, Childs does not supply a proposal, but sidesteps the interpretive issues at hand. Of Orlinsky he writes, 'I shall leave it to the reader

¹⁰⁷ Childs, *Introduction*, 96ff., where the text that is critically sought is the earliest stable canon of Judaism; i.e., the text of the first century AD (*Introduction*, 100).

¹⁰⁸ Childs, *Isaiah*, 410

¹⁰⁹ Childs mentions Anselm generally, but more relevant to this chapter would be the work of Eissfeldt, 'The Ebed-Jahwe in Isaiah xl.-lv', 265; or Kissane, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:177; Lindblom, *Servant Songs*, 50.

¹¹⁰ Orlinsky, *Studies*, 51-59; Whybray, *Thanksgiving*, 29ff.; Hanson, *Isaiah 40-66*, 160.

¹¹¹ Childs, *Isaiah*, 418.

to decide whether this interpretation does justice to chapter 53 and to the prophetic message in general'. To Whybray he responds, 'In my judgment, this bland and even superficial understanding of the passage serves as a major indictment of his conclusions'. And to Hanson, 'I leave it to the reader to assess whether this modern "politically correct" formulation does justice to the chapter's understanding of the willing obedience of the suffering servant who bore "our sins"'.¹¹² A problem with this kind of language is that it does not engage, and thus directly critique, the readings at hand, but is dismissive and insensitive to the seriousness with which those proposals were put forward. If nothing else, Orlinsky, Whybray, and Hanson deserve credit for bringing an interpretive difficulty and its possible resolutions to the fore. Moreover, through this mode of engagement Childs does not actually supply an interpretation of how vv. 5 and 8 should read, and 'I leave it to the reader to decide' is an example of an indecisiveness that sidesteps certain important questions about the chapter.

Text-critically there is the similar case of indecisiveness. On v.8a, דור is left open in meaning (following Westermann); on v.8b, a variety of emendations are noted with reference to מַפְשֵׁעַ עַמִּי נִגַּע לָמוֹ, with the conclusion that 'it is unwise to be dogmatic on any one textual reading'; on v.9, the difficult עֲשִׂיר is likewise left open, by noting that the emphasis of the verse lies elsewhere; and on the perennially difficult אִשָּׁם of v.10, Childs distances the term from a cultic context, confusingly praises Orlinsky (in light of his critique, above), and suggests (as with עֲשִׂיר), that the emphasis of the verse lies elsewhere.

An exegetical decision that Childs does land firmly upon – assigning the antecedent of 52.15b to the Israel of 48.6ff., rather than the nations and kings of 52.15a – is worth commenting upon here, since he regards this interpretive move as 'crucial to [the poem's] interpretation'.¹¹³ Nevertheless, the decision is difficult to sustain. As an evaluative, grammatical comment, the obvious antecedent of v.15b would not be something that has been addressed four chapters earlier, but simply the plural subjects of nations and kings.¹¹⁴ Important at this juncture is the role of כִּי in v.15b. Beuken translated

¹¹² Childs, *Isaiah*, 415-16.

¹¹³ Childs, *Isaiah*, 411.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Westermann, *Isaiah* 40-66, 259.

the particle emphatically, as ‘Waarlijk...’ The translation minimizes the reliance of the subsequent plural verbs upon the plural subjects of v.15a. Childs, however, retains the particle as a grounding clause in his own translation, ‘For what they were not told...’¹¹⁵ In his translation there is a clear disconnect from the ensuing interpretive proposal, perhaps attributable to haste, carelessness, or simple inconsistency.

A central problem in this kind of reading is the degree to which intertextuality carries a proclivity to self-define its own parameters: while Beuken and Childs may propose a literary, intertextual connection between Isa 48 and 52.15b, there is no reason why one should stop at Isa 48.6ff., verses which themselves possess an antecedent in 43.19 (הלוא תדעוה).¹¹⁶

The relationship takes its lead in large measure from the shared use of the ‘new things’, and forms a syntactic parallel:

Isa 43.19: הנני עשה חדשה עתה תצמח הלוא תדעוה

Isa 48.6: השמעת חזה כלה ואתם הלוא תגידו השמעתוך חדשות מעתה ונצרות ולא ידעתם

The rhetorical question posed in 43:19 is parallel in form to that of 48:6.¹¹⁷ Beyond the formal connection, we might note a difference in content – in 48.6 Israel is not asked if they ‘perceive’ / ‘know’ the new thing which Yahweh does; they are asked if they will ‘declare’ Yahweh’s mode of operation. The assumption is that they *do* in fact already both ‘hear’ and ‘see’.¹¹⁸ What we would find when reading the verses together, then, is the dramatic unfolding of a commission to Israel. A new thing in 43.19 is perceived, but the people have not ‘declared’ it as they ought. The obstinate response in 43.22-24 raises the rhetorical question of 48.6, by which point they have seen and heard.

If one is to situate 52.15b in relation to Israel, and not the kings/nations, a conceivably more fruitful route would have been to outline the relation of Deutero-Isaiah to the Isaianic commission of Isa 6.9-10, along the lines of Williamson’s proposal.¹¹⁹ Not only does the otherwise-unique

¹¹⁵ Childs, *Isaiah*, 407.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Franke, *Isaiah 46, 47, and 48*, 189-190. Further, why should Childs’s (/Beuken’s) intertextual reading not account for the semantic resonance of Job 29.8-9?

¹¹⁷ On the ‘new things’, cf. Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 346; *contra* Barstad, *Babylonian Captivity*; *idem.*, *A Way in the Wilderness*; Torrey, *The Second Isaiah*, is preferable to Barstad.

¹¹⁸ Franke, *Isaiah*, 189.

¹¹⁹ Williamson, *Book Called Isaiah*, 30-56.

construction of רָם (*qal*) + נִשָּׂא (*niphal*) occur in 52.13 (though cf. also 57.15¹²⁰), but the same intertextual vocabulary of 6.9-10 (יָדַע, רָאָה, בֵּין, שָׁמַע) features in 52.15b (רָאָה, שָׁמַע, בֵּין),¹²¹ in such a way as to suggest an overturning of the original Isaianic commission *toward Israel* (and not the nations).¹²² The reading would still be possible, though perhaps carrying the need to shift the language of ‘intertextuality’ to that of ‘allusion’;¹²³ a consequent hermeneutical outcome would be a reading that does not necessarily divorce textualization from historical antecedents.¹²⁴

Childs’s concern on this front is to keep the voice of the confessing ‘we’ of 53.1ff. from becoming that of the nations and kings. Were the voice to be so reassigned, Childs’s proposal would be less coherent. Leaving 52.15b with the nations and kings, however, does not lead necessarily to a reassignment of voice in 53.1ff. There could rather be a simple break in voice, similar to the phenomenon of 50.4-9, where a first-person description of the servant’s suffering is followed in v. 10 by a commentary-like exclamation that presses for a certain response to the servant’s suffering: מִי בְכֶם יִרְאֵה יְהוָה שָׁמַע בְּקוֹל עַבְדּוֹ (50.10a).¹²⁵

II.2.2 Hermeneutics

Hermeneutically, the difficulties of Childs’s reading are greater. Isaiah 53 functions for Childs as a theologically paramount text that carries with it an unmistakable ‘morphological fit’ with the passion narratives of the gospels. Yet Childs’s reading disappoints, for a variety of reasons.

To begin with, Childs’s interpretation of Isa 53 does not actually supply an interpretation, nor does it give the reader a *reading* of the poem in its entirety. Throughout, Childs supplies a commentary on the various

¹²⁰ Williamson, *Book Called Isaiah*, 39, notes the verse as ‘the clearest [Deutero-Isaianic] allusion’ to Isa 6.1, rightly observing that the lack of the definite article before וְנִשָּׂא in 57.15 would suggest a direct use of 6.1 by Trito-Isaiah. A close connection between Yahweh and his throne must be assumed for this allusion to be carried out, as the phrase in 6.1 refers to the throne, and in 57.15 to the person seated upon it.

¹²¹ The vocabulary features also, though to a less obvious extent, in Isa 57 (v. 1, בֵּין; v. 5, אֱלֹהִים; v. 7, נִשָּׂא [cf. 2.12]; v. 14, כִּלְיָ [contra שָׁמַע, 6.11]; v. 15, לֵב).

¹²² Williamson, *Isaiah*, 49, also cites 41.20, as well as the perplexing 40.21.

¹²³ Cf. Sommer, *Prophet Reads Scripture*, 217n.1.

¹²⁴ Alternatively, there is the relatively straightforward option of siding with Berges, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 411, ‘Der erste Abschnitt [i.e. Isa 40-88] ist geprägt durch die Themen “Babel”, “Kyros”, “Götzenpolemik” und die “früheren-späteren Dinge”, die später [i.e. Isa 49-55] nicht mehr vorkommen’.

¹²⁵ Cf., to some extent, Isa 49.1-6/7. Curiously, Childs comments upon this pattern in the text, *Isaiah*, 395.

interpretive difficulties, and the lay of the land in academic discussion. He is a master in this field, and his survey of scholarly debate is informative and persuasive. But one struggles to find a synthetic reading of the chapter and its significance for Christian theology, as we find at the close of Duhm's exegesis, or as we find in the totality of that of Motyer.

Further, the overall shape of his comments on Isa 53 may be questioned. Driver has summarized that for Childs, Isaiah 'has more to do with text-*res* referents than text-text referents'.¹²⁶ This is an understandable situating of Childs's *Isaiah*, in terms of the development of his own approach. Yet in reality, this kind of interest does *not* predominate in Childs's *Isaiah*. One needs only to think of his most prominent interlocutor throughout, Wim Beuken,¹²⁷ whose 'magisterial commentary' (Childs's assessment) is founded largely on an approach that is self-confessedly, 'inherently literary'.¹²⁸ For Beuken, intertextuality appears more akin to 'Wortspiel' than allegory, as Childs understands the terms. For Childs, intertextuality is inseparable from allegory, which relates a text to its deepest 'res'. However, in the course of his exegesis on Isaiah, Childs manifests a reading of the book that appears to have more to do with either 'text-text' referents, or text-'Historie' referents, than 'text-*res*' referents. Childs's *Isaiah* is apparently more of an exercise in midrash than allegory,¹²⁹ and struggles to appear proximately 'theocentric' in its shape.

A return to Childs's closing comments highlights the issue. Childs begins with a helpful survey of the 'mind of Christ' debate in New Testament studies vis-à-vis Isa 53, and concludes that positing the questions as *either* Christ was aware of Isa 53 (and so consciously shaped his ministry accordingly),¹³⁰ *or* he was not, since the notion of a vicarious sufferer was a later Hellenistic construction,¹³¹ both miss the hermeneutical point at issue. The former find the Old Testament influence moving forward, and so shaping Jesus' ministry, the former reverse the direction of influence, and regard Christ-centered reading of Isa 53 to be late retrojections upon a chapter that

¹²⁶ Driver, *Childs*, 151.

¹²⁷ Beuken appears within my reading of Childs in chapter six.

¹²⁸ For Childs's praise, see his *Isaiah*, 291. For Beuken, see his 'The Servants of Yahweh', 68.

¹²⁹ The one exception to this rule is Childs's appreciation of Calvin on Isaiah 6, above. This would appear to be, however, the exception that otherwise *proves* the rule.

¹³⁰ E.g. Wolff, *Jesaja* 53.

¹³¹ E.g. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 1:31.

has little inherent notion of a vicarious sufferer. Yet, as we have seen elsewhere in Childs, the direction of influence surely moves both ways, and is not determinedly *either one or the other*.¹³²

Following this survey, Childs moves to the contextualization of the servant within Christian theology. Resisting the limiting interpretation of E.J. Young ('there is only One of whom these words may be spoken, namely, Jesus the Christ'),¹³³ Childs chooses rather to read the chapter in light of 'a figure tied closely to the historical experience of Israel in the Babylonian exile. Childs continues:

My commentary has also defended the position that both the servant's response to his prophetic call (49:1-6) and the confession of a repentant community respecting the servant (53.1-11a) *reflect actual events within the life of historical Israel...As a consequence of this historical mooring of the servant in the sixth century as an anonymous figure, many commentators have recently assigned very limited theological importance to chapter 53.*¹³⁴

Childs's response to this limited significance is to uphold an historical, exilic mooring of the servant in all its particularity, yet to stress what this historical figure's ongoing use within Israel suggests of the nature of the chapter.

Childs's move from the 'text itself' – the servant's 'central and continuing theological role' within Israel – to the Trinitarian 'res' of the economic and immanent Trinity is *itself* a process of making a historical judgment on the place and use of Isa 53 within the New Testament and early Church. At the risk of overstatement, it is a comment on the history of ideas, and as such does not actually engage what Childs describes elsewhere as 'allegory',¹³⁵ that which moves 'to another level beyond the textual'.¹³⁶ If it 'seeks to discern meaning by relating it referentially to a substance (*res*), a rule of faith, or a hidden eschatological event', it does so only by a descriptive third-person discourse.¹³⁷ No doubt Childs's own health has much to do with this,¹³⁸ and though he does not cite reasons of health, he is 'painfully aware' that in his *Isaiah*, 'many of the central theological and hermeneutical questions

¹³² Childs, *Isaiah*, 420-22. Similarly, cf. Schneiders, *Revelatory Text*, xvii-xl.

¹³³ Young, *The Book of Isaiah: 40-66*, 348. As stated elsewhere, Motyer is much more responsible (/ nuanced) than Young in this regard.

¹³⁴ Childs, *Isaiah*, 422 (emph. added)

¹³⁵ Childs, *Struggle*, x.

¹³⁶ Childs, 'Critique', 183.

¹³⁷ One may contrast the voice of Childs here with that in his *Old Testament Theology*, 28-29.

¹³⁸ Stephen Chapman has cautioned me not to critique the commentary too strongly, given how seriously ill Childs was at the time of its composition.

in which I was most interested had not been adequately addressed'.¹³⁹ As a volume in the Old Testament Library series, and given the subsequent release of a massive survey of theological readings of Isaiah, the criticism may stand.

The shape of his comments is curious, in light of Childs's hermeneutical development presented in Chapter Three, where one would have expected him to engage the relation of the servant to the person of Christ in a more direct fashion. The expectation is only heightened by Childs's own positive assessment of Calvin in this regard. In a panel discussion with Hans Frei, Childs makes a remarkable statement on Calvin. The question put to the panel was 'whether it would be possible to access Barth's genius in a more exegetically controlled way'.¹⁴⁰ Childs responds:

[W]hen you read Calvin, he fights against the whole medieval tradition by saying it's the *sensus literalis* that counts – it's the literal sense – and you have page after page against the whole church dogma. But then you read Calvin on the Old Testament, and here's Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ. How could it possibly be? And everybody just says that Calvin is just inconsistent...It seems to me that this doesn't at all touch the heart of the problem: that for Calvin, the *sensus literalis* IS Jesus Christ. And it was only when you have the eighteenth century identification of the literal sense with the historical sense that you're just hopelessly lost.¹⁴¹

If Childs thinks that there is really something in Calvin on this point, why has it struggled to feature at what it perhaps the *key moment* in Old Testament interpretation – Isaiah 53? If there is anywhere to 'find' Jesus in the Old Testament, in an immediate sense, surely it is here.¹⁴²

Finally, Christ's 'ontic' presence in Isa 53 is not entirely clear, and so Childs's comments upon this bear revisiting. Speaking of the 'coercion exerted by the biblical text itself, as authoritative scripture', Childs acknowledges that the early Church's reading of Isa 53 was not framed by a linear model of prophecy-fulfillment. Rather,

[A]n analogy was drawn between the redemptive activity of the Isaianic servant and the passion and death of Jesus Christ. The relation was understood "ontologically," that is to say, in terms of its substance, its theological reality. To use classical Christian theological terminology, the distinction is between the "economic" Trinity, God's revelation in the continuum of Israel's history, and the "immanent" Trinity, the ontological manifestation of the triune deity in its

¹³⁹ Childs, *Struggle*, ix.

¹⁴⁰ Driver, *Childs*, 92.

¹⁴¹ Childs, 'Karl Barth as Interpreter of Scripture', 52-53.

¹⁴² Cf. M. Gignilliat, *Fifth Gospel*, 125, who relates Calvin to Barth on Isa 53.

eternality. Thus, for example, the epistles of Ephesians and Colossians argue that the creation of the universe cannot be understood apart from the active participation of Jesus Christ (Col. 1:15ff.). Or again, the book of Revelation speaks of “the lamb slain before the foundation of the world” (13:8). In a word, in the suffering and death of the servant of Second Isaiah, the selfsame divine reality of Jesus Christ was made manifest. The meaning of the Old Testament servant was thus understood theologically in terms of the one divine reality disclosed in Jesus Christ. The morphological fit between Isaiah 53 and the passion of Jesus continues to bear testimony to the common subject matter within the one divine economy.¹⁴³

Childs has cited Col 1.15ff. and Rev 13.8 elsewhere, as windows into the early Church’s belief in the Trinity’s immanent presence in the Old Testament’s very formation.¹⁴⁴ It is a move sensitive to the early Church’s affirmations concerning the unity of God in ‘Old’ and ‘New’ testaments.

Yet we might pause to ask what significance these verses hold for Isa 53, for the texts of Colossians and Revelation do not require Isa 53 as a presupposition, nor does Isa 53 require Colossians or Revelation to be read theologically – whether noetically *or* ontically. To speak of the ontological, immanent, presence of the triune God in the Old Testament is difficult enough in, e.g., the creation accounts.¹⁴⁵ But in this chapter, where there is such a high level of historical particularity (which Childs emphasizes), to affirm the kind of ontic reading that Childs proposed earlier runs the risk of obscuring all kinds of crucial interpretive nuance: retrospective confession, prospective hope, a believing subsection of a wider disbelieving Israel, etc. If nothing else, the chapter’s enduring ‘Wirkungsgeschichte’ in Christian theological reception is varied enough to make a more nuanced statement essential.

In any case, there is the larger problem of the way in which Childs has sought to relate Isa 53 to the New Testament and Christian theology. As noted above, relating Isa 53 to later theological formulation in terms of ‘ontic’ Trinitarian presence is simply too easy a move to make, and has little to do with the subject-matter of the poem itself. If we are to allow the ‘concepts’ of the poem to inform the larger ‘judgments’ interrelated with subsequent

¹⁴³ Childs, *Isaiah*, 423.

¹⁴⁴ Driver, *Childs*, 263-4, raises a host of relevant questions surrounding this affirmation of Childs for canon formation.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 107-118.

theological formulation,¹⁴⁶ why has Childs said nothing of the pattern of glorification through debasement? Or of victory through defeat? Surely what makes Isa 53 stand out against its Old Testament backdrop is the remarkable demonstration that a faithful community's expectations, however aligned with God's works in the past, may be overturned at the very moment of God's saving action. Glorification through debasement, or victory through defeat, presents a *theologia crucis* at the centre of the poem that resonates strongly with the New Testament's paradoxical presentation of the way of the cross as a way of life. Here, suffering and humiliation is the paradoxical moment at which God's strength and glory are most manifestly seen.

II.3 Motyer and 'Penal Substitutionary Atonement'

At the close of my handling of Motyer's reading of Isa 53, I suggested that what he provided was a true *tour de force* in evangelical interpretation. This is a possible judgment insofar as Motyer is read on his own terms, in light of a resistance of 'modern knowledge' in critical, historical analysis. Were one to entertain the 'rationalism' of the 19th century, there would be too many questions to raise here. I have raised many of them along the way, in my summary of Motyer's exegetical approach. Yet on its own terms, the inner coherency of Motyer's reading largely resists the kinds of direct criticism I brought to bear upon Duhm and Childs.

II.3.1. Exegesis

Motyer unapologetically upholds a reading of Isa 53 that reflects the theme of penal substitutionary atonement. In this regard he perhaps embodies some of the reasons for Childs's caution about reading 'theological categories foreign to the witness of the Old Testament' into the poem,¹⁴⁷ and certainly Duhm's resistance to construing the servant's work as 'eine mechanische Strafübertragung'.¹⁴⁸ Janowski's work on 'Stellvertretung', for example, has sought critically refined categories in which to approach a biblical notion of 'wiping out guilt' that is not tied to particular models of substitutionary

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Yeago, 'New Testament', 93.

¹⁴⁷ Childs, *Isaiah*, 415.

¹⁴⁸ Duhm, *Propheten*, 339.

atonement.¹⁴⁹ This kind of judgment, however, requires an openness to critical, historical distancing that Motyer is reticent to adopt. Rather, Motyer finds the text itself to uphold a reading of penal substitutionary atonement, in light of the presentation of vv.4-6 as structurally central, and in light of numerous lesser exegetical decisions.

The difficult *ניח* of 52.15a is read in line with priestly understandings of sacrificial atonement, and translated as ‘sprinkle’. That the verb does not have a direct object in the verse is not overly problematic for Motyer, ‘[I]t seems a small matter to see the MT as involving a well-established verb with a small variation from exemplified usage’.¹⁵⁰ In 53.4b, *מכה אלהים ומענה* is taken to ‘express the objective and subjective sides of his suffering: the divine agent and the personal experience of being brought low, humbled, humiliated’.¹⁵¹ In v.5b, the particle *ב* in *בהברתי* is read as ‘the particle of price’, presumably in line with the *bet pretii*,¹⁵² a reading that Zimmerli’s similar reading upheld.¹⁵³ The result is that ‘verse 4 demands the noun “substitution”, and verse 5 adds the adjective “penal”’.¹⁵⁴ In 53.10, *אשם* is simply read as a ‘guilt offering’, through which ‘the death of the Servant satisfied both the needs of sinful people before God and the ‘needs’/requirements of God in relation to his broken law and offended holiness’.¹⁵⁵ Finally, Motyer takes *דעת* in 53.11a to refer to the knowledge ‘which he alone possesses (and we need) regarding what God requires in relation to sin and what to do about it’.¹⁵⁶ The servant’s success in bringing about a ‘successful’ atonement on behalf of the believing community was contingent upon his right doctrinal understanding of the function of that atonement.

¹⁴⁹ Janowski, ‘He Bore Our Sins’ (70). Janowski is reacting, in part, to Kant, ‘Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason’, 6:72. See also Janowski, ‘Azazel’, 285ff.; idem., *Ecco Homo*, 53ff.; Sölle, *Stellvertretung*. Cf. Steck, ‘Aspekte’, 389; Hägglund, *Isaiah 53*, 11ff., 94.

Orlinsky has noted that ‘vicarious suffering’ does not have a conceptual place in sixth (or eighth!) century Israel; rather, the notion itself (and with it, penal substitutionary atonement) was retrojected into the Old Testament from a Hellenistic milieu (*Studies*, 73-4, 118).

¹⁵⁰ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 426. Motyer notes Lev 4.16-17, in which he understands the *hiphil* of *ניח* not to require a direct object. Here, *את פני* is read in light of its function in Gen 19.13, 27; 33.18.

¹⁵¹ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 430.

¹⁵² Cf. GKC, §119p, though on 53.5b, see Hägglund, *Homecoming*, 59-60.

¹⁵³ Zimmerli, ‘Zur Vorgeschichte’, 215.

¹⁵⁴ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 430.

¹⁵⁵ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 439.

¹⁵⁶ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 441.

There is a way to disagree about the wider theological framework of this reading, or to be suspicious regarding the dovetail of exegesis with sophisticated theological structures. But if we suspend this line of questioning momentarily, we find that at the crucial exegetical junctures Motyer has made decisions that are indeed possible (though on a sliding scale of probability, some may be more convincing than others). Hard exegetical decisions regarding *נייה*, *אשם*, *בחרתו*, *מכה אלהים ומענה*, *נייה*, or *דעת* are to some measure necessarily conjectural. Indeed, Motyer recognizes this reality, and states that *נייה*, for example, is not ‘free of difficulty’.¹⁵⁷ The observation to make, of course, is that on his own terms of evangelical hermeneutics his reading generally holds. The question then presents itself: if we are not able to concretely counter Motyer’s specific exegetical decisions on Isa 53, must we follow his overall structure of penal substitutionary atonement? It becomes an important point to observe that Isa 53 *can* be read this way, even if critical historical awareness might put hard questions to the proposal.

II.3.2. Hermeneutics and ‘Historie’

Historically speaking, Motyer’s reading of Isa 53 runs into particular problems as concerns the prophet’s contemporaries. Motyer has noted the prophetic message as one based on ‘crowd response’,¹⁵⁸ and so we would be right to ask who this crowd is, and in what capacity they would have been able to receive the Isaiah that Motyer depicts.

If Isaiah is writing for a crowd response, the obvious question to ask concerns a sequential unfolding of the Isaianic literature: are the implicit questions raised by the text the same as the questions held by the audience? As noted in chapters Five and Six, Motyer appreciates that the prophet was a spokesperson to his immediate contemporaries, and did not merely speak into an unknown future.¹⁵⁹ How this looks, in relation to the text’s implicit questions, however, is not entirely clear. Motyer notes a ‘double bondage’ of the people Israel in exile – political and spiritual. Within the promise of political deliverance (43.14; 44.28; 45.1), he finds ‘another stream of thought’:

The Lord’s plan to use Cyrus is greeted with hostility (45:9-13), and the spirit of the people hardens until they can be called ‘rebels’ (46:8),

¹⁵⁷ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 425.

¹⁵⁸ Motyer, ‘Isaianic Literature’, 23.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Motyer, *Roots*, 18-19.

'stubborn-hearted' and 'far away from righteousness' (46.12). Chapter 48, the very chapter which announces their liberation, is a storm-centre of denunciation, accusing them of being without title to the name of Israel (verse 1), stubborn (verse 4), idol-loving (verse 5), opinionated (verse 7), treacherous (verse 8) and having forfeited peace (verse 18). Thus, when they leave Babylon they do so with the Lord's sad comment that 'there is no peace for the wicked' (48.22).¹⁶⁰

Is this future Israel, or present? Motyer's commitment to a particular construal of the location of the prophet and his words in a divinely-orchestrated 'Historie', renders the answer unclear. A parallel example can be found at 52.14, where Motyer reads *מֵאִישׁ* and *מִבְּנֵי אֲדָמָה* as highlighting the totality of the servant's disfigurement. The result is that, 'those who saw him stepped back in horror not only saying "Is this the Servant?" but "Is this human?"'¹⁶¹ At what point in history are we to locate these contemporaries, and where are we to locate this suffering servant, if not on a simple chronological model of prophecy-fulfillment leading to the Christ-event?

A more practical criticism of Motyer comes in the simple question of popular literacy in antiquity. Simply put, Motyer's twofold interest in structurism and the prophet's historical location suggests a highly literate popular readership in pre-exilic Israel. Motyer nowhere references such a readership, but it is an assumption without which his structural-historical framework feels unconvincing.

Literacy in ancient Israel is a sharply debated area, and this is not the place to recount the debates, or to offer an angle upon them.¹⁶² It suffices to say that challenges have been raised with reference to notions of popular literacy in antiquity. More often than not, literacy is ascribed to the elite, and not (in any great degree) to the general populace.¹⁶³ The contention raises the issue of the heuristic value of Motyer's many structuralist proposals, if the prophet's wider general audience (whom Motyer has in view) cannot actually *read* that which Isaiah so painstakingly puts together. To what extent would

¹⁶⁰ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 352.

¹⁶¹ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 425.

¹⁶² Cf. Rollston, *Writing and Literacy*, 127-36, who, while avoiding a minimalist position, nonetheless does not permit the kind of popular literacy that Motyer assumes.

¹⁶³ See Young, 'Israelite Literacy. Part I', 239-253; *idem.*, 'Israelite Literacy: Part II', 408-422.

we expect Isaiah's contemporaries to respond rightly to the 'Isaianic doublet' that Motyer sets out as characteristic of the prophet?¹⁶⁴

III. *Rhetorical Distanciation and Shared Interpretive Structures*

It is necessary to restate the structure of the conclusion at this point, lest the wood be lost for the trees. The dissertation has sought to bring together three divergent voices on what it means to read Isa 53 within a wider Christian theological setting. The three divergent voices – Duhm, Childs, and Motyer – each represent a struggle (to greater or lesser degrees) to appropriate the chapter hermeneutically. Despite forceful and coherent hermeneutical proposals from each, certain difficulties were encountered when Isa 53 was interpreted; a tentative conclusion to draw from this (though not one I will attempt to sustain at length) is that Isa 53 has simply posed questions too large for any of the approaches to address adequately. What this section will attempt to highlight is the nature of interpretive rhetoric as largely *constructed*, and in no way necessarily tied to the reality of one's interpretive opponents. Whom our interpreters target is illustrative.

III.1 Rhetorical Distanciation and the Problem of Interlocutors

III.1.1 'Supernaturalists'

Duhm, in more than one place, registers a clear frustration with a model of interpretation he call 'Supranaturalismus'.¹⁶⁵ On the use of the term he writes, 'Diese Bezeichnung gebrauche ich auf Grund des Umstandes, dass die Vertreter der genannten Richtung ihre Gegner durchweg als Rationalisten oder Naturlisten behandeln'.¹⁶⁶ This is the kind of reader who upholds a 'zeitliche und formelle Einheit' of the Old Testament, and who consequently opts to employ the phrase 'Alttestamentliche Theologie' (which Duhm

¹⁶⁴ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 24. Presumably Motyer would respond with his Dvořák analogy used earlier ('Isaianic Literature', 27), that the nuance and depth of a composition – musical or literary – unfolds over time to ensuing readers. This is, however, only a partial defense, as it raises numerous other questions, not least of which pertains to the perspicuity of Isaiah's own writings.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Duhm, *Theologie*, 6.

¹⁶⁶ Duhm, *Theologie*, 6n.1.

resists).¹⁶⁷ It is that person who adheres to ‘Verbalinspiration’, to ‘allegorische oder typische Erklärung’, and who is thereby ‘unzeitlich’.¹⁶⁸ The opponent seeks, ‘durch eine teleologische Construction den Schriften des alten Testaments eine sachliche Einheit zu verschaffen’.¹⁶⁹ Further, ‘[S]ie berufen sich mit Emphase auf ihr geistliches Verständnis’, they adhere to an ‘absoluter Inspirationslehre’, in line with the Catholic Church’s ‘Infallibilitätsdogma’; it is the kind of interpreter who relies upon a materialist collapse of the ‘innere’ and the ‘äußere’.¹⁷⁰ Further, this interpreter equivocates Old and New testaments, interpreting them in light of one another (‘durch einander’),¹⁷¹ and relating the Old Testament specifically to the ‘Erscheinung Christi’.¹⁷² That this undertaking could be carried out with significant nuance does not appear to be a possibility for Duhm. His hermeneutical opponent appears to be an adherent to high Catholic dogmatic readings of Scripture. Elsewhere, Duhm has presented a stinging critique of Anselm.¹⁷³ That Duhm saw himself as reviving Luther’s anti-scholastic legacy is probably not far from the mark.

Who is the hermeneutical opponent? Duhm never specifies in whole or in part, though we could infer from a lone footnote in the discussion above that Delitzsch, as an example of a ‘wirren Vermischung’,¹⁷⁴ and by extension Hengstenberg, who sought to defend ‘traditional’ messianic interpretation of the Old Testament, are in view.¹⁷⁵ The reference to Delitzsch is either to something very specific (‘über diesen Gegenstand’), or is intended to implicate him in Duhm’s wider critiques. The latter of these is highly unlikely, given Delitzsch’s ‘rigorous philology, historical analysis, and literary

¹⁶⁷ Duhm, *Theologie*, 25.

¹⁶⁸ Duhm, *Theologie*, 25.

¹⁶⁹ Duhm, *Theologie*, 25.

¹⁷⁰ Duhm, *Theologie*, 26-27.

¹⁷¹ Duhm, *Theologie*, 27.

¹⁷² Duhm, *Propheten*, 5.

¹⁷³ Duhm, *Theologie*, 297.

¹⁷⁴ Duhm, *Theologie*, 27n.1. See Delitzsch, *Die biblisch-prophetische Theologie*. Duhm targets pp. 172ff., presumably Delitzsch’s ‘zwei constitutive Faktoren’ in the Old Testament.

¹⁷⁵ See Hengstenberg, *Christologie das Alten Testaments*, for whom christological reading of the Old Testament functioned largely apologetically. See Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 99, 453. Frei, *Eclipse*, 86ff., supplies the term ‘Supernaturalist’ to those influenced by Christian Wolff’s rationalist teleology (specifically S.J. Baumgarten, who bears similarities to Hengstenberg). Wolff’s ‘traditional’ presentation of causality and teleology is precisely the kind of framework that Kant powerfully resisted in his *Critiques*. Given Duhm’s indebtedness to (neo-)Kantian epistemology, it would make sense that Kant’s opponents become those of Duhm. Cf. Guyer, *Kant*, 335ff.; idem. *Kant’s System of Nature and Freedom*, Part III. In England, similar disagreements persisted over the relation of the prophets to Christ and/or the Church. Cf. Seitz, *Prophecy*, 65n.15.

attention to exegetical detail'.¹⁷⁶ The same could be said of Hengstenberg, though he probably falls closer to Duhm's critique than Delitzsch.¹⁷⁷

In either case, it is noteworthy to point out that neither Delitzsch nor Hengstenberg was a Roman Catholic – the target of Duhm's critiques. In fact, it is not clear what Roman Catholics would have been producing commentaries at the time of Duhm's writing, with which he would have had such strong disagreement. In reality, it is probably the case that Duhm's envisaged 'supernaturalists' were inherited, in part, from Ritschl's tutelage at Göttingen, and in part, from Kant's critique of scholastic 'metaphysics'.

The issue, then, with Duhm's rhetoric, is twofold. On the one hand, there is the issue of misrepresentation, insofar as it is not clear who the opponents are. On the other hand, there is the issue of a simple antiquatedness. Duhm made sense in his context, and his criticisms were, if somewhat over-stated, no doubt needed in the academic sphere. For contemporary interpretation, however, the discussions have changed, and as Childs has shown (for example), theological reading does not in theory need to eclipse serious historical work on the Old Testament texts.

III.1.2 'Anthropocentric'

Childs frequently describes the approach he adopts as 'theocentric',¹⁷⁸ focusing upon the divine subject-matter of the text as the primary referent, in contrast to those approaches that he deems 'anthropocentric', which focus upon various historical backdrops as the text's primary referent,¹⁷⁹ rendering the connection between text and theology a highly contingent affair. For Childs, a divine referent sustained a 'theocentricity' that saved the believing community from having to cross Lessing's ditch by an artificial bridge of existential, pietistic, or psychological construction.¹⁸⁰

The kind of theological reading that Childs proposes – a 'canonical' approach – stands in rhetorical contrast to those 'anthropocentric' approaches

¹⁷⁶ Childs, *Struggle*, 274 (cf. 272-77).

¹⁷⁷ Cf. Reventlow, *Biblical Interpretation*, 4:286-98; Kraus, *Biblische Theologie*, 99.

¹⁷⁸ The term 'theocentric' is frequently used in Childs, *Introduction* (59, 273-4, 361-2, 366, 410, 454, 460-1, 514), and shows up in similar contexts in his *Biblical Theology* (32, 408, 497, 519, 660, 694, 723). For explicit methodological attention to the term, see his 'Analysis', 363; 'Critical Reflections', 4ff.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. Childs's use of the term 'anthropocentric', in *Biblical Theology*, 72, 497, 607; *idem.*, 'Analysis', 363.

¹⁸⁰ Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 408 (cf. the specific case study on 326); *idem.*, *Introduction*, 59.

that pursue an 'independent, historically objective description of the biblical literature'.¹⁸¹ These approaches strive for 'an objective, critically established reconstruction from a neutral stance'.¹⁸² It is, in large measure, the 'religionsgeschichtliche Schule', characterized by the pursuit of 'an allegedly objective description of religious phenomena'.¹⁸³ It is part of 'the Enlightenment's claim for the interpreter's rational autonomy in developing an allegedly objective reading independent of Christian tradition'.¹⁸⁴ In contrast to the attempt 'to understand the Old Testament as the sacred scriptures of the Church', the 'history-of-religions approach attempts to reconstruct a history according to the widely accepted categories of the Enlightenment, as a scientifically objective analysis according to the rules of critical research prescribed by common human experience'.¹⁸⁵ What Childs proposes, and what the 'religionsgeschichtliche Schule' proposes, do not 'share a common understanding of history'.¹⁸⁶ As has been noticed, the problem is with an Enlightenment notion of 'objectivity', in contrast to which a canonical approach is sensitive to the dialectical nature of history. With this judgment Childs closes his last work on the Old Testament.

Childs's differentiation lay in that to which the text is 'witnessing',¹⁸⁷ and in many ways his rhetorical differentiation is easy to adopt. Childs's distance from Gottwald, for example, is marked.¹⁸⁸ Yet two major difficulties with this kind of rhetorical distancing persist.

First, there is the functional difficulty of establishing a text as witnessing to one force – e.g. ontological, theocentric – rather than another – e.g. sociological, political. Childs insists that his approach is fully historical, and that it simply recalibrates the nature of the Old Testament's *sensus literalis*, away from Romantic models of origins, and toward a text deeply imbued with theological concerns. In this sense, the motivations of the redactional processes are not plural but singular, 'to render the sacred tradition in such a way as to serve future generations of Israel as authoritative

¹⁸¹ Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 11.

¹⁸² Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 98.

¹⁸³ Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 211 (cf. 647); idem., *Struggle*, 316. Cf. Seitz, *Character*, 45.

¹⁸⁴ Childs, *Struggle*, 304.

¹⁸⁵ Childs, *Struggle*, 321.

¹⁸⁶ Childs, *Struggle*, 321.

¹⁸⁷ Childs, 'Critical Reflections'.

¹⁸⁸ See Brett, *Biblical Criticism*, 11-18.

Scripture'.¹⁸⁹ Childs is quick to point out that his approach 'focuses not on the redactor's intentionality',¹⁹⁰ but this is surely difficult to follow. A specific view of the motivation behind the redactional processes persists in Childs's work: it is theocentric, not anthropocentric. But the assertion is itself a historical judgment applied to the historical processes at work behind the text, and as such is necessarily conjectural. Though the form-critical evidence amassed in his 'Analysis' can lead to the judgment above, it cannot definitively arrive there. Childs's proposal, in other words, seeks rhetorically to distance itself from 'an objective description of religious phenomena',¹⁹¹ but simply offers another historical description of the *actual* nature and motivation of the redactional process. 'Objectivity', then, is surely not the problem. The difficulty resides, rather, in the kind of analysis the interpreter prefers (and where, in this, one chooses to place 'objective analysis').

Second, there is the problem of rhetorical distancing, and rhetorical foils. Throughout the description of Childs's rhetorical opponents, above, the term 'objective' was regularly applied. More than once I quoted Childs's description of the 'religionsgeschichtliche Schule' as in pursuit of 'an allegedly objective description of religious phenomena'.¹⁹² The last word in the sentence would surely be represented in German by 'Erscheinungen', which, of course, brings us back to Duhm. Duhm was somewhat anomalous to his context, but only *somewhat*; his adoption of a neo-Kantian dialectic between history and philosophy was present elsewhere in his milieu,¹⁹³ and as such breaks Childs's rule.¹⁹⁴ For Duhm, a 'religionsgeschichtliche' scholar *par excellence*, there could be no 'objective description of religious phenomena': that kind of thinking is far too simplistic for what is actually involved in the complex epistemological process of interpretation. Rather, as we have seen, a wider external frame of reference was needed to make sense of disparate Old Testament material in relation to the New. A dialectic was seen to be at work between the commitments of the interpreter (seen in Duhm's *negative* reading of the Old Testament), and the historical dimension to the Old Testament

¹⁸⁹ Childs, 'Analysis', 358.

¹⁹⁰ Childs, 'Analysis', 363.

¹⁹¹ Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 211.

¹⁹² Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 211 (cf. 647); *idem.*, *Struggle*, 316.

¹⁹³ E.g. Eissfeldt, 'Hegel-Kritik'.

¹⁹⁴ Duhm, *Theologie*, 2ff.

itself. If Childs has managed to distance himself from certain 'religionsgeschichtliche' figures, Duhm is certainly not one of them.

III.1.3 'Rationalists'

Motyer rhetorically frames his approach to holistic interpretation in distinction to figures or systems of thought that are 'rationalist'. Motyer is concerned with the unity of the book of Isaiah, and states that the central question becomes 'how we are to explain this unity'.¹⁹⁵ There appear to be only two options, both cast within a strict historical mold, 'Is it the (well-nigh miraculous) result of three (or more) authors contributing to one book or can it be the work of one author resulting in a threefold book?'¹⁹⁶ The first option is dismissively framed, though Motyer feels that the dichotomy is genuine.

Those who posit more than one author behind the book of Isaiah are regarded by Motyer as part of the fabric of 'the rationalistic climate of the last [i.e. 19th] century'.¹⁹⁷ This climate 'forbade anything so "miraculous" as foretelling the future', and consequently arrived at dates of the book of Isaiah's constituent pieces that spanned more than Isaiah of Jerusalem's lifetime. This 'extended timeline is historically the product of nineteenth-century rationalism which refused to countenance predictive prophecy'.¹⁹⁸ The result, according to Motyer, was a disposition toward 'fragmentation'. Nineteenth-century rationalism was thus responsible for a general concentration on 'fragments', rather than the whole, of the book of Isaiah, and this was predominantly the outcome of refusing 'to countenance predictive prophecy'.

Wright is brought in as an example of this tendency. Motyer notes Wright's 'famous *dictum*', that 'a prophecy is earlier than what it predicts and later than or contemporary with what it presupposes'.¹⁹⁹ Wright is discussed in the context of attempting to refute a Babylonian setting for Isa 40-55; for, here Motyer finds an acute example of the results of 'forthtelling' overtaking 'foretelling'.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁵ Motyer, 'Isaianic Literature', 31.

¹⁹⁶ Motyer, 'Isaianic Literature', 32.

¹⁹⁷ Motyer, 'Isaianic Literature', 32.

¹⁹⁸ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 25.

¹⁹⁹ Cited in 'Isaianic Literature', 33.

²⁰⁰ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 27-28.

Rationalism's influence reaches forward to Eichrodt and von Rad,²⁰¹ who, according to Motyer, further the problem of fracturing an otherwise holistic text. While it is not clear, in specifics, why Motyer faults Eichrodt, he finds von Rad troubling for the allowance of tensions and contradictions in the Old Testament, 'For himself, von Rad turned back to seeing "the Bible[as] not so much the source of the faith of OT men as...the expression of their faith", and considered that',

...each historical epoch had a theology unique to itself with internal tensions, diversity, and contradictions to the theology of other OT epochs...The OT possessed no central axis or continuity of a divine plan; rather, it contained a narration of the people's religious reading of their history, their attempt to make real and present older events and narratives.²⁰²

Von Rad, then, embodies a historical fracturing that renders a holistic text disparate.

The outcome ultimately poses a threat to Motyer's evangelical framework, since historical fracturing leads to conceptual fracturing. With reference to the event of the Exodus, notice the line of thought:

If...the Pentateuch is long post-Mosaic and much of it post-exilic, it has become totally detached from the actual history of the Exodus and, exacerbating the situation, the more the historicity of the Exodus events is viewed with scepticism, the less the doctrinal statements of the Pentateuch possess the quality of objective revelation.²⁰³

Motyer's rhetorical shaping suggests that those who are open to traditional source-critical work have no basis on which to wed text with doctrine.

Rationalism presses beyond Wright, Eichrodt and von Rad, and even manifests itself in Clements and Childs. Clements is understood by Motyer as concentrating on 'penetrating behind the text as received to the foundation's of Israel's faith and the original setting of prophetic oracles'.²⁰⁴ Childs, though viewed favorably in the original release of *Isaiah*,²⁰⁵ suffers a similar criticism in the commentary's reprint: while he (Childs) makes the isolation of literary sections 'crucially significant', others 'take the literature as it now stands and mine the richness of its interrelations'.²⁰⁶

²⁰¹ Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*; von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*.

²⁰² Motyer, *Look to the Rock*, 16.

²⁰³ Motyer, *Look to the Rock*, 15.

²⁰⁴ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 9n.1; Cf. *Isaiah*², 31.

²⁰⁵ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 9n.1.

²⁰⁶ Motyer, *Isaiah*², 31-2.

Ultimately, for Motyer, the issue is one of functionality. Rationalism and its adherents have ‘stripped the engine down’, and have,

made the Old Testament a mystery to the average person – indeed to the average theological student too! It has removed the book from the hands of the church and put it into the hands of the specialist. It has broken down one confidence without replacing it with another. The bits and pieces out on the bench have ceased to be a car.²⁰⁷

The Bible ceases to be Scripture, and effectively becomes an anthology of disparate fragments.

How accurate are Motyer’s rhetorical depictions? We may briefly respond in turn to each. First, it is not clear what Motyer means by 19th century rationalism, or whom he has in view as the *éminence grise* behind the subversive rationalist agenda. S.R. Driver, for example, openly used the language of prophecy and fulfillment, but was sensitive to the differing modes within which prophecy functioned – that is, short-term and long-term prophecy.²⁰⁸ Further, Williamson has noted that predictive prophecy is part of the very fabric of the literature itself, and so, for truly critical scholarship, there can be no ultimate break as Motyer suggests.²⁰⁹ Rationalism (whatever we mean by that phrase) and a refusal to countenance predictive prophecy may go hand in hand, but rationalism is thus not to be equated with critical biblical scholarship. The connection is too artificial.²¹⁰

Second, this view of rationalism was regarded as manifesting itself in G.E. Wright’s ‘*dictum*’ (cited above). In the quote, however, Wright does not label it a *dictum*, but simply a ‘rule of thumb’, affording it flexibility.²¹¹ Making it a *dictum* serves a rhetorical purpose that is unfair to Wright. Wright is, in reality, fully open to predictive prophecy (as the ‘rule of thumb’ indicates), though primarily in a short-term sense.

What is particularly odd about Motyer’s comment on this point is that he stresses his reading of Isa 39.1-8 as satisfying ‘every condition laid down by modern understanding of the prophets’.²¹² Isaiah of Jerusalem is *contemporary* with a growing Babylonian power, and so *presupposes* it in the future-oriented prophecy of Babylonian exile. As Motyer points out, knowing

²⁰⁷ Motyer, *Look to the Rock*, 15.

²⁰⁸ Driver, *Isaiah: His Life and Times*, 39.

²⁰⁹ Williamson, *Book Called Isaiah*, 2.

²¹⁰ ‘Rationalism’ is itself a complicated term, with more than one meaning (*a priori* concepts? Empiricism?). Cf. Dupré, *Enlightenment*, 2-4, 7ff.

²¹¹ Wright, *Isaiah*, 8-9.

²¹² Motyer, *Isaiah*, 29.

that it would take 200 years (his figure) stems from our retrospective advantage; for Isaiah, it could have been at any time. How different, we might ask, is this from Wright's maxim? I wish to emphasize not the propriety of this or that model for interpreting the prophets, but simply the impropriety of Motyer's rhetorical distancing from Wright.

Third, Motyer criticizes Eichrodt and von Rad, but it is fairly apparent that there is a misunderstanding of both. This is particularly noticeable with reference to von Rad, whom Motyer seems to cite above. In reality, despite the opening of the quotation, 'for himself, von Rad...', the quote is actually that of Walter Kaiser,²¹³ and as such illuminates not von Rad, but rather Kaiser's particular reading of von Rad (which is not, it should be said, a good reading). The point, again, is not to call Motyer out, but simply to note the kind of artificial rhetorical distancing at work. Had Motyer carefully worked through von Rad's work, he would perhaps have found much with which he would be sympathetic.²¹⁴

Finally, Clements and Childs have surely sought to unite the Isaianic literature in a way that moves beyond older fragmented models of reading, rather than continuing a brand of myopic source criticism. Indeed, in many ways, though for slightly different reasons, Childs has the same opponents as Motyer. One thinks of the former's attempt to overcome 'the diachronic legacy of nineteenth-century historical criticism'.²¹⁵ In opposition to higher criticism's failure to critically reconnect disparate Old Testament material, Childs sought a new path toward 'holism', 'There is need to return to the subject of the oneness of the biblical witness, and to explore in what sense one can still acknowledge scripture's simplicity, perspicuity, and wholeness'.²¹⁶ In terms of a 'first' and 'second' naiveté,²¹⁷ there is a difference: Childs (like von Rad) had crossed 'le désert de la critique', and sought after how to recover the

²¹³ Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, 5. Kaiser lamentably summarizes the entirety of von Rad's project as, 'Historicism has retuned!'

²¹⁴ E.g., one thinks of von Rad's 'actualization' (*Old Testament Theology*, I:115ff.; II:319ff.), in relation to Motyer's 'realization' (*Roots*, 21), or von Rad's insistence that Rosenzweig's 'R' ('Rabbenu'), applies not to the redactor, but to Jesus Christ, as the true subject-matter of the Old Testament (*Genesis*, 42-3), and Motyer's 'beginning with Jesus' (*Roots*, 15ff.).

²¹⁵ Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 722.

²¹⁶ Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 719. On 'holistic' reading more generally, cf. *ibid.*, 719ff.

²¹⁷ Cf. Ricoeur, *Rule of Metaphor*, 318.

central insights of the first naiveté,²¹⁸ without circumventing those critical questions. Yet this, presumably, is not quite Motyer's critique, insofar as he would question the meaningfulness of the two 'naivetés' in the first place.

That the 19th century interest in critical historical analysis placed the Bible in the hands of experts, rather than the Church, is not necessarily a fair depiction of that era. Numerous scholars in and since the 19th century have sought to make the findings of higher criticism accessible to the wider public. Indeed, it is the very legacy of S.R. Driver (cited above) that he brought the critical findings of the academic realm to a wider public. In other words, the academy, and modern knowledge more generally, does not *need* to stand at such a distance. Moreover, we would be right to ask whether it even *should*: the sharp 'church' v. 'specialist' dichotomy is neither helpful nor true to the nature of theological scholarship. The academic context of theology should not be dissociated from the context of 'personal concern', nor should it stop there – insofar as theology 'in the hands of the church' is concerned with truth, it should presumably be 'uncompromisingly rigorous' in its enquiry.²¹⁹

III.1.4 The Cracking of the Walls

The problem of the rhetorical distanciations presented above is that, in reality, they lack the force that they claim. Duhm has only partially engaged his rhetorical interlocutors, in a way that keeps his language theoretically sharp, but in practice open to question. In any case, we would be led to regard Motyer, and to some extent Childs, as the targets of his critiques, unable to establish a 'Zeitabstand' by virtue of a recognized 'supernaturalistische' *telos*. Through the benefit of hindsight, however, we can evaluate the judgment as severely misconceived, as regards Childs (who attempts to work *outward*, from the territory of 'Historie' itself, to recalibrate what is meant by the 'wissenschaftliche' endeavor in the first place). Childs and Motyer are highly involved in reading the Old Testament dogmatically, but the enterprise is not (in principle) carried out to the detriment of 'Historie'; it is, rather, fully involved in it.

Second, Childs consistently critiques the 'religionsgeschichtliche Schule' for approaching history in terms of a pure analytic objectivism. In

²¹⁸ Ricoeur, *Symbolique*, 325, 'Par-delà le désert de la critique, nous voulons à nouveau être interpellés'.

²¹⁹ The language is that of Lash, 'Criticism or Construction?', 3, 7.

reality, as we have seen, Duhm's dialectical structuring of the interpretive task escapes the criticism; though the content of the proposals will differ, formal similarities persist.

Motyer has adherents of critical, modern knowledge in mind, but fails to actually show a nuanced appreciation for what was taking place in 19th century higher and lower criticism. There was not a penchant for fracturing the literature, *per se*, nor was there an agenda for downplaying the prophet's predictive capacities. The issue, rather, concerned bringing together theological commitment and what many viewed as valuable advances in historical reconstruction.

So there exists a problem in the strategy of rhetorical distancing. Those against whom the above proposals are set do not, in actual practice, embody the caricature that is rhetorically painted. An alarming disconnect between rhetoric and reality arises. A tentative conclusion to be drawn from this observation is that the hermeneutical sphere is not as hermetically sectioned as the narratives of various prolegomena lead us to believe. The development of the relationship between exegesis and theology is far more porous than a simple 'pre-critical', 'critical', 'post-critical' model of the discipline's history.²²⁰ To further this tentative conclusion, and to supply a more critical comparison in light of the general rhetorical shortcomings above, the next section notes those similarities shared between the three interpreters.

III.2 Shared Interpretive Structures and Interests in Isaiah 53

Duhm, Childs, and Motyer represent dominant interpretive approaches to the Old Testament that are, in large measure, independently coherent and highly complex. To bring them together in this section, in terms of Isa 53, a basic outline provided by David Kelsey will be useful.

In the context of Yale's 'postliberal' development, Kelsey produced a stimulating monograph, *The Uses of Scripture in Modern Theology*,²²¹ which sought to address Jowett's description of various attempts to 'prove' doctrine

²²⁰ It is one of the unfortunate outcomes of Frei's *Eclipse*, that the history of biblical theology is viewed strictly in these categories. In reality, questions of 'Historie' are as old as the Church itself (cf. Acts 8.34). Francis Watson's 'Historical Criticism' makes the case that a family of questions has attended biblical interpretation from the early Church's first grappling with Scripture.

²²¹ The original 1975 title was later reprinted as *Proving Doctrine: The Uses of Scripture in Modern Theology*. I cite from the reprint.

from biblical texts as 'Gallus in campanili'.²²² Kelsey maintains that questioning to what extent a theological proposal is 'biblical' is essentially a meaningless endeavor, as the interaction of theology and scripture is far more involved than a simple matter of 'proving' an argument by appeal to data.²²³

Taking various representative theologians who, in one way or another, appropriate Scripture as an authoritative source of theological formation, Kelsey observes that the proposals of each represent a wider view of Scripture as a whole, itself presenting a kind of 'logical force'.²²⁴ The proposals exist as a complex network of coordinate theological and philosophical affirmations. Further, Kelsey notes that theological uses of Scripture fit into a larger pattern, that 'there is an irreducible variety of kinds of wholeness that may be ascribed to texts'.²²⁵ Theological appropriations of Scripture are 'logically irreducibly diverse',²²⁶ and do not derive from a single principle, but from 'a family of concepts'. When Scripture is used for theological ends, it is not 'the text as such, but the text-construed-as-a-certain-kind-of-whole' to which the interpreter appeals.²²⁷ Models of theological interpretation cannot be boiled down to this or that ordinary proposition.²²⁸

Consequently, theological uses of Scripture do not possess a 'starting point', *per se*. To assume so is to assume,

that a theological position is held together by, or indeed consists in, one long overarching argument. It suggests that the discussion of all other theological *loci* are fairly tightly controlled by what is said on the *locus* with which the system 'begins'...[A] theological position is a set of several different families of arguments, but it is not itself taken as a whole ordered as an argument...²²⁹

The construal moves away from regarding theological proposals as syllogistic edifices, and rather as constellations of affirmations: an outcome is the disappearance of a guiding *locus* within proposals. In this light, we may speak of the,

²²² Kelsey, *Proving Doctrine*, 1. Cf. Jowett, 'On the Interpretation of Scripture', 29.

²²³ Kelsey, *Proving Doctrine*, 5.

²²⁴ Kelsey, *Proving Doctrine*, 14. Admittedly, Kelsey is interested only in those theologians who regarded Scripture to be authoritative for the Church (89-97), a view not readily amenable to Duhm. Yet Kelsey's line of thought applies all the same, insofar as Duhm possesses a 'logically irreducible' system that is, in large measure coherent.

²²⁵ Kelsey, *Proving Doctrine*, 100.

²²⁶ Kelsey, *Proving Doctrine*, 102-3 (cf. 144).

²²⁷ Kelsey, *Proving Doctrine*, 103.

²²⁸ Kelsey, *Proving Doctrine*, 125ff., speaks of the 'gross anatomy' of 'macro-arguments' when comparing theological proposals (131).

²²⁹ Kelsey, *Proving Doctrine*, 136-7.

multiplicity of possible kinds of authority that any one proposal might have all in the same argument: not just appeal to scripture and to ontology, but also to the result of historical research, to analyses of various aspects of contemporary culture, and to the traditional practices and ways of speaking of the church.²³⁰

We have already seen in which ways these various concerns surface in Duhm, Childs, and Motyer, and will return to them below.

At this point Kelsey introduces what he calls a *discrimen*, defined as (following Robert Johnson), 'a configuration of criteria that are in some way organically related to one another as reciprocal coefficients'.²³¹ A *discrimen* 'calls for an imaginative act',²³² through which,

a theologian tries to catch up in a single metaphorical judgment the full complexity of God's presence in, through, and over-against the activities comprising the church's common life and which, in turn, both provides the *discrimen* against which the theology criticizes the church's current forms of speech and life, and determines the peculiar 'shape' of the 'position'.²³³

In some sense, this *discrimen* holds the place of 'preunderstanding' in relation to the subject matter, so as to enable interpretation in the first place. A theologian's approach to Scripture is 'decisively determined, not by the texts as texts, nor by the texts as scripture, but by that logically prior imaginative judgment'.²³⁴ The function is like that of a 'Gestalt', rendering coherent an otherwise disparate image,²³⁵ which is determinative for what the theologian 'takes theological proposals to be about, how that "subject matter" is related to Scripture, and therewith how scripture is to be construed and used'.²³⁶ Finally, Kelsey provides what is in many ways the functional outcome of his project:

'Theological positions' are best seen, not as complex overall arguments, but as imaginative structures in which individual theological proposals dealing with various theological *loci* are balanced off one another in different arrangements. The 'position' may be taken as a whole as the expression of a particular vision of the basic character of Christianity, 'what it's all about'. The actual way in

²³⁰ Kelsey, *Proving Doctrine*, 147.

²³¹ Kelsey, *Proving Doctrine*, 160. Kelsey draws upon Johnson, *Authority*, 15. I retain the use of the Latin *discrimen*, as any translation of the term into English (e.g. 'distinction', 'judgment', 'turning point'), simplifies the complex nature of Kelsey's understanding.

²³² Kelsey, *Proving Doctrine*, 160.

²³³ Kelsey, *Proving Doctrine*, 163. Cf. J. Barr, *The Bible in the Modern World* (London: SCM, 1973), 163.

²³⁴ Kelsey, *Proving Doctrine*, 206.

²³⁵ Cf. Polyani, *Knowing and Being*, 133-34, 144-45, 148.

²³⁶ Kelsey, *Proving Doctrine*, 206.

which any particular 'position' is structured is largely shaped by a root construal of the central reality in Christianity, the mode in which God is present.²³⁷

The intersection of Scripture and theology, then, is a highly contingent moment – contingent upon individual *loci* constitutive of the project as a whole, and contingent upon a 'Vorverständnis' of what Christianity 'is all about'.²³⁸

Two concerns of Kelsey are crucial to the present discussion. First, when approaching the question of differing hermeneutical models and their handlings of Isa 53, we are confronted with differing systems of thought in their entirety. We may regard some proposals to be 'better' than others, but for theological interpretation, this is a macro-judgment. The theological readings of Isa 53 in the present study consist not of a singular *locus*, but of a constellation of manifold *loci*. In Duhm, Childs, and Motyer, we find appeals to 'scripture and ontology', to 'the result of historical research', or to 'the traditional practices and ways of speaking of the church'.²³⁹ For all three interpreters, there are the arguments and convictions of philosophy / theology, 'Historie', and exegesis, which exist *coordinately* in relation to each other.

By virtue of this, a central contention of this dissertation is presented: the *hermeneutical* task of comparing Duhm, Childs and Motyer will not take place on the specific valuations of this or that piece of exegetical work (though some exegetical moves are stronger than others), but will concern the heuristic value, coherence, and force of each proposal in its own right. Exegetical decisions are not predetermined by the various *discrimina*, yet neither are they dissociated from them.

Second, Kelsey has analyzed theological uses of Scripture in such a way as to isolate two levels in each. On the one hand, there are the discrete affirmations of each proposal that constitute its internal makeup: their *loci*. On the other hand, these *loci* are employed and construed in light of a prior imaginative judgment that lends a certain logical force to the proposal.²⁴⁰ If hermeneutical approaches are to be compared in their entirety, and not

²³⁷ Kelsey, *Proving Doctrine*, 206 (cf. 137). Kelsey also suggests Calder's 'stables' to be an apt description of theological procedure.

²³⁸ Cf. Bultmann, 'Voraussetzunglose Exegese', 146-8, 149. Bultmann is influenced here in no small measure by Heidegger's 'Schon-sein-bei-der-Welt'.

²³⁹ Kelsey, *Proving Doctrine*, 147.

²⁴⁰ Kelsey, *Proving Doctrine*, 14.

merely in terms of varying *loci*, then Kelsey's two levels will provide a rubric by which Duhm, Childs and Motyer may be brought into dialogue over Isa 53. I will first compare the three in terms of their hermeneutical affinities, on the level of *discrimen*, and will subsequently as in what ways they differ on the specific *loci*-related question of text criticism.

III.2.1 Duhm and Childs – Hermeneutics and *Discrimina*

If a *discrimen* is to be construed as an imaginative act that configures reciprocal coefficients,²⁴¹ then Duhm and Childs will not share substantial commonality in terms of how history and theology are related to the various *loci* of their proposals. Duhm's particular dialectical understanding of history and philosophy/theology construed the Old Testament along negative lines in relation to the New,²⁴² whereas Childs laid great stress on the New Testament's theological use of the Old.²⁴³

What one encounters in both interpreters, though, is an awareness of the *necessity* of critical, historical work for theological reading. Childs clearly did not view his project as deviating from critical, historical inquiry;²⁴⁴ and neither did Duhm. In practice, put in Childs's terminology, Duhm sought both to isolate and elevate a historical particularity that has come to be referred to as a 'depth dimension' in later, more recent, canonical and/or theological proposals.²⁴⁵ The interest in locating prophetic, Isaianic material historically began in his *Theologie*, and is likewise present in his *Propheten*. It is no surprise, then, that his *Jesaia* manifests this interest, though no longer in abstract terms. In his handling of Isaiah 53, Duhm actually practices the kind of historically particular interpretation that his other works buttress: here he seeks to locate and elevate the 'lebendige Persönlichkeit' of the author, in order to uphold a robust dialectic, on one side of which stands 'eigentliche Geschichte'.

Whether or not Childs's reading actually coalesces with his wider project, he pursues the historical servant with sufficient specificity, that it

²⁴¹ Kelsey, *Proving Doctrine*, 160.

²⁴² Cf. his earliest statement on the relationship in *Pauli Apostoli*, 36ff.

²⁴³ E.g. Childs, 'Biblische Theologie', 22. To some extent, the difference between Duhm and Childs on this point may reflect the general differences between Lutheran and Reformed uses of the Old Testament.

²⁴⁴ Childs, *Introduction*, 40.

²⁴⁵ See Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 216-17. Slightly different is Cosgrove's use of the term, 'Hermeneutica Sacra', 54-6.

resembles many of Duhm's observations of the servant's ongoing theological impact on the poet.²⁴⁶ There may be disagreements, between Duhm and Childs, concerning an exilic or post-exilic setting of the servant and poet, but both agree on the poem as arising in the wake of an actual, suffering individual in Israel's history, on whom the community subsequently reflects.

While Childs and Duhm do not share a *discrimen, per se*, there is a remarkable affinity between the dialectical relationship of 'innere' and 'äußere' in Duhm, and 'Geschichte' and 'Historie' in Childs. Childs would no doubt resist any sharp demarcation, yet his historical claims regarding the redactional process and its theocentric motivation, is surely to be regarded as 'out there', whilst the move from the ontological plane to Trinitarian 'res' is regarded as proper only in the context of a particular confession of faith (i.e. 'in here'). This is a theological dialectic that is easily demarcated from Duhm's historical/philosophical dialectic, though formal connections persist. Both stress the need for the historical to be *truly* historical; and both understand that without an apperceptive move, the historical witness will not be realized to its fullest potential. For Duhm, this involved negative teleology; for Childs, an approach to interpretation marked by concern for the 'ontic' Christ. The conceptual, theoretical structures in place in Duhm's interpretation appear to function *analogically* to those in place for Childs.

Materially speaking, Duhm and Childs will disagree on the specific role of 'dogmatics' for biblical interpretation. For the former, they are an extraneous overlayment, that mute the liveliness and ongoing ability of the text to confront the reader. For the latter, dogmatics are the very avenue through which these goals are realized. But if we pause to suspend the particular vocabulary at work at this point, we find two structures that are indebted to *a priori* systems of apperception, held always in a dialectical relation to the biblical text. Any removal of this central dialectic between the historical and the 'suprahistorical' is a flattening of the text.

III.2.2 Duhm and Motyer – Hermeneutics and *Discrimina*

In some sense, Duhm and Motyer share a basic *discrimen*, insofar as the New Testament is needed to bring meaning to the Old. Motyer adopts the analogy of a 'two-act play', for its limited heuristic use, in which the Old and the New

²⁴⁶ Duhm, *Propheten*, 343.

are needed for mutual illumination.²⁴⁷ It is not so much that the Old *fails* (as with Duhm), but that, as far as revelation is concerned, the Old is incomplete.²⁴⁸ The sacrificial system is inherently deficient, a conviction manifest in Motyer's reading of Isa 53: within the structure of sacrifice there was a component (namely, פשע; 'transgression'), that broke the whole system down. It is this very specific exegetical observation, 'imaginatively configured' in light of a wider evangelical *discrimen*, that leads to a material relationship between Isa 53 and the Christ-event. For Motyer, all decisions depend upon whom one thinks Jesus to be, 'the Old Testament is Jesus predicted; the Gospels are Jesus revealed; Acts is Jesus preached; the Epistles, Jesus explained; and the Revelation, Jesus expected. He is the climax as well as the substance and centre of the whole'.²⁴⁹ Who Motyer understands Jesus to be, especially in terms of God's definitive self-revelation, governs what he finds in the Old Testament.

As already seen, this bears a family resemblance to Duhm, if in less polemically sharp categories. A particular reading of the Christ-event manifestly informs Duhm's reading of the Old Testament,²⁵⁰ even more so than the influence of a general 'Kulturprotestantismus'.²⁵¹ Who Duhm thinks Jesus to be affects more than one of his historical, exegetical decisions.²⁵² The significance here is that Jesus provides a definitive lens through which the Old is construed in a dependent relationship.²⁵³

Beyond this general similarity, however, Motyer and Duhm are radically different in terms of *discrimen* and *loci*. This is seen most notably in terms of Duhm's interest in 'wie es eigentlich gewesen', as contrasted with Motyer's evangelical belief in God's providential guiding of that history. Duhm attempted to keep history and theology separate (though this is itself a theological move), while Motyer attempts to remove this separation. For Motyer, history and theology are not conflated ('it is history which rescues

²⁴⁷ Motyer, *Look to the Rock*, 20.

²⁴⁸ This is the case, despite a different analogy, employed by Motyer, that suggests just the opposite. In his *Roots* (21), Motyer talks about the 'end-grain' of a plank of wood – as opposed to what one sees on the surface – as representing the revelatory presence of the New in the Old. This is a wonderful and provocative picture, though Motyer does not draw out the implications, which would contrast with his analogy of a two-act play.

²⁴⁹ Motyer, *Look to the Rock*, 22.

²⁵⁰ *Propheten*, 344-45.

²⁵¹ *Propheten*, v-vi.

²⁵² Duhm, *Theologie*, 301.

²⁵³ Cf. Moberly, "'Old Testament'" and "'New Testament'", 135-40. Cf. idem., *Old Testament*, 159ff.

theology from the realm of make-believe'), but history itself is regarded as a realm of God's 'theological' guidance and intervention. Contrasted with this is Duhm's insistence that 'Historie' rescues theology from becoming a mere textbook for dogmatics.²⁵⁴ Both lean upon something called 'history', but they do so in radically different ways.

Both regard the suffering servant to be a spiritual counterpart to the political servant of Cyrus,²⁵⁵ and their source- and literary-critical moves may not ultimately be too far apart.²⁵⁶ Even so, Motyer and Duhm will differ on what is easily the largest epistemological juncture within theological hermeneutics: the value and role of modern, critical knowledge.

Isaiah 53 does not require any historical or critical distancing from the theological interpreter in Motyer's understanding. In a sense, he holds a Reformed view of revelation that essentially leans upon, in Barth's words, a 'simultaneous act of God', inextricably linking 'the then and the now'.²⁵⁷ Though Motyer states that 'at some point a believing company came into existence' in the 'we' of 53.1, the ensuing exegesis assumes the 'we' to reflect a present readership within the Church. It rings with the language of Deut 5.3,²⁵⁸ emphatically re-orienting God's previous word to the present generation; indeed, in that context as in ours, the promise is regarded to have always been oriented to the contemporaries.

Duhm cannot follow Motyer down this road. It is not only because of the definitive break that the Christ-event demands (which is implicit in Duhm's reading), but perhaps more simply because critical historical analysis recognizes these texts as ancient literature, stemming from a small post-exilic community, reflecting upon a leprous rabbi. If nothing else, the text is ancient, and belongs within an ancient context.

The hermeneutical questions of Duhm, therefore, are not the hermeneutical questions of Motyer, and the relative emphases in reading Isa 53 theologically will posit only an artificial relationship. Given Kelsey's outline of theological approaches to Scripture as holistic constellations of

²⁵⁴ *Theologie*, 25.

²⁵⁵ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 318, 352, 383; Duhm, *Propheten*, 331, 343-4.

²⁵⁶ Barton, 'Common Ground'; Baden, 'Tower of Babel'. Cf. Baden., *Redaction of the Pentateuch*, 2, where the documentary hypothesis is framed as 'a purely literary solution to a purely literary problem' (though perhaps this overstates the issue?).

²⁵⁷ Cf. Barth, *Theology of the Reformed Confessions*, 63.

²⁵⁸ Deut 5.3 is emphatically, syntactically compounded to make this point, 'Not with our fathers did the LORD make this covenant, but with us, who are all of us here alive today'.

concerns, it becomes difficult to escape the conclusion that Motyer and Duhm cannot co-inhabit the same hermeneutical discussion.

III.2.3 Childs and Motyer – Hermeneutics and *Discrimina*

In some measure, Childs and Motyer share general commonalities as concerns a *discrimen*. To the former, both approach Isa 53 with a christocentricism that finds Christ not secondarily along chronological lines of prophecy and fulfillment, but in a more immediate sense. To highlight this commonality, I will compare Childs and Motyer in terms of what we might call an ‘immediate referentiality’, and a ‘multi-leveled’ reading. Following this, a key hermeneutical difference between the two will be noted.

III.2.3.a ‘Immediate Referentiality’

‘Immediate referentiality’, by which I mean a kind of direct correlation between past and present that is not inhibited by mediating questions of critical historical distancing, is not always easily applicable to Childs. He is far too aware and appreciative of the text’s inescapable diachronic dimension. Yet in terms of a turn from the ‘ontological plane’ to Trinitarian ‘res’, an immediacy of the text emerges. A Trinitarian ‘res’, as the deepest and truest subject matter of the text (from a Christian theological standpoint), encourages this kind of immediate referentiality. In his *Biblical Theology*, a sectioned entitled ‘From Witness to Subject Matter’ highlights the turn. With reference to the text’s ability to ‘point’ or ‘witness’ to a ‘res’, Childs asks, ‘What does it mean by subject matter or substance? What is the relation of this reality to the biblical texts? How does one discern this reality and what are its characteristics?’²⁵⁹ Childs approaches an answer in his description of the ‘fundamental goal’ of biblical theology as seeking ‘to understand the various voices within the whole Christian Bible, New and Old Testament alike, as a witness to the one Lord Jesus Christ, the selfsame divine reality’.²⁶⁰ Further:

The enterprise of Biblical Theology is theological because by faith seeking understanding in relation to the divine reality, the divine imperatives are no longer moored in the past, but continue to confront the hearer in the present as truth...[T]he heart of the enterprise is christological; its content is Jesus Christ and not its own self-understanding or identity. Therefore the aim of the enterprise

²⁵⁹ Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 80.

²⁶⁰ Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 85.

involves the classic movement of faith seeking knowledge, of those who confess Christ struggling to understand the nature and will of the One who has already been revealed as Lord.²⁶¹

Beginning with confession of Christ creates for Childs a 'fides quaerens intellectum' that situates the interpretive task, from the outset, squarely within the Church. For that reason, the Old Testament is 'no longer moored in the past', but confronts the hearer as present address.

Childs does not give a reading of Isa 53, as such (a criticism I raise above), but his closing reflections indicate a deep sympathy with the immediate referentiality of patristic allegorical interpretation. That he feels compelled to speak of 'ontology' and the immanent Trinity, suggests a relation of the text to the Church that does not feel indebted to the questions of critical distancing.²⁶² In fact, one might even say that Childs's exegetical framing of the chapter is a patterning of the poem after the early Church's experience. The referential outcome is not a clear immediacy, but it is close.²⁶³

For Motyer, the frequent use of the first-person plural throughout his exegesis manifests a similar kind of immediate referentiality as seen in Childs. Similarly to Childs, Motyer acknowledges a historical referent for Isa 53 ('at some point a believing company came into existence'), but treats it marginally, allowing for a more proximate relation of the passage to Christ. For Motyer, one is 'reminded of the resurrection, ascension and heavenly exaltedness of the Lord Jesus'.²⁶⁴

On 53.4-6, Motyer comments that the sufferings of the servant 'were properly ours', that it was 'our estimate that he suffered under the rod of God', that 'his sufferings were caused by our sins and achieved our peace'.²⁶⁵ The servant was sorrowful because he 'took our sorrows and weaknesses as his own'.²⁶⁶ All that 'blights our lives', 'mars our lives', 'our burdens', 'our sinful state', 'our alienation from God', 'our broken personhood', 'our need' –

²⁶¹ Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 86.

²⁶² Cf. Ricoeur, 'Distanciation'.

²⁶³ It is striking that 'imagination' plays so little a role in Childs's reading (where it did for Duhm ['über dem Grabe des Meisters'], and for Motyer). No small part of this relates to Childs's critique of Brueggemann's use of 'imagination', as a replacement for the role of the quickening of the Holy Spirit (*Struggle*, 296). On 'imagination' as an important piece of theological reading, see Lash, 'Interpretation and Imagination', 19-26.

²⁶⁴ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 424.

²⁶⁵ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 424.

²⁶⁶ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 428.

all of these are met by the servant.²⁶⁷ Motyer's emphasis echoes that of Luther, for whom Isaiah 52.13-53.12 was 'the foremost passage on the suffering and resurrection of Christ', and 'there is hardly another like it'. Again, 'His suffering was nothing else than our sin. OUR, US, FOR US, must be written in letters of gold'.²⁶⁸ Motyer continues in an illuminating passage on 53.1-3 (quoted above):

With this word [53.1-3], Isaiah completes a diagnosis of our human condition, which he has been unobtrusively pursuing throughout these three verses: to see the servant and find *no beauty* in him (2cd) reveals the bankruptcy of the human emotions; to be one with those who despise and then reject him (3ac) exposes the misguidedness of the human will; to appraise him and conclude that he is nothing condemns our minds as corrupted by, and participants in, our sinfulness. Thus every aspect of human nature is inadequate; every avenue along which, by nature, we might arrive at the truth and respond to God is closed. Nothing but divine revelation can make the Servant known to us and draw us to him.²⁶⁹

Motyer is unapologetic in this kind of reading. It is, for him, a fitting approach, insofar as the Old Testament is read within a wider evangelical context. Taking his lead from the use of the first-person voice throughout the poem, Motyer closes the distance between 'then' and 'now', a move evinced elsewhere through his frequent use of the phrases, 'Old Testament church' and/or 'old covenant church'.²⁷⁰ This, as Frei has noted, is a characteristic of 'pre-critical' reading, as it minimizes the mediating categories of historical-critical analysis.²⁷¹

It should be noted that Motyer's one-to-one correlation between the servant of Isa 53 and the person and work of Christ is distinctive, for immediate referentiality elsewhere in the commentary, at least as concerns text and Church, is only ever general in tone and language.²⁷² Nowhere is there such an explicit connection as in Isa 53.

²⁶⁷ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 430.

²⁶⁸ In Pelikan, *Luther's Works*, 215, 221. Quoted in Sawyer, *Fifth Gospel*, 127.

²⁶⁹ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 429.

²⁷⁰ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 30, 31, 33, 120, 134, 136, 175, 196, 363, 392, 432, 445, 462, 504, 512, 537, 538, 541. See also Motyer, *Roots*, 15, 76-8; idem., *Discovering*, 15-32, 68.

²⁷¹ So Frei, *Eclipse*, 86-104. Cf. McKane's similar description of Calvin's frequent references to the 'Old Testament Church' as the 'ecclesiastical centre' of the latter's reading, in McKane, *Late Harvest*, 47.

²⁷² For occurrences of this outside Isa 52.13-53.12, see Motyer, *Isaiah*, 73 (Isa 5.26-28), 118 (10.24), 128 (12.1), 133-34 (13.1-27.13), 140 (13.17-22), 144 (14.11), 176 (21.10), 209-10 (25.8), 234 (28.1), 268 (33.23), 291 (38.2-3), 309-10 (41.2), 322 (42.6-7), 387 (49.5), 406 (51.6), 471 (57.2), 474 (57.11), 487-88 (59.10-13), 497 (60.14), 507 (62.6-7), 509 (63.1-6), 519 (64.4-5[3-4]), 520 (64.6-7[5-6]), 537-38 (66.10-11), 544 (66.24).

Likewise, his references to Jesus and/or the New Testament are ever only in a descriptive, reception-historical sense.²⁷³ In Isa 53, however, linguistic and conceptual affinities between the poem and the later synoptic portrayals of the passion of Christ seem to press him to bring together a direct relating of the Old Testament to the reading Church with an intrinsic, almost ontological, relation of the subject matter of Isa 53 with the person of Christ in the gospels.

III.2.3.b 'Multi-Leveled Reading'

In his 'Toward Recovering Theological Exegesis', Childs proposed three levels on which the text was to be heard and interpreted. First, it must be interpreted within its own discrete historical, literary, and canonical context.²⁷⁴ Second, a 'relationship of content' is sought between the two testaments, in terms of structural similarity.²⁷⁵ And third, a unity of theological content is affirmed over both testaments.²⁷⁶ His attempt to carry this out in commentary form was only partially successful, though it did attempt to meet the text on these three levels: first, Isa 53 stemmed from a particular historical setting, and is now located within a canonical context of an eschatological narrative; second, it was related to the New Testament writers' felt impact of Isa 53 on their narrational depiction of the Christ-event; and third, it was related to the early Church's insistence on the unity of God vis-à-vis divine ontology / 'substance'. Childs contended that these three moves be 'a single method of interpretation', rather than subsequent steps.²⁷⁷ He was aware of a diachronic dimension,²⁷⁸ but did not let this dimension dominate the interpretive endeavor.

²⁷³ This excerpt Motyer's treatment of 52.13-53.12. For the observation at hand, see Motyer, *Isaiah*, 78 (Isa 6.8), 78-79 (6.9-10), 85 (7.14), 100 (9.3[2]), 103 (9.7[6]), 199 (24.5), 219 (26.1-21), 274 (35.5-6b), 320 (42.2-3b), 332 (43.4), 339 (43.22), 350 (44.21), 361 (45.9), 387n.1 (49.5), 410 (51.10), 465 (56.2), 487 (59.11), 495 (60.5), 499-500 (61.1-4), 502 (61.6), 504 (61.9), 507 (62.6-7), 509 (63.1-6), 522 (65.1-66.24), 540 (66.18-24), 541 (66.19), 544 (66.24). Motyer deviates from this rule with reference to Isa 14.9-15 (*Isaiah*, 144), where he notes that the Old Testament 'awaits Jesus and the illumination of immortality'. This has no visible bearing on his exegesis, however.

²⁷⁴ Childs, 'Recovering', 22.

²⁷⁵ Childs, 'Recovering', 23. Cf. *idem.*, *Biblical Theology*, 87.

²⁷⁶ Childs, 'Recovering', 23.

²⁷⁷ Cf. Barth's 'Schrifterklärung', in *CD I.2*, 722-40 (esp. 736-40). For the wider categories of 'dogmatic' and 'biblical' theology, and their inter-relation (to which §21 is ancillary), see *CD I.1*, 15-16; *I.2*, 816-22. Cf. Scalise, 'Childs and Barth'.

²⁷⁸ Childs, 'Recovering', 22.

Interestingly, in the preface to Motyer's *Isaiah* we find a similar threefold patterning of the task of the commentator: explanation ('what the text means'), encyclopaedia ('the course of specialist debate'), and exposition ('the continuing reality of the text as God's word today').²⁷⁹ Following this outlining, Motyer quotes D.L. Peterson, which bears repeating here:

No commentary can hope to be truly exhaustive and at the same time coherent. This volume includes text-critical and philological notes when these appear necessary...I have introduced notes which represent the dialogue between my own work and that of my predecessors. However, my primary goal has been... interpretation...²⁸⁰

The emphasis on the act of interpretation, alongside the three 'avenues' above, brings a similarity between Motyer and Childs to the fore: explanation stands alongside Childs's first 'avenue', and exposition alongside Childs's third 'avenue'. 'Encyclopaedia' does not really have an analogue in Childs's 'avenues', though 'specialist debate' does feature prominently in his wider work (as in Isa 53). The comparison is only approximate, and manifests enough of a similarity to show the commonality that Childs and Motyer hold for interpreting the Old Testament as Scripture. Indeed, where for Childs the three avenues constitute a 'single method of interpretation', for Motyer the three dynamics constitute 'three main thrusts' in the single act of 'commenting'.²⁸¹

In this light, Childs and Motyer share a general *discrimen* of christocentricity in the Old Testament, and its impact on the various facets of theological interpretation. There is, it should be noted, a wide historical and exegetical field which the two will struggle to co-inhabit. Childs's patterning of Isa 53 in a way theologically amenable to early Christian reflection grows out of a historical distancing between text and Church. This distancing is shared, in differing form, by Duhm, and so Duhm and Childs share a hermeneutical discussion regarding Isa 53 that can span both historical and theological queries. Motyer's particular evangelical *a priori* regarding divine involvement and superintendence over the events recounted in the biblical text distances him from an openness to critical historical inquiry. The result is that Motyer cannot enter the discussion of Duhm and Childs.

²⁷⁹ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 9.

²⁸⁰ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 10. The quote is taken from Peterson, *Haggai and Zechariah*, 7.

²⁸¹ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 9.

Hermeneutically, his evangelical stance excludes the essential critical questions of 18th and 19th century biblical criticism, and to the degree that theological interpretation of Scripture must be open to critical historical questions, Motyer will struggle to provide a compelling model.

III.2.4 Duhm, Childs, and Motyer – Text Criticism as Basis for *Loci*

I have so far treated the hermeneutical intersections of Duhm, Childs, and Motyer, largely in terms of what shapes their respective *discrimina*. The constituent *loci* of a proposal will vary from case to case, and to try this kind of comprehensive comparison would exceed the scope of this dissertation. Yet insofar as each interpreter is concerned chiefly with the *text* of Isa 53 as the arena of reflection (whether historical or theological), text-critical decisions would seem to be one basis for determining numerous exegetical decisions (i.e. *loci*).

Duhm is (in)famous for his numerous emendations in Isaiah as a whole, and perhaps especially at the point of Isa 53. Two points are particularly notable. The first is at 52.14a β -14b. The text, if it were to be accepted, forms an ‘abscheuliche Periode’.²⁸² The consecutive occurrences of כן are the chief reason. Following Marti, Duhm relocates the section between 53.2 and 53.3. The result is a text that flows better, and that consequently communicates the themes of suffering and exaltation in a powerful way to the reader. The second point of serious emendation for Duhm comes at 53.10. There is something slightly repetitive about recounting the servant’s suffering and death at this point, as both have already been recounted in the poem. Rather, v.10 marks the beginning of the theme of vindication and exaltation. In Chapter Two I have noted Duhm’s extensive textual emendations to suit this new theme: Aramaic cognates are resourced (רכא), slight textual corrections are made (את־שִׁיבוּ to אִם־תִּשָׁבוּ; החליף to החלי), and words are flipped from front to back (משא to אשא). The changes are thoroughgoing, but the result is that, as in 52.14, the text reads much more coherently, and in line with the underlying themes of the poem: the servant’s debasedness and exaltation.

Childs is reticent to adopt text-critical moves in Isa 53. As noted above, despite his contention that a responsible interpretation is informed by a

²⁸² Duhm, *Jesaja*, 394.

critical reading of the text, very little appears that is, properly speaking, text criticism. At 52.14, the confession is noted to have a ‘broken style’, which itself possesses a ‘striking effect’ of a ‘sudden shift’, found to some degree in other prophetic collections.²⁸³ At 53.10, Childs notes the proposed emendation of החלים for החלי (cf. החליה),²⁸⁴ and concedes, ‘Undoubtedly this alteration presents a far clearer meaning’. However, ‘one should be cautious in making such an intrusive move through emendation, which too easily resolves the hard exegetical problem’.²⁸⁵ The resolution is hardly ‘easy’, though, and rather represents a nuanced attempt to give an answer to the ‘hard exegetical question’. Childs does not give החלי an alternative proposal to resolving the problem, and simply notes that the differing translations are ‘hardly inconsequential’.²⁸⁶ We are left hanging, so some degree, in text-critical limbo.

Motyer, similar to Childs, refuses textual emendations throughout Isa 53. At 52.14, Motyer recognizes the difficulty of the text, but finds it clear in its communication of a central theme, ‘[O]n the basis of human observation, the Servant’s sufferings arouse revulsion, but a very different reaction arises from understanding what he has done’.²⁸⁷ At 53.10, Motyer does not recognize any real textual difficulty, and rather finds the verse to manifest similarity to vv.4-6, and so to contain an inherent theology of substitutionary atonement.²⁸⁸

For Childs, Duhm’s emendations are part of a wider problem with text-criticism’s proclivity to apply inappropriate criteria to measure the text’s integrity, and with the failure to hear the text *on its own terms*. Similarly, for Motyer, the kind of emendations undertaken by Duhm represent the fracturing tendency of 19th-century rationalism. Both would resist Duhm’s work on Isa 53 on hermeneutical as well as text-critical grounds.

But what actually hangs on these disagreements? Do Duhm’s emendatory suggestions actually affect the overall readings of either Childs or Motyer? Duhm sought to resolve textual difficulties, and to streamline the thematic presentation of the servant as suffering, dying, and experiencing an eventual exaltation through God’s work. Is either Childs’s reading of a

²⁸³ Cf. Isa 31.4; 55.10; Zech 8.14. These passages, however, do not carry the same degree of textual difficulty as our passage.

²⁸⁴ So *BHS*, following Begrich, *Studien*, 62-66. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 348, calls the emendation ‘ingenious but not entirely convincing’.

²⁸⁵ Childs, *Isaiah*, 417.

²⁸⁶ Childs, *Isaiah*, 417.

²⁸⁷ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 425.

²⁸⁸ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 436-8.

penitent, confessing community, or Motyer's reading of a priest-like, substitutionary figure, excluded, if Duhm's text-critical proposals are embraced in their entirety? Does not Duhm rather present the text in a clearer, more thematically-sharpened sense, from which the readings of Childs and Motyer could proceed without substantive alteration?²⁸⁹ As with the comparisons above, the disconnect between rhetoric and reality is present in the text-critical realm (i.e. in terms of *loci*), as well as in some cases of wider hermeneutical structuring (i.e. *discrimina*).

IV. Retrospect and Prospect. Historical Criticism: Friend, Foe, or Foil?

That rhetoric does not signify reality is a serious problem within the realm of theological hermeneutics, as it has enjoyed a narrative of relatively secure theological and interpretive demarcations.²⁹⁰ It would be trite to presume that serious epistemological differences did not exist between the interpreters presented in this dissertation, and I have not tried to blur this fact. Though rhetoric does not always match reality, the differences are surely more than rhetorical, and concern myriad issues: the nature of 'theology' itself, the nature and role of revelation, Scripture, the Church and its relation to Israel, as well as serious epistemological commitments.

I have tried to present throughout a sympathetic, yet critical, reading of each interpreter, in such a way as to render their projects and commitments open, honest, and able to be brought into dialogue. Duhm stands upon a dialectical, teleological reading of 'Historie' in terms of a presupposition marked by the 19th century religious *a priori*. Childs stands upon a dialectic of 'Historie' and 'Geschichte', and what is meant by these terms, when used of Scripture. Motyer does not use the category of dialectic, and though his claims are historical in nature (Duhm) and oriented positively toward the Church (Childs), they are of an evangelical variety that demarcates his discussion from that of Duhm and Childs.

²⁸⁹ A possible exception is Motyer's reading of עֲוֹן in 53.10 (*Isaiah*, 438-9), though in reality the doctrinal content of עֲוֹן has already been largely expounded in 53.4-6, 7-9 (429ff.).

²⁹⁰ The classical example is Frei's *Eclipse*, though the assumptions are carried forward in the work of Levering, *Biblical Exegesis*; Paddison, *Scripture*; Treier, *Introducing Theological Interpretation*, 103-25; and Green, 'Rethinking "History"'.

The similarities, as seen above, go deeper and beyond those stated here, and present themselves in such a way that an inescapable conclusion is presented: the relationship of 'Historie' to the Church and its Scripture, at least in terms of Isa 53, is far more complex than any 'pre-critical', 'critical', 'post-critical' division can account for.²⁹¹

Francis Watson, in a provocatively-titled paper, 'Does Historical Criticism Exist?', has sought to 'detach the label "historical criticism" from the ongoing reality of interpretative practice', since the term is no more than 'a rhetorical figure mobilized for transparent ideological ends'.²⁹² To make the case, Watson notes that from Origen to Eusebius of Caesarea to Augustine, Scripture was approached with all the analytic tools available to hand. Indeed, Watson notes, 'If there is a danger that purely scholarly issues might become an end in themselves, Augustine seems unaware of it'.²⁹³ As the narrative of historical criticism's development goes, Watson writes that,

we are often told, *our* biblical scholarship is not just different from the scholarship known to Augustine...but *fundamentally* different. Our scholarship is modern, theirs was premodern. Our scholarship is critical, theirs was precritical. Our scholarship is oriented primarily towards historical reconstruction, theirs towards the confirmation of dogma. Our scholarship is nonconfessional and feels at home in the secularity of the modern university; their scholarship (such as it was) finds its natural habitat within the church and its various competing orthodoxies. In a word: we practise something we call *historical criticism*, whereas they did not.²⁹⁴

The root problem with this kind of narrative concerns 'the appropriateness of the signifier to the phenomenon signified'.²⁹⁵ Again, rhetorical structuring does not coincide with interpretive reality.

Certain outcomes result from the observation. Looking more closely at the phrase, Watson addresses 'history'. First, 'historical critics' are, by definition, concerned with a text, and so will only be employed as historians

²⁹¹ That the standard critical demarcations of 'pre-critical', 'critical', and 'post-critical' are rather artificial is apparent in the late reflection of Barth's 'Humanity of God', in which his peculiar use of 'Retraktation' functions as an analogue to Augustine's 'Retractationes', in which Augustine 're-traced' his earlier work with a 'judicialia severitate'. See his *Retractationes*, Prolog. 1 = PL 32, 583.

²⁹² Watson, 'Historical Criticism', 2.

²⁹³ What was of importance to Augustine was not the propriety of particular interpretive tools, but the fostering of *caritas* – toward God and neighbor. See *De doct.* i.36.40, cited in Watson, 'Historical Criticism', 4.

²⁹⁴ Watson, 'Historical Criticism', 5.

²⁹⁵ Watson, 'Historical Criticism', 5.

‘on a part-time basis’.²⁹⁶ This affected the above proposals in differing ways, though I have suggested that insofar as the text itself is the material with which the interpreters are to reckon, Duhm’s numerous emendations may actually serve to uphold the readings of Childs and Motyer (rather than threaten them). Second, Watson notes that ‘historical critics’ do not necessarily serve to distance a text from the present-day reader (as the rhetoric would lead one think), but work to render it intelligible, and thus *alive* – historical work often leads to a greater sense of proximity to the text.²⁹⁷ Third, historical knowledge is in some sense ‘constructed’, and so there can be no monolithic context of history.²⁹⁸ Likewise, ‘critical’ runs into numerous problems if construed simplistically. It is not relegated to the field of scholarship from the 18th century onward, and when ‘critical’ does appear in more recent biblical scholarship, it often functions as a cipher for ‘ideological’.²⁹⁹ ‘Historical criticism’, therefore, must go; it is not only a matter of terminological inaccuracy, but serves to cover the reality of biblical studies as existing on a long, involved spectrum.³⁰⁰

Certain criticisms of Watson could be raised, of course. ‘Historical critics’, in terms of the exegetical enterprise, are concerned with a text, though we might also identify archaeological work as falling under the umbrella term ‘historical criticism’. Further, does Watson do justice to the major philosophical shifts in historical awareness (largely among the educated) in the last three centuries? Moreover, are there not now different *kinds* of questions or categories at work, that were unavailable to exegesis in antiquity? Would Origen, for example, have been aware of the genre ‘legend’, and its import for interpreting certain Old Testament narratives?³⁰¹

These comments notwithstanding, Watson’s piece presents a valuable angle from which we can appreciate theological interpretation’s existence upon a historical spectrum, insofar as it retains a relationship with traditional ‘biblical theology’. Childs’s aptly titled *The Struggle to Understand Isaiah as*

²⁹⁶ Watson, ‘Historical Criticism’, 8.

²⁹⁷ Watson, ‘Historical Criticism’, 8-9.

²⁹⁸ Watson, ‘Historical Criticism’, 9-10.

²⁹⁹ Watson, ‘Historical Criticism’, 7.

³⁰⁰ Watson (14) closes his paper with the suggestion that as regards ‘historical criticism’, ‘We should stop using this expression, speaking instead simply of “biblical interpretation” and “biblical scholarship”. Words such as “modern”, “historical”, and “critical” will still be usefully employed, as appropriate. But “historical criticism” itself should be consigned to the lexicon of defunct terminology. It will not be missed’.

³⁰¹ Cf. Gunkel, *Genesis*, vii-lxxxvi.

Christian Scripture provides a lengthy account of the repeated attempts to read Isaiah at various moments along this spectrum. The problematic intersections often differ – Synagogue and Church, text and subject matter, history and theology – but in essence have much in common. I have, throughout the dissertation, brought the relationship of history and theology to the foreground, since this project aims not at a general field of interest, but at a specific moment of confusion in theological interpretation’s self-understanding. To return to the two questions posed in the Introduction – how ought theological interpretation of the Old Testament to construe its relationship to historical-critical work?, and What bearing does this work have for its own practice? – we can say that the issue is too complex, the interpreters too interdependent, and the relationship of text to Church too dialectic, to give a clear answer. A lack of clarity, however, probably presents a ‘truer’ picture of the nature of the endeavor from the outset.³⁰²

What kind of presupposition might best enable the theological interpretation of Isa 53? Or to put it in messier, though ‘truer’, terms, what kind of *discrimen*, and what particular constellation of theological affirmations best engenders a historically-attuned, theologically proximate reading of the poem? The issue in the present study is not whether one approach or the other is ‘right’; it is rather to point out that the question, posed in an either–or fashion of empirical history v. confessional systematization, does not represent either the deeper complexity of the problem, nor any historical precedent. At its worst, the dichotomy comes to be labeled ‘historical criticism’ v. ‘theological interpretation’, as if either such body of work or thought ever existed in hermetic isolation from the other. This much the present study has sought to demonstrate, with reference to the *locus classicus* of theological reading of the Old Testament.³⁰³

Watson’s essay, above, notes that from within a theological context, certain kinds of critical, historical questions have always attended the Church’s reading of the Bible as Scripture. In the present dissertation, this much has been seen in the work of Childs and Motyer. The task of the biblical ‘historian’, was likewise bound up with questions of personal commitment. A close reading of Duhm presents, I suggest, this very point: not only has

³⁰² Louth, *Discerning*, 108.

³⁰³ Loewe, ‘Prolegomenon’, 8.

theological reading been has perennially taken up with historical questions, but also more historically-oriented scholars have not necessarily wanted to relinquish the positive import that the Christian theological context holds for the formulation and self-understanding of their own work. This kind of appreciation surely renders the discussion more complex, but, the study suggests, more true to the highly involved nature of interpreting the Old Testament – and Isa 53 – as Christian Scripture.

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