**Distribution Agreement**

In presenting this thesis or dissertation as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced degree from Emory University, I hereby grant to Emory University and its agents the non-exclusive license to archive, make accessible, and display my thesis or dissertation in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter known, including display on the world wide web. I understand that I may select some access restrictions as part of the online submission of this thesis or dissertation. I retain all ownership rights to the copyright of the thesis or dissertation. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this thesis or dissertation.

Signature:

______________________________ ______________

Ian M. A. MacGillivray Date

# Jeremiah and the Structure of Prophecy

By

Ian M. A. MacGillivray
Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Division of Religion
Hebrew Bible
Emory University

Dr. Jacob L. Wright
Adviser

Dr. Mary C. Callaway
Committee Member

Dr. Joel. M. LeMon
Committee Member

Dr. Roger S. Nam
Committee Member

Dr. John J. Stuhr
Committee Member

Accepted:

Dr. Kimberly Jacob Arriola
Dean of the James T. Laney Graduate School

Date

# Jeremiah and the Structure of Prophecy

By

Ian M. A. MacGillivray
M.A.R., Yale Divinity School, 2017
A.B., Harvard University, 2015

Adviser: Jacob L. Wright, Ph.D.

An abstract of
a dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Religion, Hebrew Bible

2025

# Abstract

## Jeremiah and the Structure of Prophecy

By Ian M. A. MacGillivray

This dissertation uses the poststructuralist philosophy of Gilles Deleuze to explain the presentation (*mimesis*) of the prophet Jeremiah in the book of Jeremiah. Applying established exegetical methods from a novel theoretical perspective, the study argues that Jeremiah's uniquely detailed portrayal as a prophetic character derives from the book's unprecedented combination of mimetically divergent texts: while the first half of Jeremiah foregrounds divine revelation and other aspects of the prophet's personal dialogue with the deity YHWH, the second half focuses instead on Jeremiah's public proclamations and their ambivalent reception among the people of Judah. In the end, however, the similarities between the literary structure of Jeremiah and the social realities of ancient prophecy prove to be unreliable. Even if Jeremiah did exist as a historical person, he has been so thoroughly transformed by the artistry and textuality of the biblical book as to become a fundamentally different kind of being, one that cannot be understood apart from its functions in the hands of living readers.

Chapter 1 undertakes close contextual readings of certain poems of lament traditionally known as Jeremiah's "confessions," which reveal a significant shift in the prophet's portrayal just before the final confession in Jer 20. Chapter 2 outlines Deleuze's philosophy of difference through his idiosyncratic theory of structuralism. Chapter 3 then connects this theory with current social-scientific research on ancient Near Eastern prophecy, yielding a structure of "epistemic intermediation" that describes the movements of privileged knowledge common to prophecy and other forms of divination. After an analysis of extrabiblical prophetic texts in Chapter 3, Chapter 4 assesses the biblical prophetic books, with special attention to Jeremiah and others (Isaiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Jonah, Haggai, Malachi) that include at least one text detailing the titular prophet's direct engagement with an audience. Chapter 5 steps back to consider the limitations of this structural approach and offers a different way to understand Jeremiah and the Hebrew Bible, drawn out of Deleuze's multifaceted concept of the "rhizome." Some implications of this concept for biblical studies are briefly explored in the Conclusion.

# Jeremiah and the Structure of Prophecy

By

Ian M. A. MacGillivray
M.A.R., Yale Divinity School, 2017
A.B., Harvard University, 2015

Adviser: Jacob L. Wright, Ph.D.

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Religion, Hebrew Bible

2025

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

You don’t have to read any trendy French philosophy to know that bylines tell a convenient lie. At the head of a book stands the solitary name of the author, all dressed up with its suffix and middle initial(s), but the heart of the book does not beat without the help of many other people, named and unnamed. No book is complete until it has given at least some of these people the recognition they deserve.

Happily, since this book happens to be a dissertation, university policy requires my name to share space on the cover with those of others who have helped this long project reach its long-due completion. First and foremost, I must thank my adviser, Jacob Wright, who has constantly supported my work and encouraged my progress, literally from the moment I first set foot in his office at Emory. Without his strategic guidance, I may not have written about Jeremiah at all; without his steadfast reassurance, I certainly would not have written the book that now stands before you. Many thanks are also due to the other members of my committee: Mary Callaway, whose work on Jeremiah has profoundly influenced my own; Joel LeMon, who first gave me the opportunity to lecture on Jeremiah back in 2018 and has since shaped my academic growth in countless ways; Roger Nam, whose pragmatic mentorship has often helped me to pull my head out of the proverbial clouds; and John Stuhr, whose Spring 2019 seminar on Deleuze, and gracious feedback on the inchoate work I produced therein, proved formative in my ongoing efforts to sharpen biblical scholarship through philosophical critique.

Among the many names that do not find a place on the cover pages of this dissertation, several stand out. In my considerable time at Emory, it has been a pleasure to work and study alongside multiple groups of exceptionally bright and invariably motivated doctoral students. Besides the experiences that I shared with Tim McNinch and Rachel Stuart in my own cohort, my time has also been enriched by ~~commiserations~~ conversations with Evan Bassett, Hyun Woo Kim, and Rachel Wrenn in the year above me, and with Caitlin Hubler, Asia Lerner-Gay, and Eric McDonnell in the years below. Though these latter students, in particular, have listened to me fret and fuss about my dissertation for years now, they have always done so with an earnest and empathetic patience that I strive to embody in my own dealings with others. My coursework at Emory also gave me the chance to work as a research assistant for two exemplary professors outside my own field: Bracht Branham of Classics and Comparative Literature, and Bob McCauley of the Center for Mind, Brain, and Culture. Although both are retired now, each modeled the rigorous thinking and vigorous curiosity that are the lifeblood of interdisciplinary scholarship, while also showing me how to translate the abstract ether of provocative ideas into the concrete elements of publishable writing.

Finally, I must thank my family. I have been blessed with two sets of loving and supportive parents, without whom I would not be the person I am today. I am forever grateful to my dad, George MacGillivray; my stepmom, Maggie Guglielmo; my mom, Victoria Freeman; and, for the purposes of this project, especially my stepdad, the late James Freeman, Ed.D., whose protracted efforts to finish and defend his own dissertation drove me to do the same for mine. I should also thank my brother, Sean MacGillivray, for his artistic sensibility, his quick wit, and his salutary reminders that not every interesting question requires an extemporaneous lecture in response. But the very last words of gratitude, which enjoy their own pride of place, belong to my wife, the recently minted Dr. Katie MacGillivray, Ph.D. Katie's presence in my life is so central, so pivotal, and so world-defining that I could write about it for another 100,000 words and still fail to do her justice. Although the concurrent pursuit of doctorates as a young couple presents a uniquely challenging combination of voluntary poverty and involuntary precarity, Katie has never failed to support me just as I have sought to support her. Her sterling sense of humor imbues every day with endless joy, her brilliant mind charges every conversation with boundless energy, and her scientific expertise offers me ceaseless insight into questions and situations that are mostly foreclosed to others in my position. When I started my program at Emory, Katie followed me to Atlanta and eventually to her own Ph.D. program, in Quantitative Biosciences at Georgia Tech; as I finished at Emory, I followed her to Davis, CA, and eventually to my own dissertation defense. In short, where she goes, I go (Ruth 1:16). When Deleuze describes his vision for a new philosopher in the latter half of *The Logic of Sense*, he remarks in passing that such a thinker "is married" (LS 219). Like so many statements in Deleuze's writings, I am not entirely sure what this claim means, but my life with Katie gives me good reason to believe that it must be true.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface........................................................ 1

Introduction: Jeremiah, Auerbach, Deleuze........................................................ 2

1. Characterization in the Confessions and Their Contexts: Toward a "Mimetic Watershed" between the "Channels Of Prophecy"........................................................ 10

  1.1. Introduction........................................................ 10
  1.2. Prelude: Jeremiah as Tragic Hero (11:1-14)........................................................ 12
  1.3. Jeremiah's "Confession(s)" in 11:18-12:6........................................................ 16
    1.3.1. Prolegomena on Terminology and Textual Units........................................................ 16
    1.3.2. Jeremiah's Complaint (11:18-20)........................................................ 22
    1.3.3. YHWH's Response (11:21-23)........................................................ 30
    1.3.4. Characterization across the Confessions: From a Downward Slope to Dynamic "Cycles"........................................................ 36
  1.4. A "Mimetic Watershed" in the Book of Jeremiah (19:14-20:6)........................................................ 40
    1.4.1. The Confrontation with Pashhur in Context........................................................ 40
    1.4.2. Two Modes of Mimesis in Jeremiah........................................................ 46
    1.4.3 Two Modes of Mimesis and Two "Axes" of the Prophetic Process........................................................ 51
  1.5. Conclusion: From Social Axes to Structural Series........................................................ 54

2. The Structure of Structures, according to Gilles Deleuze........................................................ 58

  2.1. Introduction........................................................ 58
  2.2. Structural Components: Relations, Series, Singularities........................................................ 60
  2.3. Structural Dimensions: Virtuality, Actuality, "Different/ciation"........................................................ 68
  2.4. Structural Assembly: Serial Disparity, Paradoxical Objects, Intersubjectivity........................................................ 80
  2.5. Conclusion........................................................ 90

3. How Do We Recognize Structuralism in Prophecy and Prophetic Literature?........................................................ 92

  3.1. Introduction........................................................ 92
  3.2. A Two-Dimensional Typology of Epistemic Intermediation in the Ancient Near East.... 96

3.3. Structuring Epistemic Intermediation: Knowledge, Authority, and the “Word = *x*”....... 104
    3.3.1. Differential Construction of the Revelation and Proclamation Series...................... 104
    3.3.2. Paradox at the Heart of Prophecy: The “Word = *x*” ............................................... 116
3.4. Ancient Near Eastern Actualizations of the Structure of Epistemic Intermediation ....... 132
    3.4.1. From Two Series of Prophecy to Two Types of Prophetic Literature...................... 134
    3.4.2. Between Technocracy and Autocracy: The Structural Significance of Biblical Prophetic Literature ........................................................................................... 147

4. 2 Complex 2 Jeremiah: Structures of the Book and Its Prophet ........................................... 167
4.1. Introduction....................................................................................................... 167
4.2. Textual Actualizations of Epistemic Intermediation in the Latter Prophets.................... 170
    4.2.1. Prophetic Books without Proclamation Texts........................................................ 171
    4.2.2. Prophetic Books with Proclamation Texts............................................................. 176
4.3. The Literary Structure of Prophecy in the Book of Jeremiah ........................................ 200
    4.3.1. Elements of the Revelation and Proclamation Complexes ..................................... 203
    4.3.2. Constructing the Revelation and Proclamation Complexes.................................... 211
    4.3.3. Prophetic Quotation Formulas and Other Markers of the Divine Datum in Jer ....... 228
4.4. This is (Not) a Prophet: Jeremiah as Simulacrum ......................................................... 250
    4.4.1. Jeremiah in the Revelation Complex ..................................................................... 255
    4.4.2. Jeremiah in the Proclamation Complex ................................................................. 259
    4.4.3. Conclusion ............................................................................................................. 269

5. The Tree and the Rhizome: Three Ontologies of a (Biblical) Book..................................... 274
5.1. Introduction....................................................................................................... 274
5.2. Regimes of Signs and the Root-Book ............................................................................ 279
5.3. Historical Criticism and the Radicle-Book ..................................................................... 290
5.4. Assemblages, “Antimimesis,” and the Rhizome-Book .................................................. 304
5.5. Only Life Can Make a Rhizome: Reading Jeremiah (and the Bible) as an Assemblage. 315

Conclusion: Anti-kythera.......................................................................................................... 336

Bibliography ............................................................................................................................. 341

# LIST OF FIGURES

1.1. Initial Parallelism in the First and Last Confessions……………………………………..25
1.2. Overholt's "Channels of Prophecy"…………………………………………………...52
2.1. Structure of "The Purloined Letter"……………………………………………………82
3.1. Typology of Epistemic Intermediation…………………………………………………104
3.2. Structure of Epistemic Intermediation………………………………………………..116
4.1. Distribution of *r*-texts and *p*-texts in the Latter Prophets…………………………………199
4.2. Distribution of *r*-texts and *p*-texts in Jer (MT)…………………………………………202
4.3. Distribution of *r*-texts and *p*-texts in Jer (LXX)………………………………………...203
4.4. Prophetic Quotation Formulas in Jer (MT)……………………………………………...242
4.5. Modified Word-Event Formulas in the Expanded Colophons……………………………270

# PREFACE

When the Israelites saw that Moses delayed to return from Sinai, the Bible tells us, they asked Aaron to make for them a god of gold (Exod 32:1). It does not take an academic article on this narrative to see that Aaron all too readily obliges.[1] He solicits the requisite materials, melts them down, and casts them in the image of a calf (32:2-4)—but when Moses finally confronts him, he dissembles. In Aaron's telling, he just threw the people's gold into the fire, and all at once "this calf came out!" (32:24). In context, where "the reader…already knows that Aaron is lying," this explanation suffers from a manifest, almost juvenile absurdity, not unlike a young child trying in vain to blame his older siblings for a mess that he made while they were at school.[2]

If there is any truth to Aaron's statement, however, I have definitely discovered it over the course of this project. For I also planned out my work and gathered all the right materials: in place of gold jewelry and a theriomorphic mold, I had a dissertation prospectus and a preliminary bibliography. Like Aaron surely did before the restive Israelites, anxious even to the point of aggression, I worked under pressure, struggling to stay true to my original plan while also conforming it to the expectations and exigencies that were imposed on me, as well as those that I unwisely imposed on myself. When I now compare the product of my labors to the plan that it purports to follow, I am struck by how little the one resembles the other—as if I had just thrown my notes and outlines and resources into the fire, and all at once *this book came out.* In the end, then, I can only hope that this work will be received more favorably than Aaron's was.

---

[1] If you do require an article, see Elizabeth VanDyke, "Designing the Golden Calf: Pens and Presumption in the Production of a 'Divine' Image," *JBL* 141 (2022): 219-233.

[2] The quote is from VanDyke, "Designing," 219; the simile is from an anecdote about one of my nephews.

# INTRODUCTION: JEREMIAH, AUERBACH, DELEUZE

Lettin’ my hair down
Lettin’ it grow natural
Tell ‘em I said nothin’
Tell ‘em I sent Jeremiah…
-BROCKHAMPTON, “JEREMIAH” (2021)

No book is both as ancient and as widely read today as the Hebrew Bible. Although most of the Hebrew Bible’s cultural presence must be ascribed to its status as a sacred text for Judaism and Christianity, the mere fact of this presence makes biblical literature a worthy object of study as *literature* in its own right. This would be true even if the Bible were *bad* literature; thankfully, for the most part, it isn’t. Of course, there is nothing particularly novel about recognizing the Bible’s aesthetic merits in 2025, decades after the (already belated) advent of a “new literary criticism” in biblical studies.[1] At this point, it is safe to assume that every biblical book has been subjected, in whole or in part, to focused literary analysis, of the snapshot or “synchronic” sort that appreciates all the manifest subtlety and manifold complexity of a whole text just as it stands before its reader. If there is any room for further innovation in the literary criticism of the Hebrew Bible, it now lies in the application of these techniques to new textual objects (e.g., the Dead Sea Scrolls)—or, equivalently, in their *re*application to old objects from new theoretical perspectives.

As a philosophical reading of the book of Jeremiah, this study takes the latter approach. At some level, I was drawn to Jeremiah simply because it is both interesting and difficult: it combines the compositional problems of the Pentateuch with the ideological provocations of the Latter Prophets, and the narrative artistry of the Former Prophets with the poetic beauty of the

---

[1] For the phrase and several examples, see J. Cheryl Exum and David J. A. Clines, eds., *The New Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible*, JSOTSup 143 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993).

Writings. What I have found to be most intriguing about Jeremiah, however, is the presentation of its central prophet. Just as the book of Jeremiah draws together themes from across the Hebrew Bible, the character of Jeremiah aggregates aspects of all the other biblical prophets. Like Isaiah, he confronts kings; like Ezekiel, he acts out symbols; like Amos, he sees visions; like Obadiah, he criticizes Edom; like Micah, he damns Zion; like Hosea, he problematizes love; like Jonah, he struggles with God. More so than any other part of the book that bears his name, the prophet "Jeremiah" pestered me with a persistent question: why construct this character, in this way, in this book?

Such a question has its roots in a long intellectual tradition concerned with the artistic depiction of the real world, or "mimesis." While this concept can be traced back at least as far as Aristotle's *Poetics*, its classic modern exposition is Erich Auerbach's weighty tome *Mimesis*, originally published in 1946, which sub-titularly glosses its subject as "the representation of reality [*Dargestellte Wirklichkeit*] in Western literature."[2] For the Hebrew Bible scholar, the most relevant part of Auerbach's treatise is the opening essay, "Odysseus's Scar."[3] Comparing a scene from Book 19 of the *Odyssey*, when Euryclea recognizes the disguised Odysseus by a scar on his thigh as she washes his feet, to the biblical narrative of Abraham's binding of Isaac (Gen 22), Auerbach famously distinguishes Homer's "externalized" and "uniformly illuminated" descriptions "of the foreground" from a style in the Bible that is sparser, more suspenseful, and "fraught with background."[4] For example, whereas Homer does not hesitate to interject the recollection of seemingly tangential past events into the narration of present ones, the Bible withholds seemingly integral mental and emotional details even when they are most expected.

---

[2] Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).

[3] Auerbach, *Mimesis*, 3-23.

[4] Auerbach, *Mimesis*, 11-12.

Auerbach's comparison of these styles is erudite but not entirely evenhanded, and his characterizations of biblical complexity over against Homeric simplicity can easily appear to favor the former over the latter. Although this result may be taken as a boon to biblical scholars, it has not prevented them from acknowledging the limitations of Auerbach's analysis. Some of these shortcomings are already implicit in his title's outmoded restriction to "Western" (*abendländisch*) literature, a contested category that struggles oxymoronically to contain the "ancient Near Eastern" texts of Genesis and the broader Hebrew Bible. More specifically, for all its undeniable impact, the choice to compare Genesis 22 with the *Odyssey* is far from ironclad. Auerbach deems these texts to be "equally ancient and equally epic," but the plausibility of the first claim launders a considerable amount of ambiguity in the second.[5] Beyond the many formal and generic disparities that separate the inconsistently parallelistic prose of Genesis from the tightly controlled hexameters of Homer's poetry, neither text can be elevated as a generalizable exemplar of the literary output of its respective culture: Homer differs from Herodotus no less than Genesis differs from Job. In the words of Robert Alter, a more recent and more biblically-minded literary critic, Auerbach's understanding of classical Hebrew style "is at once resoundingly right and too sweepingly general."[6]

My own study of the presentation of Jeremiah in the book that bears his name is deeply influenced by Auerbach. I have found his decidedly positive reading of the reticence or absence that defines much biblical narrative to be both highly suggestive for exegesis in general and eminently applicable to the text of Jeremiah in particular; like so much of the Hebrew Bible, the exceptional artistry of this prophetic book depends as much on what it ignores as what it includes. From a more philosophical or methodological perspective, what appeals to me about Auerbach's mimetic approach to literature is its fundamental *empiricism*. In a field like biblical studies, where durable empirical data of any kind are hard to come by, the concept of mimesis compels us to attend more closely to those data which are actually given by the page (or scroll, tablet, screen, etc.) in front of us, in order to determine how they produce the imagined events, characters, and worlds that are not so immediately given. To study mimesis, in other words, is to track the blurry and ever-shifting boundary between text and reader, where sensation stops and interpretation begins. At the same time, in adopting Auerbach's empirical mentality, I have tried to avoid his error of excessive generality through the selection of a more constrained corpus. At first, I focus solely on texts from the book of Jeremiah itself, and though the needs of my argument will eventually force me to expand the scope of my analysis, I look no further than the proximate prophetic literature of the ancient Near East.

---

[5] Auerbach, *Mimesis*, 11.

[6] Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, rev. ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 18.

If this study is deeply influenced by the work of Auerbach, it is more broadly and overtly shaped by the thought of Gilles Deleuze, especially his thinking about *structuralism*. Neither the general choice of Deleuze nor the specific focus on structuralism was arbitrary, by any means, but neither was fully autonomous, either. Since Deleuze's writings are so difficult to work with—in their analytical complexity, conceptual density, and occasional obscurity—I frequently had to ask myself the question that some of my readers may well be asking: *why Deleuze?* Indeed, those who already know something about Deleuze may be asking themselves a second question: *why structuralism?* To the first question, I offer my enduring conviction that Deleuze's work can resonate powerfully and productively with biblical scholarship as it currently exists. In a world of increasing plurality, diversity, and secularity, as well as increasingly reactionary backlash to those developments, Deleuze's philosophy of difference helps to show not only where the enterprise of biblical criticism may go from here, but also the dangers that it must avoid. While Deleuze is certainly not the only thinker who can help in these ways, nor even the only French one, biblical scholars have engaged with him noticeably less than they have with Derrida or Foucault or Spivak or Kristeva.[7] On the one hand, then, I see this project as a means of drawing attention to an underutilized theoretical and exegetical resource; on the other, I see it as an opportunity to model what the use of that resource might look like.

As for structuralism, I concede that it is a strange choice for a central theme. Structuralism was little more than a passing phase in Deleuze's long career: to the extent that he submits to such labels, Deleuze is more accurately called a "poststructuralist." Truthfully, though, *I* am not a structuralist. Rather, as I read and reread Jeremiah alongside Deleuze in the early stages of this project, Deleuze's conception of structure—particularly as laid out in the essay "How Do We Recognize Structuralism?"—emerged as the most accessible and actionable point of contact between these discouragingly disparate domains. The motivations and conclusions of my turn to (and, ultimately, away from) structuralism will become clearer as the study proceeds. At this point, it is more important to clarify what my employment of structuralism is *not*. It is not a "structuralist approach to the Hebrew Bible," of the kind that might headline an entry in a textbook on methods, because it is neither reusable nor reliable enough to work as a "method" in the usual sense of that word. Perhaps it is more aptly described as a "practice," which cannot be completely detached from the life and experiences of its practitioner. If I were to read a different book with Deleuze at a different time, or if another person were to have read the *same* book with him at the *same* time, the resulting reading of Deleuze would also differ, and a different concept would almost certainly occupy the privileged place accorded to “structure” in this reading. Maybe it would be “expression,” or “nomadic distribution,” or “the event,” or “minor language,” or “lines of flight,” or the “body without organs”—who knows? What I do know is this: though the structures that I devise here are not without explanatory and hermeneutical value, the contribution of this study does not consist in them alone. If I inspire even a few readers to think more creatively and inventively about their own work in biblical studies or in any other field, that would be enough for me to consider this project a success.

---

[7] There are some notable counterexamples, to be sure, such as the work of Brennan Breed on the Hebrew Bible (*Nomadic Text*) and that of Stephen Moore on the New Testament (*Gospel Jesuses and Other Nonhumans*; *The Bible after Deleuze*).

To that end, I would do well to prepare my readers for what awaits them in the subsequent chapters. Given that the focus of this study is the presentation of the prophet Jeremiah in the book of Jeremiah, I begin in Chapter 1 with close readings of a predictable corpus: the much-vaunted “confessions” of Jer 11-20, in which the prophetic “I” holds forth with staggering emotional and perceptual clarity. Yet, the conclusion to this analysis stems not so much from the confessions themselves as from their contexts. The fifth confession (Jer 20:7-18) falls immediately after a marked shift in the depiction of Jeremiah at 19:14-20:6, where the prophet is shown for the first time in contact with another named human character in a concretely defined narrative setting. To start making sense of this discovery, Chapter 2 offers an overview of Deleuze’s philosophy through the lens of structuralism. The significance of this philosophy is then clarified in Chapter 3, which synthesizes Deleuzian structuralism with current social-scientific research on prophecy in order to discern a properly differential structure of what I call “epistemic intermediation”: the passage of supernaturally revealed or technologically specialized knowledge *from* its original and ordinarily inaccessible source *to* its intended audience *through* a prophet, diviner, or other human intermediary. The structure of epistemic intermediation involves three roles (source, recipient, and object) differently arranged in two "series," a "revelation series" (or "*r*-series) and a "proclamation series" (or "*p*-series"). These series describe, respectively, the private movements of knowledge from a deity to an intermediary, and the public moments in which an intermediary dispenses such knowledge to an audience.

Chapter 3 concludes with a consideration of the relationship between divination and prophecy in terms of epistemic intermediation. More importantly, the discussion pivots from the structure's abstract series to the concrete textual products of prophecy that survive from the ancient Near East, especially those of the kingdom of Mari and the Neo-Assyrian Empire. As it turns out, these texts express the structure of intermediation in two divergent ways. The letters of Mari comprise "*p*-texts" that portray prophecy only from the standpoint of its interpersonal proclamation, whereas the oracles of Neo-Assyrian prophets are better understood as "*r*-texts," which emphasize the revealed content of a divine message while essentially ignoring the occasion or outcome of its delivery. Although Chapter 3 deals to no small extent with prophecy in ancient Israel and the prophetic books of the Hebrew Bible, the latter texts are more extensively examined in Chapter 4. Overall, the Latter Prophets are dominated by *r*-texts, but just under half of these books include *p*-texts as well: besides Jeremiah, they are found in Isaiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Jonah, Haggai, and Malachi. An analysis of these other books reveals that none integrates such a large proportion of so highly diverse *p*-texts as does the book of Jeremiah. In fact, the Jeremianic *r*-texts and *p*-texts are so closely interrelated, both among themselves and to one another, that they constitute, respectively, an "*r*-complex" and a "*p*-complex," each of which repeats elements of the corresponding series of epistemic intermediation in the scribal domain of a prophetic book. Together, these complexes give rise to a new and strictly literary structure, "Jer," that generates the character of "Jeremiah" as the textual(ized) image of a seemingly authentic intermediary from Israel's history.

And yet, the transition from the social structure of intermediation to the literary structure of Jer introduces all manner of differences into the latter, which militate against any simplistic alignment of the literary prophet with a definite "historical" model. As easy as it is to convince ourselves otherwise, the mechanisms of mimesis fundamentally alter the nature of the prophetic being that the book of Jeremiah produces, leading the structural analysis of the prophet Jeremiah to culminate in a dead end. While such an approach allows us to see how the literary prophet is different from historical persons, it tells us very little about what we can or should make of the prophet in light of these differences. Accordingly, the beginning of Chapter 5 summons the ghost of Ludwig Wittgenstein to push the project in another direction, toward new regions of Deleuze's thought: namely, the concept of the "rhizome" or "assemblage" that grew out of his collaboration with Félix Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*.[8] A "rhizomatic" reading of Jeremiah and the broader (Hebrew) Bible, as opposed to the "arborescent" approaches so often favored by confessional or historical-critical interpretation, allows readers to forgo many of the frustrations (over contradiction, authorship, etc.) that have traditionally dogged biblical scholarship. The rhizome encourages us instead to consider the pragmatic payout of our academic theories: what are we actually trying to *do* when we dissect a biblical book into a dozen editorial layers, or assign an anonymous ancient text to the inspired genius of an individually identifiable author? In short, we do both more and less than we might think. Perhaps the same is true of what I have done here.

---

[8] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

# 1. CHARACTERIZATION IN THE CONFESSIONS AND THEIR CONTEXTS: TOWARD A “MIMETIC WATERSHED” BETWEEN THE “CHANNELS OF PROPHECY”

> I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.
> -Acts 9:16

## 1.1. Introduction

Few texts in the book of Jeremiah are as obviously involved in the portrayal of its titular character as the so-called “confessions.” In rare and riveting first-person speech, Jeremiah struggles under the burden of his calling, rebuking enemies both human and divine for the perilous position in which his God-given task has placed him. Whether these are authentic autobiographical outpourings or imaginative explorations of the prophetic consciousness, they are utterly unlike anything else in the literature ascribed to Israel’s prophets.[1] As a result, the confessions have long stood near the center of Jeremiah scholarship, with a number of book-length studies devoted largely or entirely to these texts.[2] Whether they incline more toward literary or historical interests, studies of the confessions tend to treat these texts comprehensively: they give more or less equal exegetical attention to each pericope, and draw broad conclusions about the confessions as a whole only after each one has been thoroughly examined under the meticulous, microscopic lens of close reading. For each new investigation, the focus may require slight readjustments, so as to bring various contextual features into or out of frame, but the exegetical microscope itself remains essentially the same.

---

[1] The nearest parallels in prophetic corpus are the “servant songs” of Second Isaiah, but whereas the identity of the Isaianic servant is notoriously murky, the confessions of Jeremiah are more firmly anchored in the construction of his character. On the nature and identity of Isaiah’s servant, see Herbert Gordon May, “The Righteous Servant in Second Isaiah’s Songs,” *ZAW* 66 (1954): 236-244; more recently, Mark Gignilliat, “Who Is Isaiah’s Servant? Narrative Identity and Theological Potentiality,” *SJT* 61 (2008): 125-136. On similarities between the servant songs and Jeremiah’s confessions, see Georg Fischer, “Riddles of Reference: ‘I’ and ‘We’ in the Books of Isaiah and Jeremiah: The Relation of the Suffering Characters in the Books of Isaiah and Jeremiah,” *OTE* 25/2 (2012): 277-291.

[2] See, *inter alia*, Walter Baumgartner, *Jeremiah’s Poems of Lament*, trans. David E. Orton (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1988), trans. of *Die Klagegedichte des Jeremia*, BZAW 32 (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1917); A. R. Diamond, *The Confessions of Jeremiah in Context: Scenes of Prophetic Drama*, JSOTSup 45 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987); Kathleen M. O’Connor, *The Confessions of Jeremiah: Their Interpretation and Role in Chapters 1-25*, SBLDS 94 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988); Mark S. Smith, *The Laments of Jeremiah and Their Contexts: A Literary and Redactional Study of Jeremiah 11-20*, SBLMS 42 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990).

In a study such as this—which examines not only the characterization of the prophet Jeremiah throughout the book of Jeremiah, but also the underlying structure of that book and of prophecy more generally—the microscopic methodology of conventional literary criticism, for all its strengths, is simply unsustainable. An exhaustive study of the confessions, even one specifically focused on characterization, would exhaust my opportunities for addressing the construction of Jeremiah as a character in the rest of the book, much less the basis for that construction in a structure of prophecy that lies behind and beyond it. Accordingly, after a preparatory pass through the Deuteronomistic "sermon" that stands at the head of the series of confessions (11:1-14), my close readings in this chapter target just two texts: the first (part of the first) confession (11:18-23), and the narrative preface to the last (20:1-6). Far from atomistic exercises in exegesis, these readings provide vantage points from which to assess Jeremiah's characterization, in context, across *all* the confessions. In fact, through this combination of microscopic and macroscopic approaches, the confessions reveal more than just their own contributions to the portrayal of the prophet who speaks them. By contrasting the contexts of the first and last confessions, I identify a broader and more significant divergence in the book's total literary presentation—in a word, *mimesis*—of Jeremiah as a prophetic figure.[3] This "mimetic watershed" lays the groundwork for the discovery, later in this study, of a structure of prophecy that accounts for the incomparable complexity of the character of Jeremiah.

---

[3] Although it will be problematized later (see 4.4 and Chapter 5), the "mimesis" invoked throughout this chapter stays close to the titular concept of Erich Auerbach's classic treatise, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).

## 1.2. Prelude: Jeremiah as Tragic Hero (11:1-14)

At the foothills of Sinai and again on the plains of Moab, Moses brokered a covenant between YHWH and the people of Israel. As a Moses redivivus on the model of Deut 18, Jeremiah likewise reaffirms, on multiple occasions, the covenant that links the people and their deity.[4] In the book of Jeremiah, these reaffirmations take the form of "covenant sermons" (or "speeches") redolent of Deuteronomistic rhetoric and ideology.[5] Jeremiah 11:1-14 contains the second of these sermons—the first is the so-called "temple sermon" in 7:1-14—but the first to invoke the concept of "covenant" (ברית) as such, which it mentions not only explicitly but repeatedly (11:2, 3, 6, 8, 10).[6] Unlike its Pentateuchal counterparts, the covenant in question here is not realized in a concrete event, such as a theophany at Sinai or a valediction in Moab, but envisioned as a continuous relationship between the people and YHWH; the specific temporal reference to "the day [YHWH] led them out from the land of Egypt" (11:4) furnishes the historical foundation for an otherwise "ahistorical" discussion that "weaves together separate covenant events into a unified covenant history."[7] This synoptic view of the covenant relationship simultaneously looks back to Israel's distant past, in referring to the exodus from Egypt, and ahead to its far future, anticipating the "new covenant" of Jer 31:31.[8]

---

[4] For different (respectively, biographical and redactional) explanations of the parallels between Jeremiah and Moses, see William L. Holladay, "The Background of Jeremiah's Self-Understanding: Moses, Samuel, and Psalm 22," *JBL* 83 (1964): 153-164 and Christopher R. Seitz, "The Prophet Moses and the Canonical Shape of Jeremiah," *ZAW* 101 (1989): 3-27. But there are other ways to understand these parallels, as in Luis Alonso Schökel, "Jeremiah as an Anti-Moses," in idem, *The Literary Language of the Bible: The Collected Essays of Luis Alonso Schökel*, ed. Tawny Holm, trans. Harry Spencer (North Richland Hills, TX: BIBAL Press, 2000), 27-38. On the whole, the relationship between Jeremiah and Moses is perhaps best described as "ambivalent": see Georg Fischer, "Jeremiah – 'The Prophet like Moses?'," in *The Book of Jeremiah: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation*, ed. Jack R. Lundbom, Craig A. Evans, and Bradford A. Anderson, VTSup 178 (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 45-66, here 61.

[5] See Dalit Rom-Shiloni, "'On the Day I Took Them out of the Land of Egypt': A Non-Deuteronomic Phrase within Jeremiah's Conception of Covenant," *VT* 65 (2015): 621-647, esp. 624 on the "covenant speeches [as] a special generic group within the prose sermons."

[6] See Thomas C. Römer, "Les 'anciens' pères (Jér 11,10) et la 'nouvelle' alliance (Jér 31,31)," *BN* 59 (1991): 23-27, here 23, who identifies "covenant" as one of three "keywords" in 11:1-14, along with "hear" or "obey" (שמע) and "forefathers" or "ancestors" (אבות). Before 11:3, the only occurrence of the word ברית in Jeremiah is found in 3:16, where it refers to the "ark of the covenant of YHWH" (ארון ברית יהוה) rather than to the covenant itself.

[7] Rom-Shiloni, "Non-Deuteronomic Phrase," 641.

For the most part, Jeremiah's role in this relationship conforms to the Deuteronomistic view of the prophet as a mediating figure, who "is to represent urgently to the people the demands which are laid on them in virtue of the Mosaic covenant: the blessing which flows from obedience and the curse which flows from disobedience."[9] The primary command given to Jeremiah in this capacity is simply to "call out these words in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying, 'Hear the words of this covenant, and do them!'" (11:6). Like Moses on the plains of Moab, Jeremiah is to confront the people with the inexorable, existential choice between "life and success (הטוב) [or] death and disaster (הרע)" (Deut 30:15; cf. Jer 21:8). Here, however, the hope for adherence to the covenant seems hopelessly slim. YHWH speaks of the people's apostasy in the past tense (11:10), as a deed already done, and the resulting verdict (11:11-13) betrays no trace of remorse or forbearance. As if these decisive declarations were not enough, the certainty of the coming calamity is confirmed beyond all doubt in the concluding injunction that prohibits Jeremiah from praying or interceding on the people's behalf (11:14). Though intercession was once one of Moses's foremost functions (cf. Exod 32:7-14; Num 14:13-19), it is expressly forbidden for Jeremiah as Moses's successor, not once but twice in the first ten chapters of the book.[10] From a purely theological standpoint, the injunction against intercession can be understood as an exculpatory attempt to explain Jeremiah's apparent failure to secure divine mercy for Israel in the same way that Moses and his other prophetic precursors had done. By portraying Jeremiah as prohibited from interceding in the first place, this aspect of the tradition implies that the prophet deserves no criticism for his inability to avert the disaster of the exile: "even Moses and Samuel" would have reached the same regrettable result (cf. 15:1).[11] Interpreted thus, the injunction constitutes a kind of corollary to the broader *theodicy* that plays out across the book of Jeremiah, absolving the prophet himself no less than the deity who sent him for the fall of Judah and Jerusalem to Babylon.[12]

---

[8] On the correspondences between this passage and the Jeremianic "new covenant," see Römer, "Les 'anciens' pères," 25-27.

[9] William McKane, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah, Volume I: Introduction and Commentary on Jeremiah I-XXV*, ICC (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 245.

[10] The injunction is first issued in the "temple sermon" of Jer 7 (see 7:16). Beyond the first ten chapters, the same prohibition occurs again in 14:11; in total, it recurs not twice but thrice, all within the first third of the book. On this difference between Jeremiah and Moses, see Schökel, "Anti-Moses," 34-35.

If one approaches this text with a more aesthetic or even theatrical eye, however, it becomes clear that the injunction saves Jeremiah's reputation only at considerable cost to his characterization. Compositional complexities aside,[13] the canonical shape of the passage casts Jeremiah as a properly *tragic* hero in a three-part drama that is as bitter as it is brief.[14] In the opening scene (11:1-5), Jeremiah and YHWH play roles drawn from the "covenant validation ceremony" of Deut 27:11-26, with the deity acting as the Levitical priest who recites the covenant's curses (11:3b; cf. Deut 27:26a) and the prophet acting as the people who accede to them with shouts of "Amen!" (11:5b; cf. Deut 27:26b).[15] Having thus spoken judgment upon the people by accepting the curse on their behalf, Jeremiah is dispatched in the next scene (11:6-8) to deliver a message that seems capable of keeping the curse at bay. Implicit in the general call to "hear the words of this covenant and do them" (11:6) is a more focused and urgent appeal—"Change your ways (cf. 7:3)! Repent! Repent!" As soon as the prophet's orders are given, however, the last scene (11:9-14) reveals all to be for naught. The "conspiracy" (קשר) has been discovered (11:9), and the people have already sealed their fate (11:10). Jeremiah's message is doomed to fail in the face of the people's obstinance, just as the people's inevitable cries of distress will fall fruitlessly on the deaf ears of their spurned deity (11:11-12).

---

[11] McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 171-172; cf. 245.

[12] On the theme of theodicy in Jeremiah, see Robert P. Carroll, *From Chaos to Covenant: Prophecy in the Book of Jeremiah* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 66-73.

[13] On the various compositional cruxes in this passage, see McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 236-246.

[14] On the tripartite division of 11:1-14 outlined here, cf. Mark Biddle, *Polyphony and Symphony in Prophetic Literature: Rereading Jeremiah 7-20*, SOTI 2 (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1996), 74, who likewise delineates distinct units in 11:1-5, 11:6-8 and 11:9ff; however, Biddle deviates from my reading in positing another division between 11:9-13 and 11:14.

[15] Rom-Shiloni, "Non-Deuteronomic Phrase," 627; cf. Winfried Thiel, *Die deuteronomistische Redaktion von Jeremia 1-25*, WMANT 41 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1973), 142-143.

Through this drama, Jeremiah follows, in miniature, the characteristic "inverted U"–shaped arc of the heroes of classical tragedy, climbing to the precipice of victory only to come crashing down in ultimately insurmountable defeat.[16] From such great depths, what is there to do but lament?[17]

---

[16] For applying the concepts of "tragedy" and "comedy" to the biblical prophets, see Paul R. House, *The Unity of the Twelve*, JSOTSup 97 (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1990), 111-115. Cf. Norman K. Gottwald, "Tragedy and Comedy in the Latter Prophets," *Semeia* 32 (1984): 83-96; although Gottwald argues that "the Latter Prophets are structured as comedy rather than tragedy, since salvation has the last word over judgment" (83), he allows that some sections of these books "show short-term inverted U-shaped tragic plots that resist but nevertheless inadvertently serve and reinforce the longer-range U-shaped comic plot that envelops tragedy" (91). Both House and Gottwald adopt the notion of the tragic plot as an "inverted U" from Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 206-223.

[17] On the connection between the prohibition of intercession and Jeremiah's laments, see Seitz, "Canonical Shape," 10.

## 1.3. Jeremiah's "Confession(s)" in 11:18-12:6

### *1.3.1. Prolegomena on Terminology and Textual Units*

Before I examine the texts that have come to be known as the "confessions" of Jeremiah, a set generally understood to comprise 11:18-12:6, 15:10-21, 17:14-18, 18:18-23, and 20:7-18, I should offer a word of terminological clarification about my handling of this material.[18] In fact, it is not so much a clarification as a confession, perhaps even a "meta-confession"—that is, a confession of my ambivalence toward the conventional designation of these five texts as "confessions." To its credit, the term, which was introduced more than a century ago in Duhm's influential commentary, has more to commend it than mere intellectual inertia.[19] It also finds support of a more substantive nature in the contents of these texts, which "*confess faith* in the midst of fear, anger, and doubt."[20] At the same time, I am not alone in doubting the appropriateness and accuracy of this term, which recalls the autobiographical outpourings of Christian figures like St. Augustine more so than any texts or traditions of the Hebrew Bible.[21] The use of "confession" in studies of Jeremiah stands open to much the same charge that Frank Moore Cross once brought against the use of "kerygma" in studies of the historical books: its

---

[18] On the broad consensus surrounding the identity and extent of these five passages as a form-critically distinct set of "confessions," see Catherine Sze Wing So, "Structure in the Confessions of Jeremiah," in Lundbom et al., *Book of Jeremiah*, 126-148, here 126. Of course, as with most attempts to demarcate textual units in Jeremiah, disagreements persist over the precise boundaries of many of these texts; see below for more specific discussion of some of these issues.

[19] On the origins of the term "confessions" in early critical scholarship on Jeremiah, see Mary Chilton Callaway, "Seduced by Method: History and Jeremiah 20," in *Jeremiah Invented: Constructions and Deconstructions of Jeremiah*, ed. Else K. Holt and Carolyn J. Sharp, LHBOTS 595 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 16-33, here 18-22.

[20] Kathleen M. O'Connor, *Jeremiah: Pain and Promise* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), 81-82, emphasis original; cf. idem, *Confessions*, 158, for a different but no less theological justification for retaining the term: "the poems…confess Yahweh's power over the wicked and the unjust."

[21] On the relevance of Augustine's *Confessions* to the naming of Jeremiah's poems, see Jack R. Lundbom, *Theology in Language, Rhetoric, and Beyond: Essays in Old and New Testament* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 2015), 99.

"importation…into the form criticism of the Hebrew Bible is to be deplored as an inelegant and presumptuous anachronism."[22]

For a time, anxiety over the distorting effects of such anachronism drove me to favor instead the term "laments" to describe these passages. For one, at the level of convention, "lament" is at least as well-established as "confession" in the scholarly discussion.[23] Beyond that, at the level of content, the concept of "lament" struck me as a strictly more accurate and "objective" category for these texts. "Lament" refers equally well to Jeremiah's complaints and to the host of similar compositions found not just in the Hebrew Bible but throughout the ancient Near East; in contrast, the label "confessions" obscures these plentiful parallels so as to force the Jeremianic texts into a genre whose Augustinian exemplar postdates them by many centuries. The term "lament," it seemed, could carve these passages at their generic joints, following the contours of the text itself rather than the lines of some Procrustean pattern "deplorably imported," in Cross's terms, by later readers.

I now see that the ostensibly objective label of "lament" suffers from its own, no less lamentable issues. In foregrounding the similarities between Jeremiah's complaints *qua* laments and the many other biblical and ancient Near Eastern examples of that genre, the concept of "lament" fails to account for the distinctive features of these texts that have brought them together over the course of the book's long history of composition and reception. More pointedly, to call these texts "laments" suppresses the distinctive features that distinguish them from other superficially similar laments, especially those found in the book of Jeremiah itself.

---

[22] Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 277, n. 14. The immediate target of Cross's critique is H. W. Wolff, "Das Kerygma des deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerkes," *ZAW* 73 (1961): 171-186.

[23] For example, Baumgartner's early study of *Jeremiah's Poems of Lament* (1917; see n. 2 above) consistently refers to its target texts as "poems of lament" (*Klagegedichte*), among other analogous designations, rather than "confessions" (*Konfessionen*).

Although, on formal and stylistic grounds, there is little to differentiate the five "confessions" of Jeremiah from the dozen-or-so other laments in the book, the former texts are nonetheless set apart by the simple fact that they alone came to be directly associated with the character of Jeremiah as his "confessions."[24] To call them "laments" obfuscates their literary significance no less than calling them "confessions" does their generic precedents.

Nor can the issues be resolved by coining some clunky combination of these terms, such as "confessional laments." If we take "confessions" to be a subset of "laments" and oppose Jeremiah's "confessional laments" (i.e., the five texts that are widely regarded as his "confessions") to the book's "non-confessional laments" (i.e., the dozen-ish others that are not), then we find ourselves confronted with a simplistic binary opposition—a prime target of critique for the philosopher Gilles Deleuze, to whom I turn in the next chapter—that, by its very nature, presupposes "a swarm of differences, a pluralism of free, wild, or untamed differences…which persist alongside the simplifications of limitation and opposition."[25] In the end, that is, the decisive question regarding these texts is not so much "Which one, laments *or* confessions?" but "Why both, laments *and* confessions?" What is it about the "confessions" that compels us to ask anatomical and taxonomic (in a word, form-critical) questions about their collective association and distinction from the "laments"? Why have some of the book's many laments gravitated toward the character of Jeremiah as "confessions," while others remain far from him?

To answer such questions requires more than a narrow fixation on "the text itself." After all, terms and texts themselves mean—or better yet, *do*—nothing except in relation to their writer(s) and reader(s), just as language itself (e.g., *langue* as systematized in Saussurean linguistics) does nothing apart from its manifestation in concrete utterances (*paroles*) among addressers and addressees in a given social milieu.[26] Nor does the relation between texts and writers or readers move in only one direction. All texts, but especially those that are historically distant, culturally different, and compositionally anonymous, tend to do unto their readers as their readers do unto them. In Jeremiah studies generally, and work on the "confessions" specifically, the dynamics of this dialectic are well expressed in the reception-historical work of Mary Callaway.[27] Drawing on theoretical resources from Hans-Georg Gadamer and empirical evidence of shifts in readers' understanding of the "confessions" over time, Callaway reminds us that "we bring to historical study a consciousness already formed by the past that we study. We can only read the past subjectively, because we are part of the very object that we study."[28] Of course, this is equally true of the ancient scribes and other tradents who spoke and wrote about Jeremiah as part of *their* history. The texts about Jeremiah found in the book that bears his name are thus "doubly constructed, first by ancient redactors, and later by scholars."[29] To make sense of these texts, we must be ever mindful not only of our own presuppositions and predispositions in approaching them, but of the diverse contexts and purposes in and for which their ancient tradents crafted them. In the end, for all these reasons and more, I have decided to retain the traditional designation of "confessions"—not least "because it's nice to talk like everybody else, to say the sun rises, when everybody knows it's only a manner of speaking."[30] In the rest of this chapter, for the sake of clarity and elegance, I omit the scare quotes, but the reader would do well to act as if they were there.[31]

---

[24] Lundbom asserts that "the confessions are mostly laments" (*Theology*, 99) and emphasizes their continuity with the "seventeen—perhaps nineteen—laments" found throughout the book of Jeremiah (107).

[25] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 50.

---

[26] See V. N. Vološinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, trans. Ladislav Matejka and I. R. Titunik (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973).

[27] On the role of readers in the confessions, see Callaway, "Seduced by Method," esp. 29-32; on Jeremiah more generally, see idem, *Jeremiah through the Centuries* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2020). Although the theoretical framework is different, much the same stance toward the biblical text is advocated by Brennan W. Breed, *Nomadic Text: A Theory of Biblical Reception History*, ISBL (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2014). Breed writes: "The problematic text [i.e., the text conceived in Deleuzian terms as a "problematic field"] calls for a limitless series of potential solutions, and since *the problematic text changes over time, and the contexts in which it is read also change over time,* there is no telos for this process…. In different contexts, the text is capable of manifesting different sorts of capabilities" (126, emphasis mine). On Breed's application of Deleuze to the biblical text, see also 5.5.

[28] Callaway, "Seduced by Method," 31.

[29] Callaway, "Seduced by Method," 32.

Having thus dispensed with the quotes around "confession(s)," I should speak briefly to the parenthetical "s" within them. In this case, the rationale for my terminological bet-hedging is not semantic or philosophical but simply organizational. Although I approach the confessions in this section primarily through a close reading of the "first" confession in 11:18-23, there is considerable disagreement in the scholarly literature as to whether this text and the one that follows it (12:1-6) should be treated as two distinct confessions or read together as a single unit.[32] As befits the infamously intractable text of Jeremiah, the search for signs of unity or disunity in this section of the book has yielded a dizzying, almost fractal-like array of chiasms and other structural elements that are said to be operative at different levels of the text.[33] Much the same dissensions surround the other confessions, and especially the fifth and final one in 20:7-18—or are there two, in 20:7-13 and 20:14-18?[34] For a close reading of any part of the confession(s), this oversaturation of organizational schemata offers quite the embarrassment of riches: so many divergent paths have been traced through this passage, and others, that none can be followed fully without unduly foreclosing the rest.

---

[30] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 3.

[31] The same cannot be said for the authors that I quote; I have retained their chosen terminology without emendation.

[32] Of the three most recent studies on the confessions, O'Connor (*Confessions*, 15) regards 11:18-12:6 as "a literary unity, if not an original one," whereas both Diamond (*Confessions*, 21-35) and Smith (*Laments*, 1) treat 11:18-23 and 12:1-6 as distinct pericopes. Notably, Baumgartner breaks up 11:18-12:6 along much the same lines, but his study's comparative and form-critical orientation toward the laments of the Psalter leads him to discuss 12:1-6 separately, in an appendix on "poems related to the songs of laments," because it "do[es] not conform so exactly [as 11:18-26] to the songs of lament style" (*Poems*, 63).

[33] For instance, Diamond (*Confessions*, 25, 43) points to chiastic repetitions of verbal roots in 11:18-20, 11:21-23, and 12:1-6 as evidence that each of these sections constitutes an originally distinct unit of the text, while O'Connor (*Confessions*, 17) uses a broader chiasm in 11:18-12:6 to argue that 12:1-6 is *not* entirely distinct but contains part of an original poetic unit that comprised 11:18-20; 12:1-3. At yet another level of the text, Smith (*Laments*, 49) posits that the entirety of Jer 11-12 is organized around an even broader chiasm in which 11:18-23 and 12:1-6, as two distinct laments each accompanied by a divine response, occupy the emphatic central position.

Fortunately, questions of organization and division in the confessions are less pressing than the crowded and chaotic state of the scholarly debate would suggest. Within this debate, for example, a tenuous consensus about the composition of the confession(s) in 11:18-12:6 furnishes a suitable baseline for exegetical work on this text and others like it. The consensus holds, in short, that 11:18-12:6 is a composite text, a purely redactional unity, which incorporates a diverse and fundamentally disunified set of compositionally distinct texts within it. Whether this unity-in-disunity is attributed to a complex process of *Fortschreibung* or to a more straightforward act of redactional juxtaposition, it straddles both sides of the organizational dilemma ("One confession or two?") in such a way as to defuse that problem and redirect our exegetical efforts elsewhere.[35] On such a view, multiple and even mutually exclusive patterns are to be expected, distributed across the text along dimensions both synchronic (i.e., the multiple voices that are interpolated and interwoven in its literary landscape) and diachronic (i.e., the multiple parts and layers that are implicated in its compositional history).[36]

---

[34] Cf. n. 53 below.

[35] The compositional history of 11:18-12:6 is far from simple. Hannes Bezzel ("Das Grünen der Frevler – ein Grund zur Klage: Die Baummetapher im Rahmen der 'Konfessionen Jeremias' – Weisheit im prophetischen Mantel?," *WO* 38 [2008]: 7-21) regards the relationship of 11:18-23 and 12:1-6 as a "Fortschreibungszusammenhang" (13), with the latter as an earlier text that was redacted to provide "eine Art Reprise von 11:18-23" (14). Along similar lines, McKane (*Jeremiah 1-25,* 253-255) argues that 12:1-5 (a poetic unit) influenced the development of 11:18-23*, within which 11:18-19* constitutes an original Jeremianic kernel. Yet another account of the redactional development of this passage is provided by O'Connor, *Confessions*, 15-23, which brackets both 11:21-23 and 12:4-6 as secondary additions.

Accordingly, it is no longer productive to ask whether we are dealing with one confession or two. In some sense and to some extent, both alternatives are correct. Beneath the question "how many" lies a series of subtler "hows": How does the whole confession function in its composite, canonical form? How do its constituent parts function therein? How might the whole and its parts have functioned at different points in the total process of their composition and reception? How did the text(s) come to be as we find them today? And, most salient for this study, how do they contribute to the characterization of the prophet who speaks them?

### *1.3.2. Jeremiah's Complaint (11:18-20)*

> And YHWH of Hosts, the one who planted you, has spoken evil against you, because of the evil of the house of Israel and the house of Judah which they did to themselves, to provoke me by sacrificing to Baal.
>
> And YHWH made it known to me, and I knew; at that time, you showed me their deeds. And I, like a pet lamb, was brought in for butchering, and I did not know that they had plotted plots against me: "Let us destroy the tree in its prime! Let us cut it off from the land of the living, that its name may no longer be remembered!" But YHWH of Hosts is a righteous judge, a tester of the heart and the mind. Let me see your vengeance on them, for to you have I committed my case! (Jer 11:17-20)

To better elucidate the rhetorical logic of the first confession, I have included in the above translation a verse that lies incontrovertibly beyond the formal boundaries of that text, namely 11:17. This verse is best understood as a "redactional seam" designed to join the obscure and, in its extant form, textually corrupt poetry of 11:15-16 with the confession in 11:18ff.[37] Especially in past generations of scholarship, the transition from a general theological declaration about YHWH's relationship to Israel and Judah in 11:17 to a far more personal affirmation of YHWH's revelation to Jeremiah in 11:18 was generally viewed as unconscionably abrupt, such that the confession just "comes out of the blue" without "adequate preparation"; the usual response of scholars in those days was to cut up the text and rearrange it in order to eliminate its alleged logical lacunae.[38] More recent studies have been less willing to engage in such surgical interventions and, concomitantly, more charitable in assessing the connections that link the parts of the confession to one another and to their surrounding context. These connections include, among other things, *Stichwörter* such as the verb נטע ("to plant") in 11:17 (cf. 12:2) and the associated arboreal imagery in 11:15-16 (cf. 12:2, 4).[39]

---

[36] On the interplay of synchronic and diachronic dimensions of prophetic literature, see Biddle, *Polyphony*, 5-8.

As part of this heightened consciousness of connectivity, recent readers have also perceived a greater degree of literary cohesion in the transition from 11:17 to 11:18. The sense of abruptness, so unsettling to scholars of the past, has given way to a more nuanced appreciation of drama and mystery.[40] Kathleen O'Connor, for instance, has argued that the "enigmatic" opening line in 11:18 is no *non sequitur* but rather a proleptic device that "leads the reader into the poetry

---

[37] On this function of 11:17, see O'Connor, *Confessions*, 105. On the many problems in the Masoretic version of 11:15-16, see McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 247-253; as for the Septuagint, McKane (247) notes that similar problems appear to have been present in the *Vorlage* of the most literal Greek translations (i.e., Aquila and Symmachus).

[38] For a brief summary of these approaches, from which the quotes here are drawn, see McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 253-254; cf. O'Connor, *Confessions*, 12-15.

[39] See Smith, *Laments*, 45-48; cf. O'Connor, *Confessions*, 106. Bezzel ("Grünen," 14-15) uses such lexical and thematic connections to argue that all of Jer 11:18-23 is a later insertion in this context.

[40] An interesting midpoint in the shifting of scholarly opinion on this matter is found in Holladay, *Jeremiah 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, Chapters 1-25*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1986), 365: while Holladay appears at first to appreciate the literary dynamics of the first confession when he observes that it "seems to begin *in media res*," he immediately belies that assessment by attributing this feature to the alleged "incoherence" of 11:18-20.

[of the confession] by alluding to events which are revealed later and only partially."[41] Yet, as much as this reading clarifies the transition between 11:17 and the confession's opening line in 11:18, some amount of puzzlement persists regarding the latter verse itself. The third-person statement about YHWH in 11:18a ("YHWH made it known to me, and I knew") deviates distinctly from the second-person petitions that traditionally introduce the psalms of individual lament, long recognized as the confessions' closet parallels within the biblical corpus.[42] Although the Greek edition of Jeremiah stays closer to the psalmic paradigm by attesting an imperative (γνώρισόν μοι) in place of the perfect favored by the Masoretic edition—both readings cohere equally well with הודיעני in the consonantal text—this alternative only punts the problem to 11:18b, which recounts a past action by YHWH (marked as such by the particle אז) in either case.[43] From a form-critical standpoint, perhaps the most compelling solution has been offered by A. R. Pete Diamond, who understands 11:18-20 as a "borderline case" that combines generic elements from the psalms of individual lament with others drawn from the psalms of thanksgiving, such as the introductory affirmation of God's past deeds (cf., e.g., Psalm 120:1).[44]

In turning so quickly to the Psalter for insight, however, commentators have tended to overlook a more proximate analogue to 11:18a within Jeremiah: the opening line of the first confession is substantially similar to that which begins the final confession in 20:7a.[45] The parallelism is most apparent in Hebrew:

---

[41] O'Connor, *Confessions*, 19. Cf. Diamond (*Confessions*, 26), who recognizes the "suspense created by the abrupt oblique reference [to Jeremiah's enemies] in vv. 18-20," which is then "resolved in vv. 21-23 by their identification as the men of Anathoth."

[42] Diamond, *Confessions*, 23; cf. Baumgartner, *Poems*, 43.

[43] Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 365; cf. McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 256. Although LXX appears to resolve the issue in 11:18b along the same lines as 11:18a (namely, by reading an imperative in place of MT's perfect), McKane (ibid.) judges that "this should be regarded as an adjustment to deal with the roughness of MT rather than as an indication of a different Hebrew text available to the Greek translator."

[44] Diamond, *Confessions*, 23-24; Diamond ascribes this view to Henning Graf Reventlow, *Liturgie und Prophetisches Ich* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1963), 253-54. On the relationship between the first confession and the Psalms, see also Bernard Gosse, "Le prophète Jérémie en Jer 11,18-12,6 dans le cadre du livre de Jérémie et en rapport avec le Psautier," *ZAW* 118 (2006): 549-557.

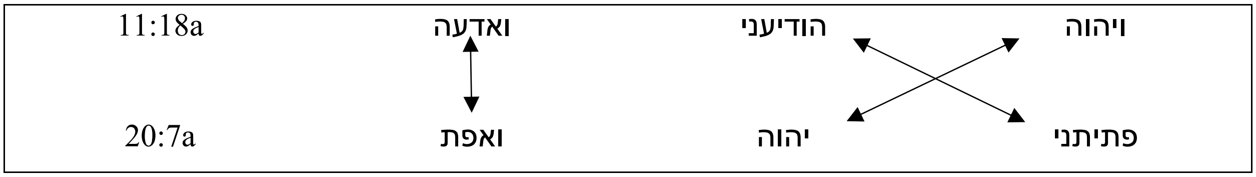


**Figure 1.1. Initial Parallelism in the First and Last Confessions**

Although these verses differ both morphologically, in the inflection of their first verb (which is third-person in 11:18a but second-person in 20:7a), and syntactically, in the position of the tetragrammaton (which is fronted as well as prefixed with a conjunctive *waw* in 11:18a), such discrepancies hardly detract from the overall effect of their otherwise striking similarities. In both verses, YHWH's past performance of an action causes a corresponding change in the condition of the prophet, a causal relationship that is "dramatize[d]" by the double usage of the verb.[46] Notably, the forms of the specific verbs in these verses (ידע in the *hiphil* for 11:18a, פתה in the *piel* for 20:7a) render them more phonetically alike than their aforementioned grammatical differences may suggest: *hôdîʿánî* and *pittîtánî* are both four-syllable words with penultimate stress and, after the first syllable, identical vowel patterns.

On its own, this point of contact between the first and last confessions may seem to be more a matter of chance coincidence than genuine dependence. Yet the relationship between the two texts is significantly strengthened by another, even closer connection: 11:20 corresponds almost verbatim to 20:12, and exactly so in the case of 11:20b and 20:12b. Despite some minor differences, the statement in both verses is thoroughly poetic and parallelistic, comprising two balanced bicola in each case. Comparing each verse to its context suggests that such a line is more likely to be original in 20:12, where it forms part of a longer poetic passage, than in 11:20, where it is surrounded by prosaic material in 11:18-19, 21-23.[47] Still more light is shed on the matter when one considers that the repeated-root formula attested in 11:18a and 20:7a is part of an overarching "stylistic pattern of repeated words" in the latter lament, whereas it stands out in the former as an isolated expression.[48] Taken together, these considerations point toward the preliminary conclusion that at least part of the first confession, namely 11:18-20, is somehow dependent on the last confession in 20:7ff.

---

[45] The exceptions to this tendency only prove it as a rule. For instance, Smith (*Laments*, 24) acknowledges the similarity between 11:18 and 20:7, but quickly moves on from this observation without considering its exegetical implications. Holladay (*Jeremiah 1*, 552) spends more time in considering the implications of this similarity, but in accordance with his high view of the historical Jeremiah, he gives it a primarily biographical and theological interpretation in terms of the prophet's personal understanding of his relationship with YHWH.

[46] Smith, *Laments*, 4 (on 11:18a) and 24 (on 20:7a).

Although this rough indication of dependence may not clarify much about the composition of the confessions, it suggests a certain artistic intentionality behind the verbal and conceptual shift from an act of *knowledge* in 11:18a to one of *seduction* in 20:7a. Its textual issues notwithstanding, 11:18 unmistakably describes an act of revelation from the deity to a human being—the *sine qua non* of prophetic activity.[49] Indeed, following the reading of the Masoretic text (where the initial verb is vocalized as a perfect), the statement in 11:18a is essentially a more overtly epistemological reformulation of the *Wortereignisformel* ("The word of YHWH came to [the prophet], saying…") used to introduce divine messages throughout the biblical prophetic literature, and especially in the book of Jeremiah.[50] Exactly the opposite is true of 20:7a. Apart from the wayward Jonah, complaints about a prophet's own mission are not a common feature of the prophetic books, and for such a complaint to be couched in ostensibly sexual terms is altogether unparalleled.[51]

---

[47] McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 254.

[48] O'Connor (*Confessions*, 67-68) points to repetitions of the following roots as further instances of the motif: דבר in 20:8-9, נגד in 20:10, and ראה in 20:12; notably, this last repetition is not present in the parallel line from 11:20, since בחן appears instead of ראה in 11:20a.

[49] For the textual issues in this verse, which chiefly concern whether the first verb should be read as a perfect or an imperative, see n. 43 above. On the constitutive importance of revelation for prophecy, see 3.3.1; cf. Baumgartner, *Poems*, 43: "[H]owever it came about, the secret, heavenly communication betrays the prophet; for he alone stands on such an intimate footing and is accustomed to receiving all kinds of secret and confidential communications."

The shift from a protective act of revelation to an oppressive act of violation or deception signifies a more profound change in the relationship between YHWH and Jeremiah across the first and last confessions. In the first, or at least in its opening lines, the prophet and the deity are fundamentally aligned in their joint opposition to Jeremiah's human enemies.[52] Their alliance becomes particularly apparent in 11:19, where Jeremiah recounts his past ignorance as a "pet lamb brought in for butchering," who "did not know that [his enemies] had plotted plots against" him; the verse strongly implies that these plots would have succeeded if they had not been thwarted by divine revelation, as described in 11:18. From the very start of the final confession, however, the alliance between deity and prophet appears fractured, almost to the point of failure. While Jeremiah does eventually assert his trust in YHWH's presence and deliverance (20:12-13), his frustrated accusations in the preceding verses portray the deity not as a boon but a burden, whose words afflict him with "reproach and derision all day long" (20:8). The finality of Jeremiah's declaration of trust and praise is further undermined by the imprecation against the day of his birth that immediately follows it (20:14-18). Even if this "cursing poem" is rightly regarded as a secondary addition to the last confession, it nonetheless destabilizes the certainty expressed in the confession's conclusion by once more "reflect[ing] ironically on the nature of the prophet's mission" (cf. 15:10).[53] On the whole, then, the role of the deity here is far more ambivalent than it is in the first confession. Rather than standing squarely on the side of the prophet, as in 11:18-23, YHWH now appears to be more closely aligned with his human enemies.

---

[50] The *Wortereignisformel* (WEF) was first noted by Walther Zimmerli in his commentary on Ezekiel: see Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1-24*, trans. Ronald E. Clements, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 25, 144-145. On the use of the WEF in Jeremiah, see 4.3.3.

[51] On Jonah, see 4.2.2.2. The sexualized rendering of פתה as "seduce," with connotations of rape, is more common in older studies, such as James L. Crenshaw, *A Whirlpool of Torment: Israelite Traditions of God as an Oppressive Presence*, OBT (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 31-56, esp. 38-39; more recent studies tend to reject this reading (Smith, *Laments*, 24) or relativize it as merely one facet of the "ranges of meaning [that] are being invoked by the use of richly nuanced [poetic] language" (O'Connor, *Confessions*, 70-71, here 71; cf. Diamond, *Confessions*, 110-111).

[52] The prophet-deity alliance grows more ambiguous in 12:1-6, where the issue is not conspiracy but theodicy and the enemies are not so decisively rebuked. See Smith, *Laments*, 8-11; Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 367; cf. Baumgartner, *Poems*, 69.

The first and last confessions thus seem to set Jeremiah's prophetic career on a decidedly downward slope: his initially amicable and even advantageous relationship with YHWH is progressively soured by acrimony as he confronts the many hardships of his divinely appointed role.[54] Although the dynamics of the entire series of confessions are not so unidirectional (see 1.3.4 below), the downward trajectory set by its endpoints runs parallel to that of the "narrative tradition" which predominates in the latter half of Jeremiah.[55] The prose stories of this tradition provide a "biographical account of the prophet's suffering" (*Leidengeschichte*) in which, much like the series of confessions, the most poignant and plentiful descriptions of suffering are found at the end, in the narratives of Jerusalem's fall and its aftermath (Jer 37-45).[56] Nevertheless, these two corpora portray Jeremiah's suffering in drastically different ways. The narrative tradition consistently offers a wealth of *external* information about Jeremiah's actions—his movements (or lack thereof) around Jerusalem, his interactions and dialogue with other people in the city, etc.—but it divulges hardly any *internal* details about his emotions and attitudes toward those experiences.[57] In contrast, the manner of artistic description (mimesis) in the confessions is fundamentally reversed: these texts keep silent about almost everything *except* for internal details! The reader of the confessions receives a tremendous amount of information regarding Jeremiah's (purported) perspective on the persecutions he endures as a prophet, while the concrete circumstances of those tribulations (e.g., where and when they took place) are sketched only vaguely and obliquely, if at all.

---

[53] Diamond, *Confessions*, 143. On 20:14-18 as a "cursing poem," and the secondary nature of this poem, see O'Connor, *Confessions*, 75-80: "What is certain is that [the poem] is not part of the fifth confession" (80). A more unified reading that nonetheless accounts for the secondary status of 20:14-18 is offered by Joep Dubbink, "Jeremiah: Hero of Faith or Defeatist? Concerning the Place and Function of Jeremiah 20.14-18," *JSOT* 86 (1999): 67-84, who treats these verses as a "critical expansion of 20.7-13" that "never existed independently, but were written immediately" for their present literary context (79). However it came to be, the collocation of 20:7-13 and 20:14-18, like other instances of redactional juxtaposition in the confessions, creates a *metanarrative* that both encompasses and expands the meanings of the texts involved; see 1.3.3 below.

[54] Cf. n. 78 below.

[55] For a brief overview of the Jeremianic narrative tradition and its textual development, see Louis Stulman, "The Narrative Tradition in Jeremiah: A Textual and Exegetical Reexamination," *Proceedings* 6 (1986): 188-203.

As I show below (see 1.4), differences between the details offered by the confessions and the prose narratives reflect a broader divergence in the modes and mechanisms of mimesis that predominate throughout the first and second halves of the (Masoretic) book of Jeremiah. Ultimately, I argue that this divergence is attributable to Jeremiah's uniquely robust manifestation of a virtual *structure* (see Chapter 4), in the Deleuzian sense (see Chapter 2), which underlies all actual forms of "epistemic intermediation," including prophecy and the extant textual depictions thereof (see Chapter 3). For now, though, I should note that one particularly important category of external information that receives extensive attention in the narrative tradition, but hardly any in the confessions, is the identification of Jeremiah's opponents. The prose stories explicitly, and repeatedly, identify the figures who are responsible for Jeremiah's persecution; in short, as Mark Smith puts it, these stories "name names."[58] Throughout the confessions, however, the prophet's persecutors remain almost entirely anonymous. In the few cases where these texts do disclose details about their shadowy antagonists—as in the next section of the first confession—they tend also to reveal valuable information about their compositional histories.

---

[56] On the prose narratives as a *Leidengeschichte*, see Stulman, "Narrative Tradition," 190. The narrative tradition is more thoroughly discussed in Chapter 4 as part of the "proclamation complex" (or "*p*-complex") in Jeremiah: see 4.3.1-2.

[57] Although motivated by real features of the biblical text, the distinction between "external" events and "internal" experiences is admittedly anachronistic for the world of ancient Israel: the inward perspective of the self contemplating itself had to be cultivated and inculcated by literacy and other developments of (early) modernity, on which see Callaway, "Peering Inside Jeremiah: How Early Modern English Culture Still Influences Our Reading of the Prophet," in *Jeremiah (Dis)Placed: New Directions in Writing/Reading Jeremiah*, ed. A. R. Pete Diamond and Louis Stulman, LHBOTS 529 (London: T&T Clark International, 2011), 279-289; cf. idem, "Seduced by Method," 21-23. Nor are "internal" details entirely lacking from the narrative tradition, though they are ordinarily only implied there (e.g., through dialogue): consider 37:20, where Jeremiah urges Zedekiah to "not send [him] back to the house of the scribe Jonathan, that I might not die there." To the extent that this verse betrays a fear of death in the prophet, it does so with remarkably little pathos or explicit emotional embellishment.

### *1.3.3. YHWH's Response (11:21-23)*

> Therefore, thus says YHWH concerning the men of Anathoth who are seeking your life, saying "Do not prophesy in the name of YHWH, and you shall not die by our hand!" Therefore, thus says YHWH of Hosts: "I am about to punish them—their young men will die by the sword, their sons and their daughters will die from hunger! Nothing will be left over for them, for I will bring calamity to the men of Anathoth in the year of their punishment." (11:21-23)

There is widespread consensus that these verses are a redactional accretion to the first confession.[59] Disagreement emerges only when it comes to assessing the complexity of the accretion: is it a single unified addition, or the product of repeated reworkings? An oft-cited theory from Franz Hubmann holds, for instance, that the entirety of 11:21 as well as 11:23bβ

---

[58] Smith, *Laments,* 40.

[59] Diamond, *Confessions*, 27-28; O'Connor, *Confessions*, 18-19; Smith, *Laments*, 5-6; cf. Baumgartner, *Poems*, 45-46.

(אנשי ענתות) are secondary elaborations building on an original core in 11:22-23*.[60] In keeping with the shift toward more unified readings of the confessions, however, more recent studies have defended the unity of 11:21-23 on the basis of its internal structure. In a representative example of this approach, Diamond identifies three features that bind these verses together so as to mark them as a unified composition: the threefold repetition of the root מות, which links the threat in 11:21 to its punishment in 11:22; the twofold repetition of פקד, which encloses the punishment itself in 11:22-23; and the inclusio formed by two occurrences of אנשי ענתות (in 11:21a and 11:23b) that brackets the whole oracle.[61] Yet even readings that find a high degree of internal coherence in 11:21-23 still stop short of unifying this oracle with the confession that precedes it. Diamond adduces both thematic discrepancies (agricultural imagery in 11:19, military imagery in 11:22-23) and logical inconsistencies (secret scheming in 11:19, direct confrontation in 11:21) as evidence that 11:18-20 and 11:21-23 constitute originally distinct units that were connected secondarily by the book's redactors.[62]

Regardless of the exact origins of these units, their redactional relationship helps to clarify the dynamics of Jeremiah's characterization across the whole series of confessions. Specifically, when this relationship is analyzed within the immediate literary context of the confessions (i.e., Jer 11-20), significant points of contact begin to emerge between the oracle in 11:21-23 and the narrative about Jeremiah's confrontation with Pashhur in 20:1-6 (on which, see

---

[60] See Franz D. Hubmann, *Untersuchungen zu den Konfessionen: Jer 11,18-12,6 und Jer 15,10-21*, FB 30 (Würzburg: Echter, 1978), 72. Hubmann's theory is wholly affirmed in Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 367, and partly (regarding the "men of Anathoth") in Smith, *Laments*, 6; it receives a more neutral assessment in Diamond, *Confessions*, 28.

[61] Diamond, *Confessions*, 25; cf. O'Connor (*Confessions*, 18), who notes the first and third of these features in her similarly unified reading of 11:21-23.

[62] Diamond, *Confessions*, 27-28. McKane (*Jeremiah 1-25*, 255) suggests that 11:21-23 (as well as 12:6) may stem from "a secondary 'Anathoth' exegesis" intended to clarify the identity of Jeremiah's opponents; cf. n. 69 below. See also the similar assessment of the function of 11:21-23 in Smith, *Laments*, 6.

1.4 below). Several similarities stand out between the two texts: both provide prose accounts of Jeremiah’s experiences with those who oppose him; both conclude with divine maledictions directed at the opponents; and, most importantly, both are juxtaposed with poetic confessions in the book as we have it.[63] This last similarity is particularly significant because it reveals something about the redactors’ intentions in crafting and combining these texts, given that there is no intrinsic connection in either case between the content of the confession and the prose passage that accompanies it. As Callaway observes regarding the last confession, “When the ancient redactors juxtaposed the poetry of Jer 20:7-14 with their narrative about the prophet’s public humiliation at the hands of Pashur, they created a meta-narrative.” Such a narrative provides not “the raw data of history” but rather a selection and arrangement of events that is “already an interpretation of the data, constructed by the historian.”[64] In the metanarrative of Jer 20, the ardent but abstract lament in 20:7ff, which could be spoken by almost any faithful prophet facing public opposition, receives a clear cause and concrete context from its proximity to the account of Jeremiah’s persecution by Pashhur in 20:1-6.[65]

The same can be said for the relationship between 11:18-20 and 11:21-23. Even though there is no reason to assume that these two texts originally referred to the *same* antagonists, the metanarrative favors and facilitates that very assumption.[66] The redactional collocation of one text *with* another transforms each text, literally, into *con-text* for the other, establishing a rich network of intertextual connections that expands each text's range of possible meanings well beyond what it might bear on its own. At the same time, as in the case of the final confession, this contextual transformation, or *contextualization*, is often bound up with a kind of hermeneutical reduction or *concretization*, whereby abstract and altogether ambiguous elements of one text may be further determined and more definitively developed by details in another. In the text of 11:18-20, the covert conspirators who "plotted plots" against Jeremiah are so abstract as to be *unnamed* in the most literal sense: though they lurk in the semantic shadows of verbs (e.g., חשבו in 11:19) and pronominal suffixes (e.g., מעלליהם in 11:18), no noun (*nomen*) directly and explicitly denotes them. In 11:21-23, these enigmatic enemies are still not named outright, but they are specified and described twice over, first as "men of Anathoth" and then as "those who are seeking your life."[67] The latter predicate allows the former to apply as well to the anonymous adversaries who threaten Jeremiah's life in 11:18-20.[68] In the end (literally; cf. 12:6), the concreteness conferred by this contextual conflation serves to sharpen and amplify an otherwise abstract danger by locating it within the inner circles of Jeremiah's familial and social life.

---

[63] Of course, there is at least one major difference in the ways that the two accounts depict these similar situations; see n. 90 below.

[64] Callaway, “Seduced,” 32.

[65] Cf. David J. A. Clines and David M. Gunn, “Form, Occasion, and Redaction in Jeremiah 20,” *ZAW* 88 (1976): 390-409, who observe that the juxtaposition of the narrative in 20:1-6 and the poem in 20:7ff. not only “increases the specificity of the poem” but also “heightens the emotional intensity of the narrative” (404).

[66] Indeed, the logical inconsistencies in 11:18-23 offer good grounds for the opposite assumption (i.e., that the two units originally referred to different enemies); see n. 62 above.

Of course, this process of contextualization, and the metanarrativity that it produces, are by no means restricted to the small-scale juxtaposition of individual pericopes. Reflected in the mirrored metanarratives of the first and last confessions is yet another that plays out across the confessional pentad in its entirety. One notable effect of this second-order metanarrative (meta-metanarrative?) is the sense of downward movement in the confessions, already discussed in the last section (1.3.2 above), as the relationship between Jeremiah and YHWH descends from assured alliance into ambivalence and animosity. Yet another effect concerns the identity of the speaker in the confessions, or rather the *identification* of this speaker with the prophet Jeremiah. Without the contextualizing effects of texts like 11:21-23 and 20:1-6, there is scarcely any material in the confessions themselves that relates explicitly, much less exclusively, to Jeremiah himself.[69] What the confessions describe on their own is no more than *a* fracturing of *a* prophet's relationship with the God of Israel, YHWH. The presence of the tetragrammaton is arguably enough to establish that the prophet is an Israelite, but there is a wide gulf between this singular generality and the full particularity of Jeremiah as a literary character, much less a human being.[70]

---

[67] The lack of named individuals in 11:21-23 marks an important difference between this text and 20:1-6, despite their comparable contextual contributions to their respective confessions; for more detailed analysis of the latter text, see 1.4 below.

[68] Thus McKane, *Jeremiah 1*, 255: "There are those who are plotting murderously against the prophet [in 11:18-19], but no clue as to their identity is offered…. It is precisely the function of the exegesis in vv. 21-23 to identify Jeremiah's assailants with the inhabitants of Anathoth."

Anticipating the next chapter's discussion of Deleuze's structuralism, and the subsequent structural treatments of prophecy and Jeremiah, I should note that the confessions themselves, shorn of their metanarrative contexts, reside primarily in the peculiar domain that Deleuze calls the *virtual* (see 2.3). They deal at this level not with concrete subjects and objects, but with something closer to "pure event[s] freed from the accidents of internal and external life; that is, from the subjectivity and objectivity of what happens"—events of scheming and subterfuge (11:18-19), despair and regret (15:10), fury and vengeance (18:21-22a), but also thankfulness and praise (20:13).[71] From this perspective, the contextualization and concretization of redactional metanarrativity are seen to be species of a broader and more profound process of *actualization*, whereby the virtual is progressively, partially, and provisionally determined as actual, in the form of individual "subjects" and "objects."[72] Linguistically, the realm of the actual is a surveillance state ruled by a tyrannical triumvirate: the definite article allied with the near and far demonstratives, always pinpointing *the* person in *this* place with *those* things. The virtual, in contrast, answers only to the indefinite article, the "index of the transcendental."[73] In explicating Deleuze's related concept of "*a* life," John Rajchman comments that "we are and remain 'anybodies' before we become 'somebodies.'"[74] Similarly, at some level, the confessions may be read as *anybody's*—or, at least, *any prophet's*—laments.[75] It is only through their actualization at the metanarrative level that they become, first and foremost, *Jeremiah's* laments.

---

[69] On 11:18-23 specifically, Baumgartner (*Poems*, 46) notes the division of 11:18-20 and 11:21-23 as "originally completely independent passages" entails that "the first song…lose[s] its only concrete datum, namely the mention of [Jeremiah's] home town, which would have been so valuable for our understanding of him."

[70] Baumgartner (*Poems*, 82) concludes that "prophetic features of the psalms of Jeremiah show quite conclusively that they derive from *a* prophet [daß sie von *einem* Propheten stammen]" (my emphasis)—note the indefinite article! The fundamental separateness of the broadly prophetic and the narrowly Jeremianic in the confessions is more directly articulated by Dubbink, "Hero or Defeatist?," 71: the text "calls forth *the image of one person* and his struggle *and identifies this person with Jeremiah* the prophet" (my emphasis). Cf. also Christoph Bultmann, "A Prophet in Desperation? The Confessions of Jeremiah," in *The Elusive Prophet: The Prophet as a Historical Person, Literary Character, and Anonymous Artist*, ed. Johannes C. de Moor, OtSt 45 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 83-93. On the often underestimated difference between the historical human and literary prophet each called "Jeremiah," see 4.4.

---

[71] Deleuze, "Immanence: A Life," in idem, *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life*, trans. Anne Boyman (New York: Zone Books, 2001), 25-33, here 28.

[72] On this process, see 2.3 in the next chapter; see also, more densely, Deleuze, "Immanence," 31.

[73] Deleuze, "Immanence," 28.

[74] John Rajchman, introduction to *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life*, by Gilles Deleuze, trans. Anne Boyman (New York: Zone Books, 2001), 7-20, here 14.

[75] Mary Callaway's work on reception history offers many examples of virtual potentialities that remain within the confessions despite (or because of) their canonical actualization as Jeremiah's utterances. See, for instance, Callaway, *Centuries*, 199-218 on the final lament in 20:7ff., which has resonated in contexts as diverse as the poetry of John Donne (203-204) and the state of Zimbabwe under the regime of Robert Mugabe (212-213).

### *1.3.4. Characterization across the Confessions: From a Downward Slope to Dynamic "Cycles"*

In this way, the virtual downward trajectory that I have described in the movement from the first to the last confession comes to be actually embodied in the character of Jeremiah. The difference between the virtual and the actual in these texts would thus seem to be analogous to the difference between a strictly decreasing linear function ($y = ax + b$ when $a < 0$) and a dusty path that follows the same slope through the landscape of late preexilic Judah—from Anathoth, where Jeremiah can still trust fully in divine support, to Jerusalem, where such succor is in short supply.[76] In fact, however, this interpretation of the confessions as a linear route from faith to hardship is hardly novel. It was already advanced more than half a century ago by Gerhard von Rad, who saw in the sequence of confessions "a road which leads step by step into ever-greater despair."[77] And, as with most theories of comparable antiquity in biblical studies, it has since been subjected to considerable critique. Diamond, in particular, makes a compelling counterargument to von Rad's reading. Far from undermining my analysis of the confessions, however, Diamond's nonlinear model contributes a salutary measure of nuance and complexity that further clarifies the dynamics of characterization in these texts. It shows, in short, that while a downward slope constitutes *one* important dimension of the confessions' portrayal of Jeremiah, it is by no means the *only* one.

Diamond's rebuttal of von Rad is two-pronged. On the one hand, the final confession, with its "internal progression from complaint to hopeful praise" (the concluding curse notwithstanding), runs counter to the putative downward trend of these texts; on the other, there is "a marked shift in tone at the mid-point of the confessional series" in 17:14-18 and 18:18-23, after which Jeremiah's invective against YHWH is largely supplanted by imprecations against those who oppose and persecute him.[78] Instead of a single sequence defined by constant downward motion, then, Diamond divides the confessions into two "cycles."[79] Though they are undoubtedly related, each cycle operates according to its own distinct logic. The first comprises 11:18-23; 12:1-6; 15:10-14; and 15:15-21; the second, 18:18-23; 20:7-13; and 20:14-18. Between the two, 17:14-18 serves as a "transitional" passage.[80] These cycles differ in focus as well as form. The first emphasizes the dangers of the prophetic *mission* and is explicitly organized as a dialogue between Jeremiah and YHWH, with complaints from the former (e.g., 11:18-20) alternating with responses from the latter (e.g., 11:21-23). In contrast, the second deals with the fate of the prophetic *message* and is structured according to *citations or quotations* from Jeremiah's enemies (e.g., 18:18), understood as those who reject the divine words that he proclaims. While there is still dialogue in the second cycle, it differs from that of the first in two important respects: it is largely *implicit,* and it takes place not with YHWH but with Jeremiah's *human* opponents, through the aforementioned citation of their words.[81]

---

[76] To be clear, this is a claim about the literary topology of the book of Jeremiah, not the physical topography of the land of Israel. On mathematical functions as exemplars of the virtual, see 2.3 in the next chapter.

[77] Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology, Volume II: The Theology of Israel's Prophetic Traditions*, trans. D. M. G. Stalker, OTL (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1965), 204.

These structural disparities between the two cycles of confessions reflect overarching differences in their presentation of Jeremiah as a prophetic character. The first cycle, for the most part, foregrounds the deterioration of Jeremiah's relationship with YHWH in the form of an

---

[78] Diamond, *Confessions*, 131.

[79] On this division, see Diamond, *Confessions*, 135-144.

[80] See also Biddle, *Polyphony*, 45, who diagnoses a similar division between the confessions along different lines: the confessions serve "as the governing element" in Jer 17-20, which corresponds to Diamond's second cycle plus the transition in Jer 17.

[81] On these differences, see Diamond, *Confessions*, 144.

"increasingly bitter, ironic 'mis-interpretation'" of his prophetic mission, in which the "consecration" to prophetic ministry (cf. 1:5) is recast, and rebuffed, as a kind of condemnation (cf. 15:10).[82] Consider the progression of the prophet's utterances in this cycle: what begins as a psalmic petition-*cum*-thanksgiving for deliverance from untimely death (11:18-20) gives way to a quasi-Joban lawsuit against the deity (12:1-3), before ultimately bottoming out in a strident denunciation of the prophetic calling (15:10-18) that culminates in a shockingly "blasphemous accusation" of divine mendacity (15:18).[83] It is in this cycle that von Rad's hypothesis of monotonic decline finds its strongest support, but even here, the downward motion is not unmitigated. It is arrested at key points by an upward force generated by two factors: the reassuring divine responses to the prophet in 11:21-23 and 15:19-21, and the transition of 17:14-18, in which the prophet seems once again to align himself with YHWH in a "marked shift back to the situation in 11:18-23."[84] It should be noted that both these factors are *redactional.* Certainly 11:21-23, if not also some part of 15:19-21, constitutes a secondary addition to the text.[85] It is no less probable that the position of 17:14-18, like that of the other confessions, was established by the redactors responsible for compiling (what would become) the book of Jeremiah.[86]

---

[82] Diamond, *Confessions*, 142.

[83] On the "lawsuit" in Jer 12:1 and its Joban resonances, see Holladay, "Jeremiah's Lawsuit with God: A Study in Suffering and Meaning," *Int* 17 (1963): 280-287; see also below on 12:1-3. For the climactic blasphemy of the lament in Jer 15, see Diamond, *Confessions*, 139.

[84] *Pace* Diamond (*Confessions*, 139), who reads 15:19-21 as a series of veiled threats suffused with an overarching "degree of censure" that is "the most pronounced" of all the divine responses in this cycle. The subtleties that Diamond senses in this response are by not shared by all commentators; O'Connor (*Confessions*, 40) sees in these same verses a "consoling promise" that "addresses both [of Jeremiah's] complaints" expressed in the preceding verses. Smith (*Laments*, 14-15), is somewhat more neutral in his analysis. On 17:14-18, see Diamond, *Confessions*, 140.

[85] See n. 62 above for 11:21-23. A range of redactional theories for 15:19-21 is discussed in Diamond, *Confessions*, 69-72, who ultimately rejects them all in favor of a more unified reading; cf. O'Connor, *Confessions*, 39-40, who tentatively suggests but does not assume that 15:21 is editorial.

The second cycle likewise moves along an upward as well as a downward trajectory. In this case, however, the relationship between the two dimensions is reversed. Upward movement in this cycle is driven by the confessional utterances themselves: the unit in 18:18-23 continues the realignment of prophet and deity that began in 17:14-18, and though the final lament in 20:7-13 commences with an audacious charge of divine malfeasance, it ultimately seems to "[bring] the whole complex of issues to a confident resolution" in 20:12-13.[87] It is the redactional accretions to these utterances, in contrast to the additions in the first cycle, that resist the upward motion with material of a more negative nature. The decline is particularly precipitous in the "cursing poem" of 20:14-18, whose form-critical differences from 20:7-13 suggest that the juxtaposition of these poems is not original but rather redactional.[88] Whereas "18:18-23 linked back to the initial situation of 11:18-23 and 20:7-13 resolved that situation in hope, 20:14-18 seem to return the reader to the situation in 15:10ff," when Jeremiah's relationship with YHWH reaches its nadir.[89]

Finally, looking ahead to the next section (1.4) and the rest of the study (especially Chapter 3), a similar, albeit subtler, downward movement may be felt in the redactional framework furnished by the short narrative in 20:1-6. Despite this text's formal resemblance to 11:21-23, there is a marked mimetic difference between them: 11:21-23 portrays *YHWH*

---

[86] Diamond, *Confessions*, 145; O'Connor, *Confessions*, 113; Smith, *Laments*, 2.

[87] Diamond, *Confessions*, 141-143, here 143; cf. n. 78 above.

[88] On these differences, see Diamond, *Confessions*, 114-121, as well as the similar judgement in O'Connor, *Confessions*, 75-80; cf. n. 53 above.

[89] Diamond, *Confessions*, 143.

*speaking to Jeremiah about his enemies*, while 20:1-6 shows *Jeremiah speaking to one of his enemies about YHWH.*[90] This difference is so significant because it demonstrates a defining dynamic of prophetic speech (see 3.3.1). No matter how sure a prophet may be that "the word of YHWH came" to her, as the *Wortereignisformel* puts it, the prophet *qua* person is ultimately unable to instill that same certainty in her audience.[91] When a message revealed by the numinous power of the deity is mediated by the mundane mouth of a mere mortal, there is nothing to prevent the recipients of that message from denying and defying it, just as Jeremiah's opponents did—"Where is the word of YHWH? Go on, let it come!" (17:15).[92] It is precisely this difference, and distance, between the transcendence of the deity and the immanence of the prophet that accounts for most of Jeremiah's suffering throughout the book: insofar as his power and purpose derive from YHWH in the heavens, Jeremiah's inescapable humanness makes him especially vulnerable to all the vicious vicissitudes of an existence on earth.

## 1.4. A "Mimetic Watershed" in the Book of Jeremiah (19:14-20:6)

### *1.4.1. The Confrontation with Pashhur in Context*

> And Jeremiah came back from Topheth, where YHWH had sent him to prophesy, and he stood in the court of the house of YHWH, and he said to all the people: "Thus says YHWH of Hosts, God of Israel: I am about to bring unto this city, and upon all its towns, all the evil which I have spoken against it, because they stiffened their necks so as to not hear my words."
>
> And Pashhur, son of Immer, the priest, an appointed leader in the house of YHWH, heard Jeremiah prophesying these things. And Pashhur beat Jeremiah the prophet, and he set him in the stocks which were in the upper Benjamin gate, which

---

[90] For similarities between 11:21-23 and 20:1-6, see the discussion at n. 63 above.

[91] On the *Wortereignisformel*, see n. 50 above.

[92] The precarious position of the prophet before an audience is aptly described by Ellen Davis Lewin, "Arguing for Authority: A Rhetorical Study of Jeremiah 1:4-19 and 20:7-18," *JSOT* 32 (1985): 105-119: "The inescapable tension in which the prophet functions is that the private nature of the revelation necessitates and yet makes problematic its public confirmation. The prophet experiences the word as definitive, coercive; the people evaluate its genuineness and present applicability freely, critically" (108).

> was in the house of YHWH. And on the next day, Pashhur took Jeremiah out of the stocks, and Jeremiah said to him, "Not 'Pashhur' has YHWH named you, but rather 'Terror-all-around'—for thus says YHWH, "I am about to make you into a terror to yourself and to all your loved ones, that they should be felled by the sword of their enemies, while you watch with your own eyes; and all Judah shall I give into the hand of the king of Babylon, that he should exile them to Babylon and strike them down by the sword. And I am about to give every treasure of this city, all its precious things, all its products, every storehouse of the kings of Judah—I shall give them into the hand of their enemies, and they shall despoil them and take them and bring them to Babylon.
>
> And as for you, Pashhur, and all those who live in your house, you will go into captivity, to Babylon shall you go, and there shall you die, and there shall you be buried—you and all your loved ones, to whom you prophesied deceitfully (19:14-20:6).

At the end of the preceding section, I observed that the superficial similarities between the contexts of the first and final confessions in 11:21-23 and 20:1-6, respectively, should not distract from deeper differences in the descriptive details of these texts. In fact, though, there is a much stronger claim to be made about the differences between 20:1-6 and all that comes before it: prior to the short narrative in 20:1-6 about Jeremiah's encounter with a priest named Pashhur, *there are no named characters to be found in the book of Jeremiah* other than the titular prophet himself. To be sure, certain historical figures are mentioned by name in earlier chapters, such as Moses and Samuel (15:1) or Manasseh (15:4), but these figures are not so much characters as mere symbols who neither speak nor act. The "action" of the poetic tradition in the first half of the book unfolds primarily as a dialogue between the prophet and YHWH, with the occasional interjection of other voices that are essentially anonymous, if not also ambiguous.[93] In this regard, the widely acknowledged unit in Jer 18-20 presents a microcosm of the entire book.[94] This section includes several poetic texts, including the fourth and fifth confessions (in 18:18-23 and 20:7-18), but it is against the backdrop of the prose passages in 18:1-11 and 19:1-15 that the uniqueness of 20:1-6 becomes most apparent.

---

[93] As, for example, in 8:18-23. Compare the divergent analyses of these verses in Christl M. Maier, "Jeremiah as YHWH's Stronghold (Jer 1:18)," *VT* 64 (2014): 640-653 and Joseph M. Henderson, "Who Weeps in Jeremiah VIII 23 (IX 1)? Identifying Dramatic Speakers in the Poetry of Jeremiah," *VT* 52 (2002): 191-206. While Henderson argues that Jeremiah is the speaker in 8:23, Maier contends more cautiously that the speaker in this and the preceding verses "could be God, Jeremiah or personified Jerusalem" (651). Anonymity also extends to the human enemies with whom Jeremiah spars throughout the second "cycle" of confessions (e.g., 18:18); even the comparatively concrete "men of Anathoth" in the first cycle are not *identified by name* in the same manner as Pashhur.

In the narrative of 18:1-11, Jeremiah receives a revelation from YHWH occasioned by the sight of a potter rejecting and remaking a ruined pot. Apart from the mere act of visual perception, though, Jeremiah does not interact with the potter, nor the potter with him. As important as the distinction between human subjects and non-human objects may be from a moral or metaphysical perspective, in this case, from a mimetic perspective, there is hardly any reason to differentiate between the potter in 18:3-4 and, say, the baskets of figs in 24:1-2—each serves as nothing more than a symbolically significant object in Jeremiah's field of vision.[95] As for 19:1-15, in which a symbolic action report about Jeremiah shattering an earthenware jug has apparently been combined with a sermon about the people's sinfulness, even *unnamed* characters are essentially absent.[96] Though YHWH directs Jeremiah to bring with him "some of the elders of the people and some of the senior priests" (19:1) as witnesses for his prophetic performance (cf. 19:10), the first-person directions given by the deity for that act never give way to a third-person description of the act itself. As a result, the witnesses referenced in 19:1, 10 never play any real role in the narrative, but remain ensconced within the hypothetical realm of unnarrated future events.[97] When the narratorial voice speaks up at last, it tells us that Jeremiah "stood in the court of the house of YHWH" and spoke "to all the people" (19:14), but even this detail does little more than establish a public setting for 20:1-6, where such an audience is otherwise unmentioned.[98]

---

[94] On the differential distribution of named characters in Jeremiah, see Jutta Krispenz, "Namen im Jeremiabuch: Ein Vergleich zwischen Jer 1-10 und Jer 26-35," in *Sprachen, Bilder, Klänge: Dimensionen der Theologie im Alten Testament und in seinem Umfeld: Festschrift für Rüdiger Bartelmus zu seinem 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Christiane Karrer-Grube et al., AOAT 359 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2009), 139-153. On the unity of 18:1-20:18, see Smith, *Laments*, 34-39; see also Louis Stulman, "The Prose Sermons as Hermeneutical Guide to Jeremiah 1-25: The Deconstruction of Judah's Symbolic World," in *Troubling Jeremiah*, ed. A. R. Pete Diamond, Kathleen M. O'Connor, and Louis Stulman, JSOTSup 260 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 34-63, esp. 54-57.

[95] Even in morals and metaphysics, both the supposedly insuperable division between humans and nonhumans and the putative primacy of the former over the latter have been increasingly challenged. See, *inter alia*, Cary Wolfe, *Animal Rites: American Culture, the Discourse of Species, and Posthumanist Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010); Michael Marder, *Plant-Thinking: A Philosophy of Vegetal Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013); Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Stone: An Ecology of the Inhuman* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015). Most of this work is influenced, to a greater or lesser extent, by the thought of Deleuze, particularly his collaborations with Félix Guattari in the two-volume treatise *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*: see Chapter 5.

[96] On the composite nature of Jer 19, see McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 451-459; cf. Stulman, *The Prose Sermons of the Book of Jeremiah: A Redescription of the Correspondences with the Deuteronomistic Literature in the Light of Recent Text-Critical Research*, SBLDS 83 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 76.

Everything changes with the entrance of Pashhur in 20:1. In sharp contrast to the abstract and anonymous figures of the previous chapters, Pashhur is explicitly and amply identified. In addition to a personal name, complete with patronymic, he receives an unusually extensive vocational epithet: he is not just "Pashhur" but "Pashhur ben Immer, the priest, an appointed leader (פקיד נגיד) in the house of YHWH."[99] Of course, some part of this lengthy appellation may be motivated more by straightforward considerations of logical clarity than by subtleties of literary artistry. Perhaps the goal was simply to distinguish Jeremiah's priestly opponent in 20:1-6 from an entirely different Pashhur, this one "the son of Malchiah," who appears in the very next chapter (21:1).[100] At the same time, if the purpose of the epithets listed in 20:1 were mere disambiguation, the sheer length of the list would be difficult to explain; it would be tantamount to extinguishing a candle with a fire hose. Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, a single epithet, generally of a patronymic or toponymic nature, suffices to distinguish individuals who happen to share the same name.[101]

---

[97] See Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 538.

[98] Apart from the explicit statement in 19:14, a public setting is at most implied in the "stocks" (מהפכת) of 20:2-3; see O'Connor, *Pain and Promise*, 153, n. 19. Even in such a role, however, the "people" mentioned in 19:14 are more akin to the backdrop or scenery on a stage than to actors performing thereupon.

[99] Notably, all these designations are also attested LXX, which is generally less detailed than MT as far as names and epithets are concerned. On this trend, see Emanuel Tov, "The Literary History of the Book of Jeremiah in the Light of Its Textual History," in *Empirical Models for Biblical Criticism*, ed. Jeffrey H. Tigay (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 211-237, here 227-229; cf. Stulman, "Narrative Tradition," 190-191. For example, compare 20:1 with the beginning of 20:2, for which LXX reads "And he beat him…" as opposed to "And Pashhur beat Jeremiah the prophet…" in MT.

To explain the presence of Pashhur's other, non-patronymic titles, then, an appeal to literary artistry is hardly inappropriate. Throughout the biblical text, such epithets frequently play a *proleptic* role in the presentation of characters, one that is at once integral and incomplete: epithets "yield a partial picture of the figure and we must round it out by our own efforts, usually at the most essential (intriguing, problematic) spots."[102] In this short narrative, the most "intriguing" or "problematic" spot for the character of Pashhur, when the reader senses the significance of his epithets, is not far off. Indeed, I would locate this essential spot at the very moment of Pashhur's appearance in the narrative, as the result of an ironic series of events that unfolds in the transition from 19:14-15 to 20:1-2. It is chiefly for this reason that I have included 19:14-15 in my translation above; this exceedingly brief scene constitutes "an editorial bridge" to 20:1-6 that "enables Jeremiah to make his inflammatory speech in the temple court and so triggers the action of Pashhur."[103] The scene ends with a classic description of Israel's disobedience, which leverages the full semantic range of the verb "to listen" (שמע) to explain the failure to *heed* God's word as a more fundamental failure to *hear* it: "they have stiffened their necks, so as not to hear my words" (לבלתי שמוע את דברי). Against this disheartening backdrop of deafness toward the deity, Pashhur's entrance in the next verse looks, at first glance, like a glimmer of hope: "And Pashhur…heard (וישמע) Jeremiah prophesying these words" (20:1).[104] At last, it seems, someone has heard the divine word—and not just anyone, but someone in a position of power, someone with cultic clout, "an appointed leader in the house of YHWH"![105] According to the expectations engendered in 19:15 by the implicit connection between "hearing" and "heeding," both expressed through the root שמע, it seems moreover that obedience and repentance may be mercifully, almost miraculously within reach for God's people, despite the devastating and despairing rhetoric of the book thus far (e.g., 11:1-14; see 1.2 above).

---

[100] Such clarification is further necessitated by the reappearance of Pashhur ben Malchiah later in the book, in Jer 38, whereas the role of Pashhur ben Immer is limited to 20:1-6. On the name "Pashhur" and the various biblical figures that bear it, see John M. Bracke, "Pashhur," *ABD* V:171-172.

[101] For example, the difference between Jeroboam I and Jeroboam II is adequately expressed by simple patronymic designations: "Jeroboam ben Nebat" (1 Kgs 11:21 and *passim*) and "Jeroboam ben Joash" (2 Kings 14:23 and *passim*). Even the name "Jeremiah" itself is borne by some ten persons in the Hebrew Bible; on the name and its occurrences, see Robert Althann, "Jeremiah (Person)," *ABD* III:684. In 2 Kings 24:18, another Jeremiah, the maternal grandfather of Zedekiah, is sufficiently specified by a single toponym, "of Libnah."

[102] Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading*, ISBL (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985), 327.

As soon as these hopes are ignited, they are extinguished by the ironic inversion at the beginning of the next verse: "And Pashhur beat Jeremiah the prophet and put him in the stocks (המהפכת)…" (20:2).[106] Like all irony, the movement from 19:15 to 20:2, and especially the role of 20:1 therein, "subverts expectations by the falsifying representation of different kinds of unreliable communications."[107] On its own, of course, the act of hearing in 20:1 is morally ambiguous; staunch supporters no less than strident critics must first perceive a message before they can respond to it.[108] Yet insofar as 20:1 partially corresponds to and contrasts with 19:15 (the people *did not* hear, and *did not* obey; Pashhur *did* hear, and…), the verse pushes the reader to assume, unreliably, that Pashhur hears Jeremiah's message from a stance of sympathy rather than censure. Without naming the irony as such, O'Connor captures the jarring reversal of expectation in these verses: Pashhur confronts Jeremiah in the temple, "the one place where the prophetic word should be eagerly heard and the high priest its ready recipient. But the opposite happens."[109] The overall rhetorical effect of Pashhur's ironic response to Jeremiah's preaching is akin to the "biting sarcasm" of the "faux call to worship" sounded by one of Jeremiah's precursors, the prophet Amos.[110] Just as Amos derisively exhorts his audience to "Come to Bethel—and transgress!" (Amos 4:4), Pashhur's actions express an equally perverse attitude toward the divine word: "Hear the word of YHWH—and abuse the one who speaks it!"

---

[103] McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 465; on this point, McKane follows Thiel (*Redaktion*, 226), who assigns 19:14-15 to the Deuteronomistic redaction of Jeremiah, with these verses serving "die zur Predigt umgestaltete symbolische Handlung mit dem folgenden Text (20:1-6) zu verknüpfen."

[104] English word order distorts the force and flow of the Hebrew, in which the act of hearing is foregrounded by the initial position of the *wayyiqtol* verb form.

[105] The most likely referent of "these words" (את הדברים האלה) is the divine message in 19:15; thus McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 466.

[106] The meaning of מהפכת is not entirely clear, but the versions strongly suggest that it is a place of imprisonment, torture, or both; see McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 460.

### *1.4.2. Two Modes of Mimesis in Jeremiah*

Like so much else in Jeremiah, the irony of 20:1-6 reinforces two of the book's overarching themes: the inevitability of Judah's destruction and, with it, the futility of repentance to avert that fate. Yet, Pashhur's entrance onto the book's literary stage marks more than just a moment of theologically significant irony. In the broad landscape of the book, the short vignette in 20:1-6 stands out as a veritable *mimetic watershed*, at which the descriptive dynamics of the text—its total presentation of events, characters, settings, etc.—undergo fundamental and far-reaching changes.[111] Beyond the manifest, manifold non-anonymity of Pashhur discussed above, Konrad Schmid has identified two other points at which this narrative diverges from the mimetic propensities of previous texts in Jeremiah. The first lies not in the narrative of 20:1-6 itself but in the redactional bridge (19:14-15) that binds it to the preceding pericope: before 19:14, the public proclamation of the divine word by the prophet is never depicted.[112] Even for the so-called "temple sermon" (*Tempelrede*) in 7:1-8:3, the text offers no account of the actual delivery of the sermon, but only a set of divine instructions amounting to little more than speaker's notes and stage directions.[113] As a rule, until this point on the very threshold of 20:1-6, "spielt sich das gesamte Geschehen…nur zwischen Jhwh und Jeremia ab."[114] In 19:14, however, Jeremiah is shown standing in the temple court and, at last, prophesying "to all the people" gathered there. It is worth noting that this shift from divine dialogue to public pronouncement inauspiciously amplifies the force of the irony identified above. At least as far as the book's presentation of its titular character is concerned, Pashhur's abuse of Jeremiah was occasioned not by just any proclamation from the prophet, but by his first such act in the public square.[115]

---

[107] On the nature of irony and its relevance for biblical interpretation, see Carolyn J. Sharp, *Irony and Meaning in the Hebrew Bible*, ISBL (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009), 6-42, here 28.

[108] A poignant example of hearing's moral ambiguity is found in the drastically, and deliberately, divergent descriptions of Josiah's and Jehoiakim's reactions to hearing the word of YHWH in 2 Kgs 22:11 and Jer 36:24, respectively.

[109] O'Connor, *Pain and Promise*, 74.

[110] On irony in this verse and throughout Amos, see Sharp, *Irony*, 151-169, here 151.

---

[111] While many commentators would place the book's primary medial division between Jer 25 and Jer 26, Richard D. Weis ("The Structure of MT Jeremiah, with Special Attention to Chapters 21-45," in *Partners with God: Theological and Critical Readings of the Bible in Honor of Marvin A. Sweeney*, ed. Shelley L. Birdsong and Serge Frolov [Claremont, CA: Claremont Press, 2017], 201-224) comes closer to my reading in seeing a "substantive textual boundary" between Jer 20 and Jer 21, when "the third-person narrator assumes a much more significant role" (209). In my view, this ascendance of the narrator begins already with 19:14-20:6.

[112] The same observation is made by Biddle, *Polyphony*, 65.

[113] The same is true of the symbolic action in 19:1-13, as discussed above (see 1.4.1); this text is not so much a symbolic action *report* as it is a symbolic action *command*.

[114] See Konrad Schmid, *Buchgestalten des Jeremiabuches: Untersuchungen zur Redaktions- und Rezeptionsgeschichte von Jer 30-33 im Kontext des Buches*, WMANT 72 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1996), 4; on the *Tempelrede* specifically, Schmid (ibid.) notes that it "wird lediglich als Auftrag, nicht aber in ihrer Ausführung dargestellt."

The second mimetic milestone comes a few verses after Pashhur's appearance. Following Jeremiah's renaming of the priest as "terror-all-around" (מגור מסביב) in 20:3, the prophet clarifies that rechristening with an oracle of imminent imprecation.[116] The oracle begins with a threat of violent vengeance that is shocking but, relative to the scorched-earth tactics typical of Jeremianic rhetoric, hardly surprising: YHWH declares to Pashhur that "I am about to make you a terror to yourself and to all your loved ones, that they should fall by the sword of their enemies while you watch with your own eyes…" (20:4a). Yet, a surprise does come in the second half of the verse: "…and all Judah will I give into the hand of the king of Babylon, that he should exile them to Babylon and strike them down by the sword" (20:4b). The surprise here consists, specifically, in the unexpected utterance of the name "Babylon" for the first time in the entire book of Jeremiah.[117] Until this point almost halfway through the book, the agent of Judah's coming calamity is never named outright, but only obliquely and ominously acknowledged—as "evil out of the north" (1:14), "a lion gone up from its thicket" (4:7), "besiegers coming from a distant land" (4:16), etc.[118] No sooner is the name spoken, however, it ascends to a place of prominence, and preponderance, in the textual landscape of Jeremiah, occurring no fewer than four times in three verses within this short pericope and well over a hundred times across the rest of the book.[119] In fact, insofar as 20:3-6 may be said to "contain a poem," the logical movement between the two halves of 20:4 stands out as distinctly parallelistic.[120] This verse exhibits the emphatic "seconding" structure that James Kugel has discerned at the heart of Hebrew poetry, summed up in the formula "A is so, and *what's more*, B."[121] According to Kugel, the second half of a parallelistic bicolon "typically *supports* [the first half], carries it further, backs it up, completes it, goes beyond it."[122] Here, parallelistic movement works on two levels, broadening the scope of the destruction envisioned in the first half of the verse while more narrowly specifying its cause, as if to say: "*Not only* will you witness the deaths of your loved ones at an enemy's hands, you will witness *the end of your entire world* at the hands of an enemy whose name you already know—Babylon."[123]

---

[115] Regardless of the historicity (or lack thereof) of the narrative in 20:1-6, there is no reason to assume that the *historical* Jeremiah's public prophetic activity actually commenced with this unfortunate encounter. Indeed, the position of the narrative about Pashhur at this point in the books likely has more to do with the redaction of the book than the action of the prophet. Cf. McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 465-6: "There is no reason to doubt the attribution of the breaking of the jug and its explanation to Jeremiah, and his confrontation with Pashhur is entirely credible, but it should not be supposed that there was an original, historical connection between the two events."

[116] The etymology and even the meaning of Pashhur's new name is disputed by commentators; on these issues, see McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 461-464. For the multiple layers of meaning that may be implicated in this densely evocative phrase, see Holladay, "The Covenant with the Patriarchs Overturned: Jeremiah's Intention in 'Terror on Every Side' (Jer 20:1-6)," *JBL* 91 (1972): 305-320.

[117] Schmid, *Buchgestalten*, 4.

[118] On this cluster of motifs, see David J. Reimer, "The 'Foe' and the 'North' in Jeremiah," *ZAW* 101 (1989): 223-232.

Beyond the two features identified by Schmid, there is another mimetic difference in this short text that merits mention, one that was anticipated above at the end of my reading of the first confession: in short, 20:1-6 marks a change in the presentation of Jeremiah's *persecution*. Although previous texts in the book mention hardships faced by Jeremiah, particularly in the series of confessions (e.g., 11:18-21), both the references to those hardships and the divine responses thereto are wholly subsumed under the ongoing dialogue between Jeremiah and YHWH. Before 20:1-6, Jeremiah's hardships are only ever described obliquely by the prophet himself or by YHWH, often in vague or metaphorical terms (e.g., 11:19, 15:10, 18:18); they are never depicted outright, by the narrator, as completely concrete events contemporaneous with others in the unfolding action of the text. But just as the description of Jeremiah's first public proclamation is marked as such by the occurrence, for the first time in the book, of the third-person *wayyiqtol* **ויאמר** ("and he said") with Jeremiah as its *subject* (19:14), so too is the first concrete description of his persecution indicated by the first occurrence of a verb of violence in the same form (**ויכה**; "and he struck") with Jeremiah as its *object* (20:2).[124] In assessing the significance of this unprecedented diction, and the mimetic divergence it reflects, it is helpful to remember that the encounter with Pashhur provides the contextual framework for the final, and fiercest, confession. With both the narrative and the confession in view, Schmid's assessment of the impact of the chapter as a whole is especially apt: "Jer 20 dokumentiert so kondensiert die negative Wirkung der im vorlaufenden Buch angestauten Gerichtsbotschaft im Blick auf die ausbleibende Rezeption bei ihren Hörern als auch im Blick auf das damit verbundene Leiden Jeremias."[125]

---

[119] See Krispenz, "Namen," 146.

[120] See Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 538, who restricts the poem to 20:4a, 6, with 20:4b-5 bracketed as a disruptive "prose insertion" (ibid.). Yet, since the distinction between Hebrew prose and poetry is more a difference of degree than kind (see n. 121 below), there is no reason to assume that parallelism could not persist, or even improve, as a result of prose additions to a poetic text.

[121] See James L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), esp. 1-58. It should be noted that the identification of parallelism within biblical prose is entirely consistent with Kugel's analysis of the concept: parallelism is not a marker of "poetry" as such but rather a rhetorical technique, found *throughout* Hebrew (and other ancient Near Eastern) literature, that reaches its fullest and most sublime expression in those texts that we have come to recognize as "poetry." In short, for Kugel (*Idea*, 302), "'prose' and 'poetry' are a matter of degree," not of kind.

[122] Kugel, *Idea*, 52.

[123] Cf. McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 464, who notes that 20:4 "indicates that the name מגור (מסביב) given to Pashhur (in 20:3) will be indicative not only of his personal fate and that of his family (cf. v. 6), but also of the terror, demoralization and disintegration which will overtake his circle of friends and the entire community."

---

[124] Before 19:14, what Jeremiah "says" is either in the *first*-person *wayyiqtol* (1:6, 11, 13; etc.), as a dialogical response to YHWH, or in the second-person *yiqtol* or *we-qatal*, as future speech commanded by YHWH (3:11, 5:19, etc.).

[125] Schmid, *Buchgestalten*, 4.

### *1.4.3 Two Modes of Mimesis and Two "Axes" of the Prophetic Process*

Building on the selective survey of the confessions that began this chapter, the foregoing analysis in this section has identified three ways in which the narrative in 20:1-6 marks a mimetic departure from the previous material in the book of Jeremiah: first, the shift from dialogue with the deity to proclamations for the Judean public; second, the shift from an anonymous and abstract agent of YHWH's wrath to Babylon as a concrete and clearly identifiable aggressor; finally, the shift from vague and indirect descriptions of Jeremiah's persecution to the direct, explicit depiction of such an event. In conclusion, it is worth asking if these mimetic differences should be understood as unconnected and altogether adventitious discrepancies in the notoriously chaotic and complicated text of Jeremiah, or if there is some overarching principle that might draw them together and explain their co-occurrence in this one brief pericope.

I propose that there is such a principle, and that it is to be found in sociological research on the phenomenon of prophecy, namely Thomas W. Overholt's model of the "channels of prophecy" as a social process.[126] In Overholt's view, the "prophetic process" necessarily involves "reciprocal interaction and adjustment among three distinct actors or groups of actors: the supernatural [i.e., the deity], the prophet, and the people to whom the prophet's message is addressed [i.e., the audience]."[127] Graphically, this model takes the form of a triangular set of three dyadic relationships (deity–prophet, prophet–audience, and audience–deity), as depicted below:[128]

---

[126] See Overholt, *Channels of Prophecy: The Social Dynamics of Prophetic Activity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989).

[127] For this description, see Overholt, "Jeremiah and the Nature of the Prophetic Process," in *Scripture in History & Theology: Essays in Honor of J. Coert Rylaarsdam*, ed. Arthur L. Merrill and Thomas W. Overholt, PTMS 17 (Pittsburgh, PA: Pickwick, 1977), 129-150, here 131.

[128] This figure is adapted from Overholt's own depiction of the prophetic process in *Channels*, 23.

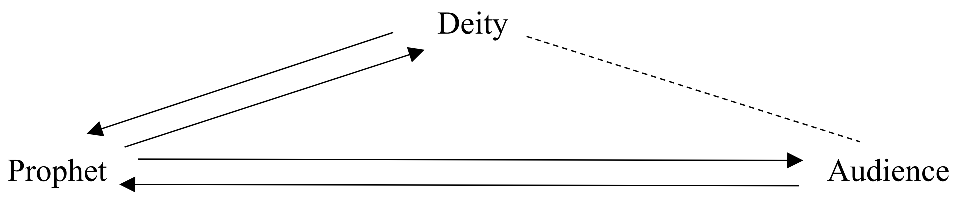


**Figure 1.2. Overholt's "Channels of Prophecy"**

Processes of "reciprocal interaction and adjustment" pertain primarily to the first two of these relationships (deity–prophet and prophet–audience). Between the deity and the prophet, the former grants *revelation* to the latter, eliciting *feedback* from the prophet and, in turn, further revelation(s) from the deity; between the prophet and the audience, prophetic *proclamations* likewise provoke feedback from the audience, and further proclamations in response—which in turn requires further revelations from the deity, and so on. The relationship between the audience and the deity, in contrast, is more marginal and attenuated (hence the dotted line in the above diagram), being limited to the people's "expectations of confirmation," directed toward the deity, regarding the prophetic messages that they receive.[129]

Overholt's model facilitates, among other things, the identification of two distinct dimensions or *axes* of prophetic authority, and it is this aspect of the model that best illuminates the mimetic shifts discerned above in 20:1-6. One axis corresponds to the deity–prophet relationship: along this axis, prophetic authority derives from the prophet's own experiences of supernatural revelation, which "constitute an essentially private, theological justification of [prophetic] activity."[130] The inherently private and personal nature of revelation thus necessitates a second, "more public and…existential" axis of prophetic activity and authority, corresponding to the relationship between prophet and audience, and specifically the "acceptance (or rejection)" of the former by the latter. Overholt contends that this axis is "at once the more tangible and more critical aspect of the prophet's claim to authority, since it was the auditors who had to decide whether or not, and how, they would act in response to [the prophet's] message."[131] As a mere mouthpiece for the supernatural, the prophet *qua* person is powerless to compel the audience to hear, much less heed, a message that (allegedly) comes from that otherwise rarefied and inaccessible realm.[132]

---

[129] For a more detailed explanation of the model, see Overholt, "Prophetic Process," 131-34. In his later work (*Channels*, 22-23), Overholt reverses the direction of the audience-deity relationship, describing it in terms of "supernatural confirmation" (from the deity, for the audience) rather than the expectation of such confirmation (from the audience, for the deity).

[130] Overholt, "Prophetic Process," 132; Overholt here uses the term "aspect" rather than "axis" (or "dimension") to describe these domains of prophetic authority. Elsewhere, he speaks of two "sequences": a "revelation–feedback–revelation sequence," and a "proclamation–feedback–proclamation sequence" (*Channels*, 54–56). In the terminology of this chapter, these sequences correspond, respectively, to my "deity–prophet axis" and "prophet–

I must acknowledge that Overholt's model is first and foremost a historical and social-scientific tool, intended more to explain the dynamics of prophecy as a social and cultural phenomenon than to explore the meanings of literary productions that purport, with varying degrees of credibility, to describe that phenomenon. Indeed, to the extent that Overholt himself engages in the latter endeavor, it is chiefly in the service of the former.[133] Yet if a literary portrayal of prophetic activity accurately and authentically embodies the sociohistorical dynamics of that activity—for the book of Jeremiah, Overholt is joined by others who show that this is so—then it is not illegitimate to employ a theoretical model of those dynamics as a hermeneutical aid for interpreting their literary portrayal.[134] With Overholt's model in mind,

---

audience axis." In Chapter 3, the axes are reformulated as a "revelation series" (*r*-series) and "proclamation series" (*p*-series); see 3.3.1.

[131] Overholt, "Prophetic Process," 132.

[132] Cf. n. 92 above.

[133] See, for instance, Overholt (*Channels*, 21) on the challenges posed for his analysis by biblical prophetic texts: "Our problem…is trying to penetrate the editors' and subsequent religious community's interests in order to catch a glimpse of the social interaction that we must assume was integral to the prophet's performance of the role."

[134] For the applicability of the model to Jeremiah, see Overholt, "Prophetic Process," 136-143; *Channels*, 51-58. For another study that helps to corroborate Overholt's conclusions, see Lester L. Grabbe, "Jeremiah among the Social Anthropologists," in *Prophecy in the Book of Jeremiah*, ed. Hans M. Barstad and Reinhard G. Kratz (Berlin: De

then, the various mimetic milestones in 20:1-6 can be seen to reflect an overarching shift in the orientation of the text from one axis of prophetic activity to the other: whereas the material before 20:1-6 plays out primarily along the deity–prophet axis, 20:1-6 and most of the material that follows should be placed along the prophet–audience axis. The interaction of Jeremiah with other named characters, the explicit identification of previously anonymous enemies, the direct depiction of persecution in narrative contexts—such features together serve to embed and enmesh the oracular, confessional, and other material from the first half of the book within "a concrete historical and cultural situation."[135] For Jeremiah, this situation is the fatal collision of the Judean state with the rising tide of Babylonian imperial hegemony at the turn of the 6th century BCE, which comes increasingly to dominate the literary landscape of the book following the prophet's encounter with Pashhur.

### 1.5. Conclusion: From Social Axes to Structural Series

In the previous sections, contextual close readings of the first and final confessions revealed an axial shift in the major stylistic or mimetic features that more broadly define the whole book of Jeremiah. Before 20:1-6 (or, more accurately, before the introduction to this narrative in 19:14-15), the "action" of the book unfolds primarily as a poetic dialogue between Jeremiah and YHWH, punctuated by occasional interjections from other speakers but devoid of concrete

---

Gruyter, 2009), 80-88, who concludes that "the model of prophecy found in the Bible—or at least in Jeremiah—is based on the real experience of prophecy and is not an artificial literary creation" (88). At the same time, Grabbe is appropriately circumspect in adjudicating the implications of this finding for the so-called "historical Jeremiah": to say that "the model of prophecy found…in Jeremiah is based on the real experience of prophecy" is *not* to say that "Jeremiah existed or that he carried out any of the actions ascribed to him in the book" (ibid.). On the differences between the historical Jeremiah and the prophet as portrayed in the book of Jeremiah, see 4.4.

[135] On the importance of historical and cultural context for prophetic activity and authority, see Overholt, "Prophetic Process," 132-33.

depictions, in narrative form, of the prophet's interactions with other persons. After this point (or, more accurately again, after the end of the final confession in 20:18), the dialogue between prophet and deity is increasingly supplanted by a sequence of prose narratives that describe Jeremiah's often contentious confrontations with various audiences during the last years of the Judean monarchy. In these narratives, to be sure, messages from the deity are by no means absent; in fact, like some of the more prosaic passages in the first half of the book, many of these narratives begin by quoting "the word which came to Jeremiah from YHWH."[136] Still, despite the persistent presence of the "word of YHWH" (דבר יהוה) in the latter sections of Jeremiah, the broader literary frameworks in which that word now appears are decidedly different.[137] In the first half of the book, the divine word itself structures an essentially uninterrupted sequence of speeches from the deity, the prophet, and others.[138] In contrast, the second half generally relegates the divine word to a causal and instrumental role as a catalyst for or response to other events, which are recounted in narratives driven neither by the voice of the deity nor that of the prophet, but by an anonymous third-person narrator.[139] Whence this axial shift, and what does it contribute to the book and character of Jeremiah?

---

[136] For the occurrences of this phrase in the first half of Jeremiah, see 7:1; 11:1; 18:1; cf. 21:1; 25:1; 30:1; 32:1; 34:1, 7; 35:1; 40:1. On the "word-event formula" (*Wortereignisformel*), of which this phrase is but one of many variants, see n. 50 above as well as 4.3.3.

[137] Even after the final confession, texts resembling those before 20:1-6 continue to appear: most notable, in this regard, are the oracles against kings and prophets in Jer 21-23; the vision of the figs in 24; 30-31 and 33 in the so-called "little book of consolation" (*Trostbüchlein*); and the oracles against foreign nations in 46-51 (MT). For a more precise delineation of these non-contiguous mimetic "halves" of Jeremiah, see Chapter 4 (esp. 4.3).

[138] This framing function of the divine word in the first half of Jeremiah is evident even in the series of confessions, which is intertwined with another series of divine speeches that plays an important structural role in this section of the book; on these speeches, see Smith, *Laments*, 43-60. For other voices that may be heard in these texts, besides those of the deity and the prophet, see Biddle, *Polyphony*, 15-45, 87-114.

[139] For an illustrative discussion of this "narrative management of prophetic oracles" in the latter chapters of Jeremiah, see A. R. Pete Diamond, "Portraying Prophecy: Of Doublet, Variants and Analogies in the Narrative Representation of Jeremiah's Oracles—Reconstructing the Hermeneutics of Prophecy," *JSOT* 57 (1993): 99-119, here 101.

Due to the preponderance of poetry and prose in the first and second halves of Jeremiah, respectively, it is perhaps tempting to dismiss this supposed shift as a mere symptom of the underlying transition from a poetic tradition, concentrated in the first half of the book and associated with the purported *ipsissima verba* of the historical prophet (the "A" source, in Sigmund Mowinckel's classic compositional theory), to a prose tradition in the second half that is to be identified with the so-called "biographical" material often attributed to the scribe Baruch (the "B" source).[140] Straightforward as it may seem, this *prima facie* characterization of the axial shift in terms of "prose" and "poetry" turns out to be too imprecise. Though the generic heading of "prose" fits fairly well as a label for the narratives about Jeremiah's interactions with his audience in the second half of the book, there is far less basis for affixing the label "poetry" to all the variegated material that constitutes the dialogue between Jeremiah and YHWH in the first half. Across most of these texts, prose and poetry are consistently juxtaposed and even intercalated with one another: alongside quintessentially poetic forms, such as prophetic oracles and laments, one finds unmistakably prose genres such as sermons (e.g., 7:1-8:3; 11:1-14) and symbolic action reports (e.g., 13:1-11; 18:1-19:13).

Following Mowinckel, the standard scholarly response to this mixture of genres has been to bracket out some substantial part of the prose in the first half of the book as Deuteronomistic accretions to a primarily poetic and authentically Jeremianic core.[141] Yet even if Deuteronomistic provenance should be affirmed for much—or, for the sake of argument, all—of the prose in the first half of Jeremiah, this historical-critical hypothesis would not detract from the mimetic trends that unify those prose units, at a strictly literary level, with the poetic passages that accompany them. Whether prosaic or poetic, Deuteronomistic or Jeremianic, the material before 19:14-20:6 *never* portrays the prophet publicly speaking or otherwise engaging directly with his audience, while the texts after that point *repeatedly* show him in just such acts of interpersonal proclamation.[142] Conversely, this latter material mostly silences the reciprocal revelatory dialogue between YHWH and Jeremiah that resounds throughout the former sections of the book. An adequate description of these textual collections, which are defined not by historical connections to any specific community or school of thought but by an unusually close mimetic relationship to the biaxial process of prophecy, requires a step beyond the standard exegetical repertoire of "sources," "traditions," "redactions," "cycles," etc. Even Overholt's sociological model of the prophetic process is itself insufficient for this purpose, since it was not originally intended for the interpretation of texts. To begin to understand the problems posed by Jeremiah's unique literary organization, we must move beyond Overholt to higher orders of theoretical abstraction, guided by a thinker who remains woefully underutilized in biblical studies.

---

[140] For this theory, see Mowinckel, *Zur Komposition des Buches Jeremia*, Videnskapsselskapets Skrifter 2, Hist.-Filos. Klasse 1913, no. 5 (Oslo: Dybwad, 1914).

[141] Mowinckel (*Komposition*, 31-45) assigns the book's Deuteronomistic passages to his "C" source; for a more recent reassessment of the C material, see Stulman, *Prose Sermons*, 7-48. Others have argued for a systematic redaction of Jeremiah by Deuteronomistic tradents: thus Winfried Thiel (see n. 15 above) and J. Philip Hyatt, "The Deuteronomic Edition of Jeremiah," in *A Prophet to the Nations: Essays in Jeremiah Studies*, ed. Leo G. Purdue and Brian W. Kovacs (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1984), 247-267. Although some have sought to refute these theories (e.g., Helga Weippert, *Die Prosareden des Jeremiabuches*, BZAW 132 [Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1973]), the notion of an early Deuteronomistic edition of Jeremiah has gained widespread acceptance; see, *inter alia*, Thomas C. Römer, "How Did Jeremiah Become a Convert to Deuteronomistic Ideology?," in *Those Elusive*

---

*Deuteronomists: The Phenomenon of Pan-Deuteronomism*, ed. Linda S. Schearing and Steven L. McKenzie, JSOTSup 268 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 189-199.

[142] There are several important exceptions to this description of the material after 20:1-6; see n. 137 above.

# 2. THE STRUCTURE OF STRUCTURES, ACCORDING TO GILLES DELEUZE

In a world this wide, we feel limited
Even if we try, we can't live in it
'Cause the world is small, but it's infinite
And the future's all undistributed.
-YACHT, "Matter" (2015)

## 2.1. Introduction

Gilles Deleuze is not an easy philosopher to read. His thought is prohibitive in style and prodigious in scope, covering both traditional philosophical questions (about being, time, language, ethics, etc.) and diverse cultural domains, from literature to mathematics to psychiatry to cinema and beyond. If its sheer magnitude were not difficult enough, Deleuze's oeuvre also consistently demonstrates a pluralistic, distinctly postmodern openness to multiple approaches and perspectives. It is no exaggeration to say that any single concept in this sprawling body of work offers the reader a potential point of ingress, from which she could eventually reach any other concept, and indeed *every* other. The densely ramified philosophical system that emerges from this radical conceptual connectedness may seem hopelessly labyrinthine, but this assessment is mistaken so long as the labyrinth is conceptualized negatively—as a desolate maze populated only by traps and other dangers, yet concealing an attractive treasure at the center. As described in the introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus* (ATP), one of Deleuze's late collaborations with Félix Guattari, this system or style of thought is better understood as a subterranean burrow or *rhizome*, wherein each entrance or extremity is charged with the full energy of "a life," and every twist or turn corresponds to a problem posed by living (ATP 3-25).[1]

---

[1] On the concept of "a life," see 1.3.3 in the previous chapter. See Chapter 5 (esp. 5.4-5) for a more detailed discussion of the rhizome and its relevance to biblical studies.

Of all the possible points of ingress to Deleuze's philosophy, I have found his intriguing theory of *structuralism*, laid out in the brief but provocative essay "How Do We Recognize Structuralism?" (HRS), to be the most immediately helpful for addressing the divergent dynamics of prophetic mimesis in Jeremiah, already glimpsed in the previous chapter (see 1.4).[2] Drawing on well-established structural models from various fields of study, such as the linguistics of Roman Jakobson and the anthropology of Claude Lévi-Strauss, Deleuze's theory may be read as a kind of "metastructuralism," insofar as it connects structures from diverse disciplines in order to discern the features and forces that define *any* structure whatsoever, up to and including that of "structuralism" itself. At the same time, even in this relatively early essay—"This is 1967," asserts one of the opening lines (HRS 170)—Deleuze shows himself to be more of a *post*structuralist than a structuralist in (what would become) the traditional sense.[3] This open, unsettled perspective endows Deleuze's thought on (post)structuralism with an extremely wide range of explanatory and exploratory utility, and there is no reason why biblical literature, which already refers its readers to a lively interchange of different structural domains, should not benefit from exposure to these ideas.

In fact, by the end of this study, I hope to show that Deleuze has far more to offer biblical scholarship than an imaginative yet idiosyncratic theory of an admittedly outmoded intellectual paradigm (see Chapter 5). For understanding the depictions of prophecy in and beyond Jeremiah, however, Deleuze's structuralism can make a considerable contribution in its own right. To prepare for that project, this chapter connects "Structuralism?" to Deleuze's related work in

---

[2] Deleuze, "How Do We Recognize Structuralism?," in idem, *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953-1974*, ed. David Lapoujade, trans. Michael Taormina (Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e), 2004), 170-192.

[3] For the history of (post)structuralism, see Craig Lundy, "From Structuralism to Poststructuralism," in *The Edinburgh Companion to Poststructuralism*, ed. Benoît Dillet, Iain MacKenzie, and Robert Porter (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 69-92, esp. 86-87 on Deleuze's Deleuze's ambiguous relationship to these intellectual movements; cf. James Williams, *Understanding Poststructuralism* (London: Routledge, 2014), 53.

*Difference and Repetition* (DR) and *The Logic of Sense* (LS) in order to construct a brief overview of his theory, focusing on three of its key features: the differential *components* of structures, their virtual and actual *dimensions*, and their *assembly* as effected by a paradoxical "object = *x*."[4] This overview lays the foundation for the next chapter's structural analysis of prophecy and other forms of "epistemic intermediation," and the following chapter's examination of the uniquely robust manifestation of that structure, relative to other biblical prophetic literature, in the book of Jeremiah.

## 2.2. Structural Components: Relations, Series, Singularities

In order to grasp the implications of Deleuze's structuralism for prophecy generally and Jeremiah specifically, we can start by considering the components of a structure on this view. Any structure, at bottom, is composed of elements that are "necessarily organized" into a certain number of *series* (HRS 182). These series should be distinguished, first and foremost, from more familiar notions of spatiotemporal sequence, as neither series nor their elements allow for straightforward linear ordering in time or space.[5] The series of a structure are not to be found in simple progressions of moments, such as the minutes in an hour, nor in successions of objects, like the bricks in a wall. What, then, makes a series? The answer lies in the underlying commitment of Deleuze's entire philosophical project to the primacy of *difference*, understood as "pure difference" or "difference in itself" (DR 28-69). As Deleuze reads it, the history of philosophy has traditionally been dominated by a pervasive and perverse preoccupation with identity and sameness, according to which thought about anything must begin by ascertaining *what the thing is* through questions of "essence" and the like: only once you determine what a thing is are you able to say how it differs from all the things that it is not. Deleuze argues that this unchallenged prioritization of sameness entails the unwarranted subordination of difference, since it requires that difference is always defined secondarily in terms of more fundamental identities, leaving all kinds of differences—including those presupposed in the initial determination of identity—out of frame and unaccounted for (DR 50-51). In place of this misguided essentialism, and the whole "image of thought" that surrounds and supports it, Deleuze seeks to liberate difference from the chains that bind it to a predetermined or prefabricated concept—hence the notion of difference *in itself*.[6]

---

[4] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); idem, *The Logic of Sense*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas, trans. Mark Lester and Charles Stivale (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

[5] On the difference between structural series and spatiotemporal sequences, see Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Logic of Sense: A Critical Introduction and Guide* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 2-3.

Of course, in its fullest and most unrestricted totality, the foundational flux of pure differences is little more than an "undetermined chaos." Yet, through operations that will be described more precisely below (see 2.3), there arises a "relative order" grounded in this chaos, which allows for the emergence of structure from difference—and, from structure, everything else.[7] Indeed, Deleuze speaks not only of chaos, but of a "chaosmos" (LS 176; cf. DR 123). The portmanteau signifies a world (*cosmos*) positively defined by differential chaos, a space that is fundamentally disunified but not so disorganized as to fail to constitute a "world" in the end.[8] This world is populated not by clear-cut subjects and objects, but by series and their points or elements; the elements, in turn, are connected and constituted as series not by their similarities, but by their differences.[9] At the most basic level, this serial constitution, or *serialization* (LS 36-41), arises through peculiar patterns of *repetition* that establish relations between different terms without thereby suppressing or subsuming their differences (e.g., in the mind of a perceiving subject). Accordingly, as a counterpart to the concept of difference in itself, Deleuze speaks in this regard of a "repetition *for itself*," rather than for us (DR 70-128).

---

[6] On the motivations of Deleuze's philosophy of difference, see also Henry Somers-Hall, *Deleuze's* Difference and Repetition: *An Edinburgh Philosophical Guide* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 21-23. For Deleuze's critique of philosophy's regnant "image of thought," see DR 129-167.

[7] Williams, *Logic*, 5.

[8] On Deleuze's concept of chaos, see François Zourabichvili, *Deleuze: A Philosophy of the Event* with *The Vocabulary of Deleuze*, ed. Gregg Lambert and Daniel W. Smith, trans. Kieran Aarons (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 188-199, here 188-191.

In contrast to the actual things with which we are ordinarily and empirically acquainted, and which "incarnate" or "embody" the differential elements of series, series and their elements are *virtual* in nature and irreducible to anything actual (HRS 176-179). The strange character of these entities will become clearer below as well as in the next section (2.3), which more fully discusses the key concepts of "virtuality" and "actuality." Nevertheless, at this point, the differential repetition of virtual elements suffices to show how series of such elements should be understood: not as simple sequences of essentially similar objects that differ from one another only in degree (first, second, third…), but as complex arrangements of comparatively obscure terms that are defined by differences in kind, always in relation to another series.[10] The former description applies to *homogeneous* series, and the latter to those that are *heterogeneous*; it is with these latter series that Deleuze's structuralism is chiefly concerned. "Every unique series, whose homogeneous terms are distinguished only according to type or degree, necessarily subsumes under it two heterogeneous series, each one of which is constituted by terms of the same type or degree, although these terms differ in nature from those of the other series" (LS 36-37).

---

[9] Cf. Jean-Jacques Lecercle, *Deleuze and Language*, Language, Discourse, Society (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 103: "[I]f the passage from chaos to cosmos consists in the institution of some form of coherence or order, the series is the elementary form of that coherence, in that it is sequentially ordered and allows a synthesis of the manifold…."

[10] On differences of degree and kind, and the priority of the latter, see Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Hammerjam (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 17-35.

Like so many strands of French postmodernism, this one may appear at first glance to be irredeemably recherché. Still, it is important to recognize that the thoroughgoing abstraction of Deleuze's concepts stems not from dearth of coherence but breadth of comprehension: the concepts developed in his structuralism and elsewhere are meant to be coextensive with life itself and discernable in all its immeasurably diverse domains.[11] Abstruse or abstract as these concepts may be in their own right, examples of their impact on everyday life are utterly and ubiquitously accessible. This is true above all of language, which is to humans almost as water to fish. In fact, the structures of language are nothing short of prototypical: it was linguistics in which the principles of structuralism were first devised, and after which its methodology has always been modeled.[12] Deleuze goes so far as to posit that "language is the only thing that can properly be said to have structure" (HRS 170). For example, within language, the set of *phonemes* constitutes a particularly clear case of a heterogeneous series in the Deleuzian sense.[13] As "the smallest linguistic unit capable of differentiating two words of diverse meanings" (HRS 176), an individual phoneme is nothing other than a unit of difference marking particular "distinctive features" in the total phonetic system of human language.[14] Deleuze goes on to explain that "the phoneme is embodied in letters, syllables, and sounds, but…it is not reducible to them"; although these embodiments "give it an independence," it remains the case that "in itself, the phoneme is inseparable from the phonemic relation which unites it to other phonemes: b / p" (HRS 176). That is, such differential elements have no inherent value over and above that which is given by their relations with other phonemes: to more fully elaborate Deleuze's own example, /*b*/, a voiced bilabial plosive, is defined as such by (and thus does not exist outside of) its difference from the *voiceless* bilabial plosive /*p*/, and v(o)ice versa.

---

[11] The animating vitalism of Deleuze's philosophy receives its clearest, or at least most concise, expression in his late essay "Immanence: A Life," in idem, *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life*, trans. Anne Boyman (New York: Zone Books, 2001), 25-33.

[12] The advent of structuralism in linguistics can be traced back to Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Roy Harris (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013); on Saussure's importance, see François Dosse, *History of Structuralism, Volume 1: The Rising Sign, 1945-1966*, trans. Deborah Glassman (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 43-51. For an example of the linguistic foundations of structuralism in a specific discipline, see Claude Lévi-Strauss, "Structural Analysis in Linguistics and Anthropology," in *Structural Anthropology*, trans. Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf (New York: Basic Books, 1962), 31-54; cf. Lundy, "Structuralism," 72-74.

[13] For a fuller discussion of phonemes as differential elements, see Sean Bowden, *The Priority of Events: Deleuze's* Logic of Sense (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 155-158. See also Lecercle, *Deleuze and Language*, 105-106.

The example of phonemes as a heterogeneous series may be extended along (at least) two axes. Horizontally, remaining at the level of phonology, such series may be found in the phonetic system of any given language (*langue*), each of which expresses some of the constitutive relations that define a series of phonemes within the broadest abstract totality of language itself (*langage*).[15] At the same time, moving vertically from phonology to progressively higher domains of linguistic structure (morphology, syntax, semantics, etc.), series of a similarly heterogeneous nature can be seen to recur at all levels: for instance, just as series of phonemes are defined in differential terms, so too are series of "morphemes" (e.g., the forms of nominal declensions or verbal conjugations).[16] Moving along the horizontal axis requires posing questions about the relations among actual languages, and between these languages and their shared structural underpinnings. In Deleuzian terms, these are relations of *differentiation* and *actualization* (or "differen*c*iation"), which are discussed in the next section (see 2.3 below). The question of movement along the vertical axis is more germane at this point, as it indicates another integral component of structures in and beyond language. If the terms of the series at each level (phonemic, morphemic, etc.) are related by their differences, what connects series *across* these different levels?

---

[14] Bowden, *Priority*, 156.

[15] On *langue* vs. *langage*, see HRS 179. Bowden (*Priority*, 157) cautions that we should "not confuse structure and the actual 'things' in which structure is incarnated…. [L]inguistic structure [*langage*] must not, strictly speaking, be confused with the determined phonemes and morphemes of particular languages [*langues*]," because "linguistic structure is 'virtual' as opposed to 'actual'"; on this distinction, see 2.3 below.

[16] Cf. DR 187, where a similar dimensionality is posited for the organization of virtual (or "problematic") "Ideas": a "vertical dimension" of "*ordinal varieties* according to the nature of the elements and the differential relations: for example, mathematical, mathematico-physical, chemical, biological, physical, sociological, and linguistic"; and a "horizontal dimension" of "characteristic varieties corresponding to the degrees of a differential relation within a given order, and to the distribution of singular points for each degree (such as…the varieties of language ordered from the point of view of their phonological system)" (emphasis original). On Deleuze's concept of the "Idea," see Bowden, *Priority*, 95-151.

In a certain simplistic sense, it is not incorrect to say that the relations between series are no different than those within series: literally, that is, interserial relations are *no less defined by difference* than intraserial ones. Even so, since the former relations involve a new distinction between disparate levels or orders of series, their constitutive differences are not all on a par with those of the latter. The relations within series are established through processes of *reciprocal determination*, whereby each element in the series is defined by its differences from every other (HRS 176; DR 172-173).[17] Still, such reciprocally determined series are utterly sterile and unproductive unless they are somehow involved in the determination of elements in a different series at another level. For example, to the extent that the series of phonemes can be isolated from morphemes (and higher linguistic domains), it amounts to little more than a cacophonous and totally meaningless chain of oral noises, corresponding to specific contortions of the tongue, lips, and larynx (cf. LS 186-187). One series (e.g., phonemes) is fully defined only through its articulation with another (e.g., morphemes); the reciprocal determination of the former must be supplemented by a *complete determination* in relation to the latter (HRS 177; DR 175-176).[18]

---

[17] On reciprocal determination, see also Williams, *Understanding*, 61.

[18] For this and other examples of complete determination, see Bowden, *Priority*, 161-163.

In being completely determined through contact with another series, the terms (or distinctive points) of the first series take on a new value: that of *singularities* (or “singular points”). Simply put, singularities are points in the vicinity of which a system undergoes significant changes, such that these points “characterize curves or figures” in the system (HRS 176). Like series themselves, examples of singular points are not terribly hard to find. Indeed, some singularities are quite literally elementary, in that they pertain to systems so simple as to be understood by children in primary school: “a triangle for example has three singular points” (ibid.). Advancing a number of years in mathematical education, algebraic examples abound in the behavior of functions, for which singularities are identified as asymptotes, discontinuities, inflection points, etc. To continue the linguistic examples from above, consider how the differential relations among phonemes acquire new significance, and new uses, within the realm of morphology. However, just as a function need not resemble its derivatives, there is no straightforward conformity between the series of phonemes as pertinent sound differences and the series of morphemes as basic units of signification; the former has no intrinsic relationship with the altogether different arrangement of elements in the latter. For example, the morphological determination of the phoneme /aɪ/ (“i”) as a singular point in English (namely, the nominative first-person singular pronoun “I”) can by no means be inferred or derived from its position in the phonemic series alone.

In sum, two key properties of singularities at all structural levels must be emphasized. First, as stated above, while a distribution of singular points “corresponds” to a series of differential relations, this correspondence is not grounded in any relation of resemblance between these two arrangements (HRS 177). This claim should elicit no surprise, for it follows as a necessary consequence of the broader principle that heterogeneous series are constituted, both internally (among their elements) and externally (among other series), by their differences. Second, as a result of these interserial differences, series of differential relations and distributions of singular points each determine different aspects of the structure to which they belong. As Deleuze states, the "elements and their relations always determine the nature of the beings and objects which come to realize them, while the singularities form an order of positions that simultaneously determines the roles and the attitudes of these beings in so far as they occupy them" (HRS 177). In other words, series of differential relations define *species or classes* of beings, like phonemes as a set of phonic and acoustic differences, whereas the corresponding distributions of singular points define *functions or parts* for those species, such as the various syntactic and semantic values that phonemes come to bear as morphemes (HRS 178). In keeping with this functional role, Deleuze posits a close connection between singularities and *verbs*, especially in the form of the gerund or infinitive, which do not presuppose a subject in the same manner as a fully conjugated finite verb.[19] In linguistic systems, for example, "to pluralize" constitutes a singularity at the level of morphemes, which is embodied by diverse phonemes in different contexts (e.g., /*s*/ or /*z*/ in English but /*m*/ or /*n*/ in Hebrew and other Semitic languages). In a biological or meteorological system, on the other hand, a singularity can be found in the "greening" that characterizes healthy photosynthetic organisms no less than the sky before certain severe storms, corresponding to diverse configurations of the physical properties proper to these disparate domains.[20]

---

[19] Borrowing a phrase from Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Deleuze places singularities in the "fourth person singular" (LS 102-103); for the source of this phrase and its appropriation by Deleuze, see Joff Bradley, "The Eyes of the Fourth Person Singular," *Deleuze Studies* 9 (2015): 185-207.

[20] On the connection between verbs and singularities, and "to green" as an example of the latter, see LS 112; see also Brennan W. Breed, *Nomadic Text: A Theory of Biblical Reception History*, ISBL (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2014), 117-118.

On this latter point, however, the sheer diversity of human languages—as well as mathematical functions, biological organisms, social collectivities, or any other structural field—raises a critical question: having seen how Deleuze addresses the relations of elements and series within the obscure recesses of a structure, how does he account for the differences that so clearly exist among the ordinary things that structuralism seeks to describe? To answer this question, already anticipated above in the "horizonal" axis of serial organization, we must turn our attention from the components of structures to their virtual and actual dimensions.

### 2.3. Structural Dimensions: Virtuality, Actuality, "Different/ciation"

At the beginning of his essay on structuralism, Deleuze locates the basis of the titular intellectual movement in a tripartite distinction between the *real*, the *imaginary*, and the *symbolic*; or, more accurately, in the supplementation of a conventional bipartite distinction between the real and the imaginary with "a third order, a third regime: that of the symbolic" (HRS 171). However else we wish to define it, the real is first and foremost that which truly, if not always tangibly, *is*—real subjects and objects, but also their no less real parts, properties and relations, together populating a single and singularly real world.[21] The imaginary, in contrast, contains no more than shadows or doppelgangers of reality's proud populace. Whatever form it takes, the being of the imaginary is inherently duplicative and derivative of the real: an object in reality is doubled by an ideal image in the mind, and no matter how much the former may be deformed or distorted in the latter, the two remained fundamentally linked by a mutual resemblance.[22] It is beyond, or rather

---

[21] Deleuze (HRS 172) notes that "the real in itself is not separable from a certain ideal of unification or of totalization: the real tends towards one, it is one in its 'truth.'"

[22] Deleuze (ibid.) continues: "As soon as we see two in 'one,' as soon as we make doubles, the imaginary appears in person…. The imaginary is defined by games of mirroring, of duplication, of reversed identification and projection, always in the mode of the double."

*beneath*, these two seemingly sufficient domains that structuralism finds the realm of the symbolic, "irreducible to the orders of the real and the imaginary, and deeper than they are" (HRS 173).

So, what is the symbolic? For one, it is the locus of structures. On the other hand, it has "nothing to do with" forms, or figures, or essences; its "atomic elements…claim to account both for the formation of wholes and for the variation of their parts," while nonetheless claiming for themselves "neither form, nor signification, nor representation, nor content, nor given empirical reality, nor hypothetical functional model, nor intelligibility behind appearances" (ibid.). The symbolic, in a word, is *virtual*, whereas all that which Deleuze denies to the symbolic belongs instead to the *actual*. Perhaps the easiest way to approach these concepts is to oppose them to another, more familiar pair, the *possible* and the *real.* In the latter dichotomy, the possible fills a role much like that of the imaginary outlined above. The possible is the double or the shadow of the real insofar as the "form of the possible" is furnished by reality.[23] Though the real world may seem to be but one outcome of a vast set of ontologically prior possible worlds, the priority of the latter is belied by their epistemological dependence on the former, for it is always in and from the real that we find a model for the possible. However diffusely or indirectly, possible subjects or objects necessarily resemble something real—except, crucially, in their failure to possess the property of "realness" itself (DR 211-212). Even when the connections between real and possible are at their most attenuated, as in a thought experiment or (what often amounts to the same) a science-fiction story that deliberately stretches certain possibilities to their very limits, the possible is nonetheless defined, in the end, by a dual principle of exclusion and emulation in relation to the real.

---

[23] Zourabichvili, *Vocabulary*, 215.

In Deleuze's reorientation toward the virtual and the actual, both prongs of this principle are rejected. On the one hand, the virtual, unlike the possible, is by no means excluded from the real. The virtual stands in opposition to the actual, but reality equally encompasses them both; no less than the actual, "the virtual is fully real in so far as it is virtual" (DR 208). On the other hand, there is no resemblance between the virtual and the actual, in contrast to that which binds the possible to the real. The relationship between virtual and actual is not that of model to copy (as the real is to the possible), but rather that of one part of a whole (i.e., the real object) to another. Here, I should caution that the near-synonymy of "real" and "actual" in modern English will only beget confusion if it is imposed on these continental concepts. Deleuze's "actual" is better explicated by the word's cognates in French (*actuel*) or German (*aktuell*). The actual consists not of that which is "real" or "genuine" or "true," but what is "current" or, better yet, "present," insofar as presence encompasses both a *here* and a *now*.[24] As such, the actual refers quite broadly to particular concrete things as we ordinarily and empirically encounter them: books and pens and coffee mugs, but also minds and ideas and statements, all of which are actually present, in one form or another, as I write here and now at my desk.

Of course, since the actual for Deleuze constitutes only one part of a real object, it does not suffice to conceptualize actuality as the domain of "particular concrete things." Not even the simplest such thing is actual in its entirety. If the actual pertains to the part of an object that is somehow empirically accessible to us, then the virtual includes all the (no less integral) parts which are *not* to be accessed in this way. As François Zourabichvili puts it, "only the actual is given," but "the virtual is the insistence of that which is not given."[25] In his own descriptions of the virtual, Deleuze often makes recourse to a phrase borrowed from Marcel Proust: it is "real without being actual, ideal without being abstract" (DR 208; HRS 179).[26] Unfortunately, as with the actual, there is a certain risk of confusion in this use of "virtual," due to the word's ever-growing association with trendy technological innovations such as "virtual reality." Beyond the superficial similarity of terminology, however, Deleuze's vibrant virtual cannot be likened to, much less equated with, Zuckerberg's moribund metaverse. The avatars, tokens, and other simulated objects that populate the worlds of virtual reality are no less actual than their corporeal counterparts; nor, for that matter, does virtual reality in the technological sense lack a virtual dimension in the Deleuzian sense.[27] Notwithstanding Deleuze's occasional hostility toward metaphor, a better understanding of the virtual, and its relations to the actual parts of a real object, can perhaps be gleaned from the figure of an iceberg floating in the ocean. If the iceberg as a whole is the real object, then its exposed tip represents the object's actual part, whereas the virtual includes all that remains submerged below the water—and, indeed, the water itself. It is as if "the object had one part of itself in the virtual into which it plunged as though into an objective dimension" (DR 209).

---

[24] Cf. HRS 179: "What is actualized, *here and now*, are particular relations, relational values, and distributions of singularities; others are actualized *elsewhere or at other times*" (my emphasis). See also Breed, *Nomadic Text*, 121-122.

While it would be unwise to take the image of the iceberg too far, lest it concretize and thus distort the abstract concepts it is meant to explain, the simple fact of an iceberg's "in-ness" with respect to the ocean may help to capture another important aspect of the virtual: namely, its

---

[25] Zourabichvili, *Vocabulary*, 215.

[26] See also Deleuze, *Proust and Signs: The Complete Text*, trans. Richard Howard, Theory out of Bounds 17 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 58.

[27] On the relationship between virtual reality and Deleuze's virtual, see Wojciech Kalaga, "The Trouble with the Virtual," *symplokē* 11 (2003): 96-103.

*immanence* with respect to the actual. To say that the virtual is immanent is, at the very least, to reject a certain Platonic interpretation of this concept that would locate the virtual in a kind of "third realm," separate from and superior to the mundane theater of actual experience. On such a reading, the virtual would be tantamount to "another type of actuality," more distant and dignified than that of the world we inhabit but nevertheless modeled after its image.[28] Nothing could be further from Deleuze's intended meaning for this concept.[29] Just as virtual and actual parts coexist in a single object, the virtual and the actual belong in their entirety to a single reality; the virtual simply encompasses those dimensions or domains of the real that are not, and cannot be, given directly in experience. The virtual is immanent insofar as it lies on the same ontological level as the actual which it grounds and determines. In a word, it is *transcendental*, but not transcendent.[30]

As for the content of this immanent virtual, it is nothing other than the structures and series outlined in the previous section: "The reality of the virtual consists of the differential elements and relations along with the singular points that correspond to them. The reality of the virtual is structure" (DR 209). The actual, in contrast, consists of "that in which the structure is incarnated or rather what the structure constitutes when it is incarnated" (HRS 178). This distinction accounts for the thoroughgoing lack of resemblance between the virtual and the actual. In short, structures at once determine and differ from the things in which they are incarnated: to the objects and subjects of the actual world, and the real relations that link them, there correspond in the virtual only series of strictly differential relations and distributions of singular points. If the actual is primarily the dimension of being (continuity, stasis, identity), then the virtual is first and foremost a dimension of *becoming* (change, dynamism, difference).[31] To resume the linguistic example from above, consider, on the one hand, a phoneme as a virtual-structural element (i.e., a pure pertinent difference in sound), and, on the other, its multifarious incarnations in a diverse array of actual objects (e.g., its specific intonation in concrete individual utterances [*paroles*] or its generalized representation in letters and other orthographic signs).[32] It is clear enough that none of the latter beings can be fully equated or identified with the inchoate acoustic becoming in which the phoneme itself consists. At the same time, it is equally clear that actual linguistic objects themselves differ, and thus relate differently to phonemes and other elements of the virtual structure, depending on the given language to which they belong. What we need, then, is to account more systematically for the connections among and movements along these two structural dimensions: how, in other words, is the actual determined in and by the virtual?

---

[28] Zourabichvili, *Vocabulary*, 215.

[29] For Deleuze's hostility toward Platonism, see his essay "Plato and the Simulacrum," trans. Rosalind Krauss, *October* 27 (1983): 45-56.

[30] Deleuze describes his own philosophy as a "transcendental empiricism" (DR 56-57), which distinguishes itself from something like Kant's transcendental deduction by seeking the conditions of *actual* experience rather than those of *possible* experience; see also Williams, *Understanding*, 75.

The answer lies in the complex concept of "different/ciation," which is more accurately described as a *compound* concept. Just as a compound word is composed of two simpler words, the term "different/ciation" reflects the combination of two (somewhat) simpler concepts, "differen*t*iation" and "differen*c*iation" (DR 207-221). This terminological division tracks an underlying lexical distinction, present in French but not in English, between two types of differential procedure: *differencier* refers broadly to all forms of distinction-drawing and difference-making, whereas *differentier* applies specifically to the mathematical operation of differentiation. Since the alternation of these terms is no mere paronomastic ornament but a load-bearing pillar of Deleuze's philosophical system, an Anglophone interlocutor is left with little choice but to preserve the distinction in translation (DR xi). Felicitously, the respective etymologies of "differentiation" and "differenciation" help to clarify certain aspects of the technical meanings that these terms receive in Deleuze's hands. Even the slash in "different/ciation" carries potential pedagogical value, insofar as the construction "t/c" signifies a paradigmatic differential relationship, "the distinctive feature or the phonological relation of difference in person" (DR 209; cf. HRS 179).

---

[31] Thus Williams, *Understanding*, 54: "Structure is a living part of things. It is their intensity and the source of becoming and of change in them."

[32] For *parole* as distinct from *langue*, see Saussure, *Course*, 13-17; see also the reevaluation of *parole* as a fundamentally "social phenomenon" in V. N. Vološinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, trans. Ladislav Matejka and I. R. Titunik (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 58-82, here 82.

Most simply put, differen*t*iation pertains to virtual differences; differen*c*iation, to actual ones.[33] Yet because the virtual and the actual are themselves fundamentally different from one another, as outlined above, their respective processes of different/ciation do not proceed analogously. In the virtual, differentiation determines an array of differential relations and singular points that are entirely *coexistent*, but not at all confused or indeterminate (HRS 179; DR 206). Unlike some epistemically fuzzy field of possibilities that becomes clearer and more completely defined in proportion to our knowledge about the real, from which such a field derives, the virtual encompasses at once "all the varieties of differential relations and all the distributions of singular points coexisting in diverse orders" (DR 206). To the extent that any one of these relations or points can be independently and individually considered apart from all the others, it will admit of no uncertainty about its nature. The obscurity of any particular differential relation (of sound, color, affect, etc.) or singularity (e.g., "pluralizing" or "greening") does nothing to detract from its distinctness relative to every other.[34] At the same time, the obscure distinctness of that which coexists in the virtual cannot be adequately understood apart from the *comprehensiveness* of the virtual itself. In any domain amenable to structural analysis, the virtual structures comprise "*all* the elements, the relations and relational values, *all* the singularities proper to the domain considered" (HRS 179, emphasis added). In fact, it is precisely because of this comprehensiveness that the elements of the virtual are able to maintain their perfect distinctness; for any such element to be totally distinct, it must be distinguished with respect to the virtual in its totality.

---

[33] "We call the determination of the virtual content of an Idea differen*t*iation; we call the actualization of that virtuality into species and distinguished parts differen*c*iation" (DR 207). On the "Idea" in Deleuze, see n. 16 above.

In a helpful analogy, Deleuze likens this perfectly distinct, entirely comprehensive coexistence of the virtual to the phenomenon of white light, which "perplicates in itself the genetic elements and relations of all the colors" (DR 206).[35] White light contains all the colors of visible light without displaying them as such, but the colors are no less fully differentiated for being so contained, as demonstrated by the ready divisibility of white light into a perfectly determinate chromatic continuum (i.e., a rainbow) with the aid of a dispersive prism. (The cover artwork for Pink Floyd's classic album, *The Dark Side of the Moon*, can perhaps be read as a visual parable for different/ciation.) Along these same lines, the virtual whole of language is "that which contains in its virtuality all the phonemes and relations destined to be actualized in diverse languages and in the distinctive parts of a given language" (ibid.). Indeed, the comprehensive coexistence characteristic of virtuality is already indicated by the mathematical lineage of the concept of "differen*t*iation" itself. Even if practical or methodological constraints require the first derivative to be found before the second, every derivative is equally and completely "contained" in the primary function in much the same way as the colors of the visible spectrum in a beam of white light.

---

[34] This is how the virtual can be "ideal without being abstract"; see n. 25 above. In this regard, Deleuze follows Leibniz in reconfiguring the Cartesian paradigm that elevates clear and distinct ideas over those which are obscure or confused; in truth, the "clear-confused" ideas of the actual must be opposed to the "distinct-obscure" Ideas of the virtual (DR 213-214; cf. 252-254); see Somers-Hall, *Guide*, 154, 185-186, 191.

[35] "Perplication" is a Deleuzian neologism for the complex "interpenetrative" organization of the virtual; on this concept, see Somers-Hall, *Guide*, 150-152.

And yet, we must remember that the virtual, by nature, is not given in experience; that which is so given belongs instead to the actual. Accordingly, the virtual determination of any domain (language, society, biology, etc.) through differen*t*iation cannot account for the myriad empirical distinctions that collectively define actual things (e.g., individual languages, societies, or organisms) without the related procedure of differen*c*iation. In distinguishing this concept from differen*t*iation, it may help to recall that its etymological source, *differencier*, means simply "to make or become different" in any respect whatsoever (DR xi). Whereas differen*t*iation draws its inspiration from the relatively recondite field of differential calculus and applies to the no less rarefied realm of the virtual, differen*c*iation derives from the discourse of the (Francophone) layperson and likewise pertains to the thoroughly ordinary and accessible world of actuality, with which we are most intimately (because empirically) familiar. However, Deleuze also refers to differenciation with a more translationally transparent term, "actualization."[36]

One key aspect of differenciation or actualization was already identified at the end of the previous section, namely its essentially *dual* progression, in which *classes or species* of things are correlatively and simultaneously determined along with the functional *parts* of those things. The former determinations respond to the constitution of series of differential relations in the corresponding virtual structure (reciprocal determination), while the latter depend on the distribution of singular points within that structure (complete determination). For instance, from the virtual whole of language, actualization produces particular languages, or "language species," in one and the same movement as their constitutive parts: morphological elements, syntactical constructions, lexical stock, etc. (HRS 179).[37] Relative to the reciprocal determination of series in a structure and the complete determination of singular points among the elements of those series, actualization thus constitutes a third stage of "progressive determination," in which the first two stages "find their systematic unity" (DR 210).[38] To say that this determination is progressive is to say that it possesses a certain *temporal* significance: progressive determination, in its progressing, "always implies an internal temporality" or *rhythm* of actualization, "variable according to what is actualized" (HRS 180). For example, linguistic actualization (diachronic development of natural languages) does not proceed according to the same time or rhythm as biological actualization (evolution through natural selection). Although we can align these temporalities on a single shared timeline at a sufficient level of abstraction, so that "their virtual component [is] omitted," we do so at the expense of grasping the specific dynamics of actualization as it unfolds in a particular domain.[39]

---

[36] For the synonymy of these terms, see n. 33 above; cf. DR 211, where Deleuze asserts that "four terms are synonymous: actualize, differenciate, integrate and solve."

Against the totalizing backdrop of the virtual, moreover, we are now in a position to recognize another, equally important aspect of actualization. This is the inherently *partial or local* nature of actual products (subjects, objects, states of affairs) in relation to the total or universal virtual from which they arise. The virtual, as we have seen, constitutes a totality—or, as Deleuze also calls it, a *multiplicity* (DR 182-183; HRS 177, 179)—that encompasses all the differential relations proper to a given domain, in which each term is completely differen*t*iated and thus perfectly distinct with respect to every other.[40] At the same time, we have also seen that the distinctness of these elements is directly proportional to their obscurity, since any particular differential relation or singular point falls below and beyond the scope of conscious, empirical awareness. Being composed of such elements, structures are always unconscious, "necessarily overlaid by their products or effects" (HRS 181). No one of these products or effects, nor even all of them together, can suffice to embody or incarnate the full differential complexity of the virtual. For example, "[t]here is no total language [*langue*]" that would embody "*all* the possible phonemes and phonemic relations"; rather, "the virtual totality of the language system [*langage*] is actualized following exclusive rules in diverse, specific languages, of which each embodies *certain* relations, relational values, and singularities" while necessarily excluding many others (HRS 179, emphasis added).[41] More generally, as Brennan Breed puts it, the virtual is "determin*able* but is not given as already determined, and any determination is a limited, provisional manifestation."[42]

---

[37] See also Bowden, *Priority*, 157-159.

[38] On progressive determination, see also Bowden, *Priority*, 160-161.

[39] Zourabichvili, *Vocabulary*, 216.

To answer the question posed at the end of the previous section, it is this inevitable incompleteness of actualization, together with its intimate and internal relation to time, that explains the manifest diversity of actual beings in any structural domain. "Time," says Deleuze, "is always a time of actualization…. Time goes from the virtual to the actual, that is, from structure to its actualizations, and not from one actual form to another" (HRS 180). Yet, because the immanent totality of the virtual necessarily exceeds the immediate territory of the actual, the perfectly differen*t*iated structures of the former cannot be provisionally differen*c*iated into the concrete objects of the latter without suppressing some elements and selecting for others, depending on the conditions of the particular milieu in which the actualization occurs. Since no single language, for example, can embody the whole virtual structure of language at once, each actual language only ever actualizes certain elements of the structure, under certain conditions, at the expense of countless others. This progressive, selective, and "experimental" nature of actualization, which draws out or extrudes portions of the virtual as if through a series of sieves or dies—the forms or conditions of which are always determined by actualizations proceeding simultaneously in other domains—maintains an inexorable potential for this process to yield new and even unexpected outcomes in response to different circumstances.[43] No amount of time is time enough for actualization to be finished once and for all, because *time itself is actualization*.[44]

---

[40] The concept of "multiplicity" is redeployed in Deleuze's later delineation of the "rhizome" or "assemblage," on which see Chapter 5 (5.4).

[41] On the distinction between *langage* and *langue*, see n. 15 above.

[42] Breed, *Nomadic Text*, 123 (emphasis original).

To this point, I have outlined the composition of structures from series of differential relations and singular points, as well as the movement of these virtual structures into actuality through the process of different/ciation. In all this, though, I have yet to address a question of fundamental importance: what is it that creates or brings together structures in the first place? Without some account of the *assembly* of structures, my presentation of Deleuze's structuralism remains essentially incomplete. On a first pass, it is tempting to attribute the assembling of structures to the agency or activity of a *subject.* Even though structures, as we have seen, are necessarily unconscious, it is by no means obvious that this status should obviate the need for a conscious subject, by and in relation to whom unconscious structures would be discerned and defined as such; after all, it is always a subject who performs structural analysis. According to Deleuze, however, such structural presumptions for subjectivity are fundamentally mistaken. While it is true, in some sense, that there can be no structures without subjects, it is even more important to realize that there can be *no subjects without structures.*

---

[43] On the experimental quality of actualization, see Bowden, *Priority*, 160; the (admittedly imprecise) metaphor of "extrusion" is my own.

[44] Deleuze explains that the "genesis" of "the virtual and its actualization…goes from the structure to its incarnation, from the conditions of a problem to the cases of solution, from the differential elements and their ideal connections to actual terms and diverse real relations which *constitute at each moment the actuality of time*" (DR 183, emphasis added). Later in the discussion (DR 216), Deleuze more succinctly remarks that the "true meaning" of time is "creative actualization."

### 2.4. Structural Assembly: Serial Disparity, Paradoxical Objects, Intersubjectivity

To understand the assembly of structures, let us begin by revisiting the nature of the components involved therein. As described above (2.2), structures are composed of heterogeneous series of differential relations. The arrangements and values of these relations at one level of the structure determine, at another, a distribution of singularities or singular points, which correspond to the elements of the first series without resembling or otherwise duplicating them. Finally, the singular points define functions characterizing roles or parts within the structure, whereas the differential relations define the classes or species of beings that occupy those roles. We have seen, moreover, that distributions of singular points also acquire a serial form: in conjunction with the series whence they derive, singularities "organize themselves in another series capable of an autonomous development, or at least they necessarily relate the first to this other series" (HRS 182). The latter caveat clarifies that the possibilities for a second series are not limited to distributions of singular points drawn from the first, as in the series of morphemes and phonemes. It may be the case that the singularities merely relate the first series, in some manner, to another series comprising a disparate arrangement of entirely different elements.

We are now in a position to appreciate two important implications of this inherently "multi-serial" organization (ibid.). The first stems directly from the pervasive heterogeneity proper to structures. Because relations within and between series are defined by differences, to the exclusion of any simplistic imitation or duplication of one series by another, it follows that "the terms of each series are in themselves inseparable from the *slippages or displacements* that they undergo in relation to the terms of the other" (HRS 183, emphasis added). To the extent that the terms of one series are at all similar or comparable to those of another, they will inevitably be identified and situated differently in each case. Here, the most instructive instance is not linguistic but literary. In his recurrent example of Edgar Allen Poe's short story, "The Purloined Letter," Deleuze follows the reading of Jacques Lacan in isolating two narrative series that each involve the titular epistle (LS 38-40; HRS 183). In the first series, the queen confidently hides her letter in plain sight from the king, only to have it taken by the cunning and calculating minister; in the second, the minister similarly, and no less confidently, hides the letter from the investigating police, only to have it taken by the astute Auguste Dupin. Both series distribute the same three positions or roles as singular points (deceived–deceiver–detective), but "the minister in the second series comes to the place that the queen had occupied in the first one" (HRS 183), with the result that an element of one series slips or slides relative to the other, as if along a kind of structural fault line. Schematically, this slippage may be depicted as follows:

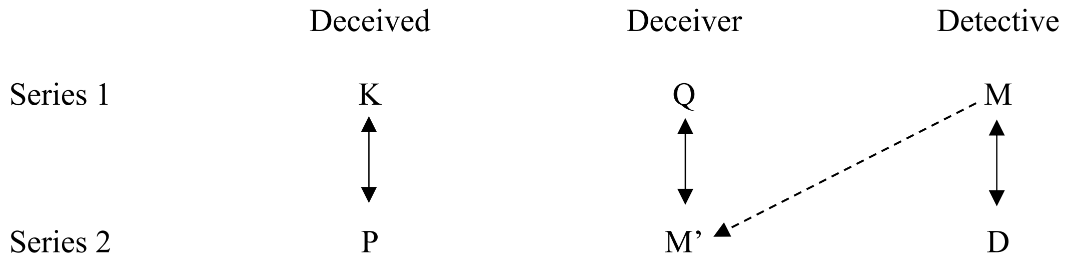


**Figure 2.1. Structure of "The Purloined Letter"**

In this diagram, the role of the king (K) in the first series is filled in the second by a new and altogether different element, the police (P); likewise, the role of the minister (M) is differently occupied in the second series by Dupin (D). In the role of the queen (Q), however, the second series introduces no new element but rather reproduces the minister from the first series. Even so, crucially, this element has shifted to a new role in the second series (M') such that, despite its reproduction, it nonetheless differs relative to the first. The movement of the minister, combined with the other differences between the two series, establishes a "perpetual relative displacement" at the heart of the story's structure (LS 39).

Like this perpetual relative displacement of serial terms, the second consequence of structural multi-seriality constitutes another form of disparity among series, namely their asymmetry with respect to *signification or subordination*. If relative displacement is conceived as fault-like slippage along a horizontal axis, then this other disparity can be seen to introduce a measure of vertical hierarchy into structure. As Deleuze writes in *The Logic of Sense*, "The law governing two simultaneous series is that they are never equal. One represents the *signifier*, the other the *signified*" (LS 37, emphasis original). While the language of signification can also be found in the "Structuralism?" essay (HRS 182), that discussion additionally describes this asymmetrical interserial relationship as a "subordination" of structural "orders" (i.e., series).[45] In any structure, Deleuze states, there is *something* which "subordinates within its order the other orders of structure, that then only intervene as dimensions of actualization" for the subordinating order (HRS 189). As such, the signifying or subordinating series assumes a *virtual* determining role with respect to the signified or subordinated series. The latter series, in turn, offers an organization of objects or other entities in which (some part of) the virtual terms and relations of the former will *actually* unfold.[46] At the same time, designations of signification or subordination are not invariable, but may well be “interchanged as we change points of view” (LS 38).

---

[45] On the connection between "signification" and "subordination," and the synonymy of "orders" and "series" within this context, see Bowden, *Priority*, 169-170.

Everything thus hinges on the identity of this “something” that joins series in their necessarily asymmetrical arrangements, always establishing one as signifying-subordinating in relation to another that is signified-subordinated. Or perhaps “identity” is the wrong word here, as this strange entity “has no identity except in order to lack this identity” (HRS 188). Befitting its peculiar nature and paramount importance, it bears not one name but many, each of which expresses a certain aspect of its unusual behavior: it is the “empty square,” the “paradoxical element,” the “supernumerary pawn,” the “riddle object,” the “dark precursor,” to name but a few (HRS 184; DR 119-120; LS 48-51 and *passim*). Its most enduring epithet, though, is the *object* = *x*.[47] The quasi-mathematical variable connotes at once an emptiness and an openness, but these properties should not be taken to imply any generality or vagueness in the paradoxical object: as part of a virtual structure, the object = *x* is no less fully differen*t*iated, and thus no less fully determinable, than any other structural component.[48] And yet, the object = *x* is less an “object” than an essentially irresolvable *problem or question* lurking within structures (HRS 187;

---

[46] Cf. Bowden, *Priority*, 168, who also supplies a linguistic example: “[T]he signifying series represents the differen*t*ial conditions of the signified series, while the signified series…brings about the differen*c*iation of these conditions or their actualization (we differen*t*iate between words in oral discourse by means of sound differences [i.e., the signifying series of phonemes], but the sound differences which end up being pertinent depend on the words to be distinguished [i.e., the signified series of morphemes]).”

[47] For this appellation, see HRS 184-189; DR 105, 120; LS 113; cf. LS 66-73, which replaces “object” with a series of other designations (“word,” “thing,” “action,” “instance,” “element”) each set equal to *x*. This object should not be confused with the similarly named but substantially opposed “transcendental object = X” invoked by Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. and trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 233 (A109) and *passim*, where “‘x’ means [simply] ‘in general’” (LS 97).

[48] “In each structural order…the object = *x* is not at all something unknowable, something purely undetermined; it is perfectly determinable, including within its displacements and by the mode of displacement that characterizes it. It is simply not assignable: that is, it cannot be fixed to one place, nor identified with a genre or a species.” (HRS 188).

LS 56-57).[49] The challenge posed by such an entity is not so much to find it, in the first place, but to follow it throughout the structure to which it belongs.

How, then, does the object = *x* operate in structures? First, from one structure to another, the role of "object = *x*" is variously assumed by a wide range of different symbolic objects. In the aforementioned short story by Poe, the mobile element is none other than the titular letter itself (LS 40; HRS 184). In addition to several other literary examples, Deleuze also points to the *phallus*, in the structure of human sexuality; to *value*, in the structure of economic exchange; and to the *zero phoneme*, in the structure of (spoken) language (HRS 185-188). Of these cases, the zero phoneme is arguably the most instructive, insofar as the object = *x* always constitutes the "zero" for its structure.[50] In fact, as we will see below, it is this inherent emptiness of the object = *x* that accounts for the connections between structures in different domains. Second, within each structure, the object = *x* is always moving or circulating, so that it necessarily differs *with respect to itself.* As Deleuze explains it, the object = *x* is "always displaced in relation to itself," in that it "is not to be [found] where one looks for it" while also being "found where it is not" (HRS 185). For this reason, the object = *x* is able to function simultaneously, and paradoxically, as both an "empty square" or "place without an occupant" and a "supernumerary pawn" or "occupant without a place" (LS 50). Specifically, in relation to the two (or more) series that constitute its structure, the object = *x* moves ceaselessly about as a kind of vagabond, a *nomadic* object that consistently appears in both series while belonging fully and properly to neither.[51] Consider the letter in Poe's text: though it figures in each series (*king–queen–minister* and *police–minister–Dupin*), and indeed sets both in motion, it resists any firm and final integration into either series at the expense of the other, in virtue of the multiple thefts and concealments that suspend it uneasily between them both.

---

[49] On the priority of problems and questions over solutions in Deleuze's philosophy, see also Breed, *Nomadic Text*, 124-127.

[50] For a more extensive explanation of the zero phoneme as object = *x*, see Bowden, *Priority*, 165-168. On the concept of the "zero" in the thought of Deleuze and his structuralist precursors, see Catharine Diehl, "The Empty Space in Structure: Theories of the Zero from Gauthiot to Deleuze," *Diacritics* 38 (2008): 93-99, 101-109.

[51] In resisting a definitive assignment to any one series over another, the object = *x* exemplifies Deleuze's concept of "nomadic" (as opposed to "sedentary") distribution, wherein things are not classified statically, in terms of what

No fewer than *five* important consequences follow from these peculiar properties of the object = *x*. First, in direct response to the question asked at the end of the previous section, the object = *x* is that which brings about the assembly of structures. Two heterogeneous, otherwise divergent series converge around this paradoxical object so as to form a structure: it ensures "the convergence of the two series…precisely on the condition that it makes them endlessly diverge" (LS 40).[52] Second, and more specifically, in these structures that are themselves defined by differences, the object = *x* functions as their "differenciator"—the "differenciating element of difference itself"—which creates the constitutive differences of series and relates them to one another (HRS 186; cf. LS 50-51, DR 117). As Deleuze writes, differences or displacements emerge among series "because the *relative* places of their terms in the structure depend first on the *absolute* place of each, at each moment, in relation to the object = *x* that is always circulating, always displaced in relation to itself" (HRS 185-186, emphasis original; cf. LS 40-41). In this regard, the paradoxical object is integrally involved in both the reciprocal determination of elements within a series and the complete determination of singular points between series. Consider, again, the two series of Poe's story: in each one, it is the movement of the letter that determines the roles or positions of deceived, deceiver, and detective, as well as the relations among the characters as they variously fill those roles. The constant movements of the object = *x*

---

they *are* (or, more often, what they are *not*), but dynamically, in terms of what they (can) *do*: on this distinction, see DR 36-37; Breed, *Nomadic Text*, 141; Somers-Hall, *Guide*, 40-42.

[52] Cf. Lecercle, *Deleuze and Language*, 103, who describes the paradoxical object as a "zipper" that "clinches" the two series together.

thus generate the pure differences, including both differential relations and singular points, that form the basis of Deleuze's structuralism.

Third, the object = *x* explains the asymmetrical relationships of signification or subordination in structures, as described above. Although it remains the case that the object = *x* cannot be fully identified with or integrated into one series to the exclusion of the other, it is no less true that this object circulates *unevenly and unequally* in the two series that it connects. In one series, the object = *x* is always present in excess; in the other, it is essentially lacking. It is on this basis that the former series is established as signifying or subordinating, and the latter as signified or subordinated. For instance, the linguistic "zero phoneme," as a "supplementary sound difference" without fixed distinctive features or a constant vocalization, exists in the series of phonemes as a purely additional, surplus element. At the same time, since this "phoneme" does not itself bear any definite morphological significance, it is strictly lacking in the series of morphemes. The uneven circulation of the zero phoneme thus determines the phonemic series as signifying and the morphemic series as signified, such that the differences among phonemes become virtual conditions for the actualization of morphemes (rather than the reverse).[53] On the whole, these dual determinations effected by the object = *x* reflect the two sides of its paradoxical self-displacement: as an excessive term in the signifying series, the object = *x* presents itself as an "occupant without a place," whereas it constitutes a "place without an occupant" as a fundamentally deficient term in the signified series.

Fourth, the object = *x* explains relationships *between* structures as much as those within them. In virtue of its perpetual and problematic motion, this "zero" is at once more and less than a mere empty space: it constitutes a veritable rip or *tear* in a structure, a central element that nonetheless reveals, by its paradoxical nature, the very limits of structuralism in any domain where it may find application.[54] As Catharine Diehl observes in a study of this structuralist trope, "the zero becomes the representation within structure of the center it lacks," thereby forcing thought to consider not only a structure itself, but also that which inevitably "escapes" or "exceeds" it.[55] Thus surpassing its own structure, which struggles in vain to contain it, the object = *x* necessarily invokes *other* structures at other orders or levels of virtuality. Deleuze himself describes the object = *x* in "each order of structure" as "the empty or perforated site that permits this order to be articulated with the others, in a space that entails as many directions as orders" (HRS 188). Through the emergence of a zero phoneme, for example, the whole structure of language opens out onto others that are by turns sociological, psychological, physiological, biophysical, etc., just as the zero phoneme itself generates progressively higher orders of structure within language (morphology, syntax, semantics, and so on). However, in the full transcendental totality of the virtual, it makes no sense to privilege or prioritize any one structure as the root cause or foundation of the others. "All structures are infrastructures" (ibid.), even (or especially) the linguistic prototype from which structuralism draws its sustaining breath.[56]

---

[53] For this example, see Bowden, *Priority*, 165-168.

Fifth, and finally, we must consider the implications of the object = *x* for *subjectivity*, and specifically the subject's relation to structure. Although it would seem at first that structures could not be discerned or created apart from the activity of a subject or agent, we have just seen that the truly decisive force in structural assembly is not subjectivity but the ceaseless circulation of an object = *x*. And yet, as the final section of “Structuralism?” makes clear (“From the Subject to Practice,” HRS 189-192), the subject still has a significant role to play in the organization and operation of structures. In fact, this role is strictly inseparable from that of the object = *x*, which is conceptualized here as an “empty square.” Deleuze tells us that “if the empty square is not filled by a term, it is nevertheless accompanied by an eminently symbolic instance which follows all of its displacements, accompanied without being occupied or filled…. The *subject* is precisely the agency [*instance*] which follows the empty place” (HRS 190, emphasis original). As a genuine source of agency, the subject *qua* “structuralist hero” is uniquely responsible for injecting creativity and chance into structures, such that they change dynamically in response to new circumstances, new concerns, and new problems (HRS 191).[57] As a mere accompaniment to more profound forces, though, this subject is continually (re)constructed within the very structures that it influences; the subject contributes nothing to structure without the prior and ever-progressing contributions of structure (biological, economic, psychosocial, linguistic, etc.) to the subject. In short, as Sean Bowden puts it, the subject is a “necessary though not sufficient condition” for structural assembly.[58]

---

[54] In this regard, the object = *x* is one of the many features of Deleuze's structuralism that radicalize it and push it in the direction of poststructuralism, whose "common thread" is "that the limits of knowledge play an unavoidable role at its core," to such an extent that "the limit is the core"; on the centrality of limits in poststructuralism, see Williams, *Understanding*, 1-4, here 1-2.

[55] Diehl, "Empty Space," 116-117.

[56] On language and linguistics as the paradigm for structuralism, see n. 12 above.

On more than one occasion, Deleuze describes the structural constitution of the subject—the genitive here is both objective and subjective—as “intersubjectivity” (HRS 190, DR 105), since it necessarily involves multiple structures and, by the same token, multiple subjects. Still, for the purposes of my project, it is important to distinguish Deleuzian intersubjectivity from other versions of this concept, especially those that currently have greater currency in the field of biblical studies. I have in mind, specifically, the philosophy of Mikhail Bakhtin, who also presents a theory of the constitution of the subject as an inherently intersubjective affair. For Bakhtin, in the smallest of nutshells, intersubjectivity is *polyphonic* and *dialogical*: my own perspective, and very identity, as a "self" is thoroughly and inexorably bound up with the multiple contrasting voices and viewpoints of "other" selves, with whom I interact.[59] To be a subject, on this view, is to be constantly in dialogue with another—indeed, many others—whose words, and worlds, necessarily elude me to some extent. As a result, subjectivity itself proves to be equally elusive, such that one can never have the "last word" on one's own identity.[60] In Bakhtin's own words: "The single adequate form for *verbally expressing* authentic human life is the *open-ended dialogue*. Life by its very nature is dialogic. To live means to participate in dialogue: to ask questions, to heed, to respond, to agree, and so forth. In this dialogue a person participates wholly and throughout his whole life: with his eyes, lips, hands, soul, spirit, with his whole body and deeds."[61]

---

[57] Cf. Bowden, *Priority*, 172. On the problematic orientation of structures for Deleuze, see also Williams, *Understanding*, 63.

[58] See Bowden, *Priority*, 171-172.

Although a more thorough discussion of Bakhtin's thought lies beyond the bounds of this study, certain affinities are nonetheless apparent between his views on the subject and those of

---

[59] For Bakhtin's concepts of "polyphony" and dialogue or "dialogism," see in particular his *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson, Theory and History of Literature 8 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984); idem, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, University of Texas Press Slavic Series 1 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981). On the implications of Bakhtin's work for (inter)subjectivity, see Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan, *Between Philosophy and Literature: Bakhtin and the Question of the Subject* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013). For applications of Bakhtinian thought in biblical studies, see *inter alia* Walter L. Reed, *Dialogues of the Word: The Bible as Literature according to Bakhtin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Carol A, Newsom, "Bakhtin, the Bible, and Dialogic Truth," *JR* 76 (1996): 290-306; Timothy C. McNinch, "Who Knows? A Bakhtinian Reading of Carnivalesque Motifs in Jonah," *VT* (2021): 1-17, doi:10.1163/15685330-bja10073.

[60] On the impossibility of last words, see Bakhtin, "Toward a Methodology for the Human Sciences," in idem, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, trans. Vern W. McGee, University of Texas Press Slavic Series 8 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 159-172, here 170 (ironically, the last paragraph of the essay); cf. Bakhtin, *Problems*, 166; Newsom, "Truth," 294-295.

[61] Bakhtin, *Problems*, 293, emphasis original.

Deleuze. In particular, both Bakhtin and Deleuze understand (inter)subjectivity as fundamentally *differential*, insofar as it requires the divergent perspectives of different subjects, and *dynamic*, insofar as it is always unfolding, never to be fully finalized or completed. Even so, there is (at least) one major difference that distinguishes their theories. Whereas Bakhtinian intersubjectivity connects the self and others more or less directly through ongoing dialogue, Deleuze posits relations among subjects that depend crucially on the intervention of a *third* term, namely the object = *x*. For Deleuze, that is, "selves" and "others" are only ever determined as such within structures that are already defined by the intervention and circulation of this strange, and decidedly non-subjective, object, which engenders not only subjectivity but sense, signification, and dialogue therewith. Even so, Deleuzian and Bakhtinian theories of intersubjectivity should not be regarded as irreconcilably opposed: rather, with the right effort, Bakhtin's dialogical philosophy may receive both complementary resonances and salutary challenges from Deleuze's more radical affirmations of difference.[62]

## 2.5. Conclusion

The foregoing discussion has surveyed much of the theoretical landscape of Deleuze's structuralism, from the differential elements of structures (2.2) to their virtual and actual dimensions (2.3), as well as the integration of these components through the obscure movements of a paradoxical object = *x* (2.4). To summarize the most essential points of the discussion, I can do no better than Deleuze's own enumeration of "certain minimal conditions for a *structure* in general" (LS 50-51, emphasis original):

---

[62] It is worth noting in this regard that, while Deleuze never engages extensively with Bakhtin, he does approvingly cite the latter's work on language (via Vološinov's *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* [see n. 32 above], often attributed to Bakhtin) in his collaborations with Guattari: see ATP 79-82, n. 10 on 524.

1. "There must be at least two heterogeneous series, one of which shall be determined as 'signifying' and the other as 'signified[.]'"
2. "Each of these series is constituted by terms which exist only through the relations they maintain with one another. To these relations, or rather to the values of these relations, there correspond very particular events, that is, *singularities* which are assignable within the structure."
3. "The two heterogeneous series converge toward a paradoxical element, which is their 'differentiator.' This is the principle of the emission of singularities."

This theory of structure will furnish the analytical framework for the next two chapters of this study, in which I offer a Deleuzian reinterpretation of Overholt's model of prophecy as a social institution (Chapter 3), and show how this structure accounts for the complex construction of Jeremiah as a prophetic character in the book that bears his name (Chapter 4). Even so, a remark made at the outset of this chapter bears repeating at its end: Deleuze's theory of structuralism is no more, and no less, than a single segment in the long arc of a resolutely *post*structuralist philosophy. Indeed, as the dizzying complexity of certain aspects of his system should suggest, Deleuze was already testing the limits of structuralism even as he was first conceptualizing it. Whatever the structures that I discern in Jeremiah may clarify in their own right, then, they point as well toward deeper and more drastic ramifications of Deleuze's thought for all biblical scholarship.

# 3. HOW DO WE RECOGNIZE STRUCTURALISM IN PROPHECY AND PROPHETIC LITERATURE?

And YHWH said to Moses, "See, I have made you God to Pharaoh,
and your brother Aaron will be your prophet."
-Exodus 7:1

## 3.1. Introduction

In his 1923 *Tract on Monetary Reform*, the economist John Maynard Keynes offers some pointed advice about the purpose of his profession. Rebutting those who hold that the relationship between the quantity of currency in circulation and the prices on goods should remain constant, independent of the behavior of individuals or institutions in managing their money, Keynes writes:

> Now "in the long run" this is probably true. […] But this *long run* is a misleading guide to current affairs. *In the long run* we are all dead. Economists set themselves too easy, too useless a task if in tempestuous seasons they can only tell us that when the storm is long past the ocean is flat again.[1]

If any part of this pronouncement survives in the popular consciousness, it is the memorable remark made in the middle: "In the long run, we are all dead." On its own, this line conveys a pithy and provocative pessimism that seems, from a modern perspective, to be better suited for dark humor on social media ("long run? i'm dead rn") than a treatise on interwar economics. But of course, as any scholar of the Bible (or other literature) well knows, such a striking claim must be assessed against its original context; in this case, the next sentence considerably clarifies the meaning of Keynes's quip. In short, his rejection of the "long run" hinges on the centrality of *practical prediction* to the whole enterprise of economic analysis. A key task of the professional economist is the anticipation of future market behavior, but an economist performs this task rather poorly if she restricts her analysis to a future so distant that it fails to address the most pressing questions and concerns of her audience.

---

[1] John Maynard Keynes, *A Tract on Monetary Reform* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1924), 80, emphasis original.

In the modern world, Keynes's advice about the futility of long-run analysis can be extended to a wide range of professionals—"knowledge workers," broadly speaking—whose jobs depend at least in part on the construction of informed predictions about the future, and on the dispensation of actionable advice based thereupon. Not only economists but physicians, attorneys, meteorologists, journalists, engineers, epidemiologists, climate scientists, and many others do well to remember that both they and their audiences are inevitably dead in the long run, and to frame their predictions accordingly—even if, from some of these professions, the most urgent message is simply that we may all be dead in less long a run than Keynes and his contemporaries would have thought! Interestingly, though, much the same advice could be extended to some very different vocations from the world of the ancient Near East. Whereas we today tend to look to scientists and other highly educated experts for insight into far-flung and inscrutable matters, from humanity's future to the futures market, the ancient peoples of Southwest Asia sought guidance about their own epistemically intractable problems from religious (and often no less educated) experts, such as diviners and prophets.[2] Endowed with specialized technical skills or a preternatural affinity for supernatural revelation, these ancient professionals, or *religious intermediaries*, would surely rank among the "knowledge workers" of their day, whose job it was to "[guide] the decision-making in society by means of revealing the divine will."[3] They were no mere soothsayers or fortune-tellers but "futurologists," deserving all the dignity that that suffix connotes in the modern world.[4]

---

[2] The equation of "prophecy" with "prediction" has been frequently, and fervently, disputed in biblical studies, but the latter is nevertheless an important facet of the former; see Martti Nissinen, "What is Prophecy? An Ancient Near Eastern Perspective," in *Inspired Speech: Prophecy in the Ancient Near East. Essays in Honour of Herbert B. Huffmon*, eds. John Kaltner and Louis Stulman, JSOTSup 378 (London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 17-37, here 18–19. More generally, Nissinen defines "prophecy" as "the activity of transmitting and receiving the divine will" (20); my comparison of ancient prophecy and modern knowledge work consists simply in the fact that the divine will often functions as a fount of supernatural knowledge, about the future and many other matters.

In this chapter, I examine the phenomenon of religious intermediation, chiefly as it appears in ancient Near Eastern prophecy, so as to foreground and formalize its epistemic dimensions. My analysis draws its tools and methods directly from the Deleuzian theory of structuralism outlined in the previous chapter (see Chapter 2). I contend, in brief, that the social and epistemological dynamics of prophecy, as elucidated by Thomas Overholt and others, may be understood as the components of a virtual structure in the Deleuzian sense.[5] This structure consists of two series, a "revelation series" (or "*r*-series") and a "proclamation series" (or "*p*-series"), which are defined by differential relations of *disclosure* and *feedback*, and which converge around a peculiar and paradoxical object, the *divine datum* or "Word = *x*." To this end, I begin by sketching a cursory typology of the forms of religious intermediation, based on past social-scientific research on this phenomenon (3.2). After connecting this typology to Overholt's model of the prophetic process and examining the latter in light of Deleuze's structuralism (3.3), I conclude by considering how the structure of epistemic intermediation was variously embodied or *actualized* in, among other things, the extant biblical and extrabiblical prophetic literatures of the ancient Near East (3.4.1). Ultimately, I show that the actualizations of this structure in the biblical prophetic books are utterly unlike those attested outside the Hebrew Bible (3.4.2). These investigations lay the foundation for the next chapter's analysis of the actualization(s) of intermediation in the book of Jeremiah, which is every bit as unique among the biblical prophetic books as those books are within ancient Near Eastern prophetic literature as a whole.

---

[3] On "intermediary" and other terms used for these professionals, see nn. 6–8 below. On their role in "decision-making," see Martti Nissinen, "Comparing Prophetic Sources: Principles and a Test Case," in idem, *Prophetic Divination: Essays in Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy*, BZAW 494 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2019), 377-396, here 391; cf. n. 2 above. Of course, religious intermediation was not the only form of "knowledge work" practiced in the ancient Near East. On this and other forms of "intellectual leadership" within Israel, see Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Sage, Priest, Prophet: Religious and Intellectual Leadership in Ancient Israel*, LAI (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1995); Lester L. Grabbe, *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages: A Socio-Historical Study of Religious Specialists in Ancient Israel* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1995).

[4] See Klaus Koch, "The Language of Prophecy: Thoughts on the Macrosyntax of the *dĕbar YHWH* and Its Semantic Implications in the Deuteronomistic History," in *Problems in Biblical Theology: Essays in Honor of Rolf Knierim*, ed. Henry T. C. Sun and Keith L. Eades (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 210-221, here 218.

[5] See Thomas W. Overholt, *Channels of Prophecy: The Social Dynamics of Prophetic Activity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989). On Overholt's model of the prophetic process, see 1.4.3.

Before I embark on this rather ambitious endeavor, however, it is worth acknowledging certain limitations of my abstract and unrepentantly (post)structuralist approach to the concrete phenomena of ancient prophecy: namely, the constraints of analytical distance. Since it is obviously impossible to observe the activities of long-dead religious intermediaries as they actually existed in antiquity, those who seek to understand these subjects have often done so with the aid of anthropological research on similar figures in comparable small-scale societies of the modern world. However, biblical scholars have mostly refrained from undertaking such research themselves, relying instead on the published results of others who are better equipped for the fraught task of fieldwork. On its own merits, this "armchair" approach is perhaps to be celebrated as a salutary corrective to the overeager Bible-and-spade methodology that once directed, and distorted, biblical scholars' forays into archaeology and other social-scientific domains. Yet, even if some amount of analytical distance may be productive in its own right, thornier problems start to sprout once studies that are themselves separated from their subjects become the basis for further studies, such as this one, that purport to draw far-reaching philosophical conclusions about those same subjects, who are now separated twice-over from the analysis—at best! Isaac Newton famously claimed that if he saw farther than others, it was because he stood on the shoulders of giants. If I succeed in even slightly surpassing the sight of my forebears, the most I can say is that I sat precariously atop a pyramid of larger, sturdier armchairs.

## 3.2. A Two-Dimensional Typology of Epistemic Intermediation in the Ancient Near East

Although the previous chapter has already provided the theoretical groundwork for a structural analysis of intermediation, such a project cannot proceed without first surveying the very phenomena that it intends to describe. Accordingly, I begin here by sketching a rough typology of the forms of religious intermediation attested in the ancient Near East and elsewhere. In biblical studies, the language of "intermediation" can be traced back to Robert R. Wilson's seminal study of *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel*.[6] The impetus for this terminological innovation was the sheer diversity of preexisting terms for this broad class of religious professional (prophet, medium, shaman, witch, sorcerer, diviner, mystic, etc.) and the considerable cultural or connotative baggage that some of those terms bear. While the inadequacy of a pejorative epithet like "witch" is almost self-evident, even apparently neutral labels present potential problems for taxonomic appropriation. "Shaman," for instance, derives specifically from the Tungus of Siberia, and this origin necessarily conditions and constrains the extension of the term to other, often highly disparate contexts.[7] The language of "intermediation" (for the activity) and "intermediary" (for a practitioner of that activity) is thus intended as a more objective, and more accurate, supplement to the existing designations for this widely attested process of mediating, connecting, or otherwise bridging the gap between the human and the divine.[8]

---

[6] See Wilson, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980).

[7] On this terminological diversity, see Wilson, *Prophecy*, 21–27; on "shaman," see specifically 23–24. This is not to say, of course, that any generalized usage of a culturally conditioned term is thereby inappropriate. For example, it is widely recognized that certain biblical prophets, particularly Elijah and Elisha, exhibit distinctly "shamanistic" characteristics insofar as they exhibit control over spirits and other supernatural powers; see n. 10 below.

As reflected in the diverse terminology that surrounds it, religious intermediation takes many forms and serves just as many purposes. Some intermediaries, such as shamans or "spirit mediums," establish contact with the divine world primarily to achieve and demonstrate control over spirits or other beings from that realm, even to the point of undertaking ecstatic, otherworldly journeys to reach them.[9] In the Hebrew Bible, this form of intermediation is embodied by figures such as the "medium of Endor" (1 Sam 28:3–25), who conjures the spirit of the deceased prophet Samuel at Saul's request, as well as the prophets Elijah and Elisha, who both harness divine power to perform a variety of miraculous acts.[10] The activity of these "shamanistic" or "spiritual" intermediaries can be broadly distinguished from another form of religious intermediation, namely *divination*, which may be more generally described as a kind of *epistemic* intermediation. Rather than the mastery of spirits, the main task of epistemic intermediaries is "to ascertain God's will and other esoteric knowledge."[11] As I discuss below, prophecy is best understood as a subset of divination or epistemic intermediation, and thus it is with this form of intermediation, rather than shamanism, that my analysis here is chiefly concerned.[12] Still, I must admit that there is plenty of room for ambiguity in this distinction. The channeling of spirits may easily serve epistemic ends, and a single intermediary may exercise both these functions, in addition to many others.[13] For Jeremiah, and for the rest of the so-called "Latter Prophets," however, it is the epistemic role the predominates; to the extent that these figures perform "acts of power," their actions serve more to convey symbolic lessons than to demonstrate control over supernatural forces.[14] If their more shamanistic counterparts often act as "miracle workers," epistemic intermediaries are first and foremost *knowledge* workers, in their words as well as their deeds.

---

[8] For these terms, see Wilson, *Prophecy*, 27–28; cf. Overholt's definition of "religious intermediation" as "a process of communication between the human and the divine spheres in which messages in both directions are 'channeled' through one or more individuals who are recognized by others in the society as qualified to perform this function" (*Channels*, 17).

[9] On these forms of intermediation, see Lester L. Grabbe, "Shaman, Preacher, or Spirit Medium? The Israelite Prophet in the Light of Anthropological Models," in *Prophecy and Prophets in Ancient Israel: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*, ed. John Day, LHBOTS 531 (New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 117–132, here 128–129.

[10] For a brief analysis of shamanistic traits in Elijah and Elisha, see R. P. Carroll, "The Elijah-Elisha Sagas: Some Remarks on Prophetic Succession in Ancient Israel," *VT* 19 (1969): 400–415, here 406–407.

[11] Grabbe, "Spirit Medium," 128.

At the highest level of generality, forms of epistemic intermediation may be distinguished and organized along two axes: one for the *means or manner* of intermediation, and another for the *social position* of the intermediary. On the first axis, we may place at one end forms of purely *technical* (or "inductive") intermediation; at the other end belong those forms that are entirely *intuitive* (or "noninductive").[15] Technical intermediation owes its name to the specialized techniques, such as ritual autopsies to examine a sacrificial animal's liver and other entrails (i.e., haruspicy or extispicy), that such intermediaries must learn to apply and interpret according to established sets of prescriptive, procedural rules. Other common forms of technical intermediation include the study of the stars and other heavenly bodies (astrology), or the observation of terrestrial phenomena, such as the flight of birds (augury).[16] Intuitive intermediation, on the other hand, usually requires neither extensive technical training nor fixed interpretive procedures, but depends instead on an intermediary's own intuitions about the divine realm and its inhabitants. The intuitive intermediary often acquires these insights through dreams, visions, or other intensely personal revelatory experiences.[17] As indicated by its alternate designation as "noninductive," this form of intermediation is guided, at bottom, by spontaneous and essentially irreproducible moments of contact between an intermediary and the supernatural. This stands in stark contrast to the activity of technical intermediaries, which "presuppose[s] exhaustive studies in the traditional omen literature and experience in observing material objects" proper to their particular domain of divinatory expertise (stars, birds, livers, etc.).[18] Of course, intuitive intermediaries also work within frameworks of culturally conditioned norms, influencing everything from the general patterns of their speech and behavior to the specific content of the messages that they convey.[19] On the whole, though, these norms are less robust, less formalized, and less learned than those that govern technical intermediation. In principle, if not always in practice, the only prerequisite for intuitive intermediation is the prior revelation of pertinent information in a personal encounter with divinity.

---

[12] In the rest of this chapter, accordingly, the term "intermediation" refers specifically to epistemic intermediation, unless otherwise indicated. Prophecy must also be distinguished from *technical* intermediation, also commonly referred to as "divination," on which see n. 15 below.

[13] On the multivalent functionality of individual intermediaries, see Grabbe, "Spirit Medium," 126. As for the possible connection between knowledge-gaining and spirit-channeling, consider the medium of Endor: although her immediate role is the conjuring of a spirit, Saul only asks her to do so for the unequivocally epistemic purpose of "inquiring of YHWH" for guidance (1 Sam 28:6–7). As if to support my distinction, though, the medium fulfills this request by summoning none other than the prophet Samuel, an epistemic intermediary. Similar traits are also attested among the prophets of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, by virtue of their association with the "strongly shamanistic" cult of Ishtar; see Karel van der Toorn, "Mesopotamian Prophecy between Immanence and Transcendence: A Comparison of Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian Prophecy," in *Prophecy in Its Ancient Near Eastern Context: Mesopotamian, Biblical, and Arabian Perspectives*, ed. Martti Nissinen, SBLSymS 13 (Atlanta: SBL, 2000), 71–87, here 79.

[14] On these acts, see Overholt, *Channels*, 86–111, esp. 87–88 on the symbolic actions of Jeremiah and others; cf. idem, "Seeing is Believing: The Social Setting of Prophetic Acts of Power," *JSOT* 23 (1982): 3–31.

[15] See Jonathan Stökl, *Prophecy in the Ancient Near East: A Philological and Sociological Comparison* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 7–11; for the same distinction in terms of "induction," see Nissinen, "The Socioreligious Role of the Neo-Assyrian Prophets," in idem, *Prophecy in Context*, 89-114, here 108.

---

[16] On the complex science of ancient astrology, for example, see Ulla Koch-Westenholz, *Mesopotamian Astrology: An Introduction to Babylonian and Assyrian Celestial Divination*, CNIP 19 (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 1995); Francesca Rochberg, *The Heavenly Writing: Divination, Horoscopy, and Astronomy in Mesopotamian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); idem, *In the Path of the Moon: Babylonian Celestial Divination and Its Legacy*, SAMD 6 (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

[17] See Nissinen, *Ancient Prophecy: Near Eastern, Biblical, and Greek Perspectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 14–15, who notes that the knowledge gained through intuitive intermediation is usually ascribed to "inspiration or spirit-possession" (15).

[18] Nissinen, "What is Prophecy," 21; cf. idem, "Socioreligious Role," 108.

[19] On the societal determination of stereotypical behaviors in intermediaries, see Wilson, *Prophecy and Society*, 62–68.

Notably, the distinction between technical and intuitive divinatory practices is nearly as ancient as the practices themselves.[20] As with many useful distinctions, however, this one is less a discrete binary opposition than a continuous spectrum of gradual differences.[21] The application of systematic processes for technical divination may involve a greater or lesser degree of personal intuition on the part of each individual technician, just as the revealed insights of intuitive intermediaries may require a greater or lesser dependence on learned techniques of psychic manipulation, such as trance or ecstasy, that enable revelation in the first place.[22] For this study, the key point is simply to recognize that the phenomenon of "prophecy," as attested in the Hebrew Bible and elsewhere, constitutes a type of intermediation that belongs squarely on the intuitive end of the spectrum. However we ought to understand the oft-obscure revelatory experiences that lie at the root of a prophet's pronouncements, the pronouncements themselves are always made in "words…which are understandable without further analysis with a special skill" like bird-watching or liver-reading.[23]

Perpendicular to the technical–intuitive axis, epistemic intermediaries of both types may be distributed along another that tracks their position relative to the power centers of their society. In many cases, intermediaries arise among groups at the margins of a society, such as cults that remain devoted to the worship of minor spirits or “old gods,” on whose behalf the intermediaries speak.[24] Such *peripheral* intermediaries occupy a role in their society that is ultimately ambivalent. While they may gain acceptance within the broader culture, even to the point of achieving reforms or other social remediations that benefit the periphery whence they came, they may also find themselves to be irreparably at odds with the established powers, and thus subject to persecution, further marginalization, and even death.[25] What nonetheless enables the existence of peripheral intermediaries is the presence of a *support group*, like one of the aforementioned minor cults, that values and validates their intermediation independently of the skepticism or outright antagonism that they may receive from the rest of their society.[26] It is only in the concrete context of such a support group that the potentially strange or subversive phenomenon of peripheral intermediation can be recognized as a genuine social institution, rather than a mere psychological aberration.

---

[20] The distinction was made by Cicero (*De divinatione* 1.VI 11) and, centuries earlier, by Plato (*Phaedrus* 244b–e); on these ancient sources, see Stökl, *Prophecy*, 9, n. 39.

[21] Cf. the discussion in 1.3.1, esp. the quote from Deleuze at n. 25.

[22] Stökl, *Prophecy*, 9. On the close relationship between "prophecy" and "divination," see also Nissinen, "Prophecy and Omen Divination: Two Sides of the Same Coin," in idem, *Prophetic Divination*, 75–85; the relationship is nicely encapsulated in the title to Nissinen's volume.

[23] Stökl, *Prophecy*, 10. This is not to say, of course, that prophetic messages do not require interpretation, but only that such interpretation lies within the bounds of normal human communication via natural language.

On the other hand, some intermediaries are much more firmly and integrally embedded within the power structures of their society, often because the society collectively recognizes (certain forms of) intermediation as a legitimate and productive practice of the established religion.[27] For these *central* intermediaries, “the social and political establishment constitutes the support group” that allows them to function.[28] In contrast to their peripheral counterparts, central intermediaries are thus far more likely to support the status quo than to advocate for major reforms that might undermine it. For the societies that employ them, central intermediaries foster stability—and its habitual handmaiden, hegemony—"by providing supernatural legitimation for the existing political order and by supplying divine sanctions for traditional religious, political, and social views."[29] As with the distinction between technical and intuitive methods of intermediation, however, there is no hard and fast line to demarcate, once and for all, the intermediaries of a society's "periphery" from those at its "center."[30] Confronted with a sudden change in the dominant political powers or a more gradual shift in cultural values, obsolescent central intermediaries and their support groups may be pushed toward the periphery, just as highly successful peripheral intermediaries may earn such widespread approval that they and their group gain a foothold, at least for a time, within the very centers of power that they once critiqued.

---

[24] Wilson, *Prophecy and Society*, 38.

[25] On peripheral intermediaries and the inherently precarious position that attends their social role, see Wilson, *Prophecy and Society*, 36–39, 69–76.

[26] On the importance of validation by support groups, see Wilson, *Prophecy and Society*, 51–56; on the validation (or lack thereof) provided by other segments of the society, see Overholt, *Channels*, 69–86.

[27] Wilson, *Prophecy and Society*, 40.

[28] Wilson, *Prophecy and Society*, 84.

If there is a single theme that unifies the two axes of the preceding typology, it is the primacy of *society* as the decisive force in systems of intermediation. Intermediaries cannot even begin to function in the absence of concrete social arrangements wherein the work of religious intermediation is recognized as such and at least tolerated, if not encouraged. This is especially true of the support group that most closely surrounds an intermediary, but it extends as well to the broader society in which such a group is located, since the society as a whole sets the norms against which the behavior of even its most reclusive subgroups will ultimately be judged. To stand in a Mesopotamian city gate and proclaim a message from Ishtar is prophecy; to do so on the steps of an American city hall is madness, even if some renegade sect of latter-day Ishtar worshipers might condone it. More than just engendering practices of intermediation in the first place, social forces also determine the distribution of such practices within the typology outlined above. For instance, in the Old Babylonian kingdom of Mari (located on the western bank of the Euphrates in present-day Syria), the central intermediaries were strictly technical diviners, namely haruspices. While Mari also had intuitive prophets, these were relegated to a more peripheral and subsidiary role, to such an extent that their oracles had no inherent authority but required additional confirmation (*piqittum*) from the extispicies performed by their central, technical counterparts.[31] Yet, in the context of the late Neo-Assyrian Empire, more than a millennium after the time of Mari, the same kinds of prophets are situated much closer to the center. Instead of peripheral and often anonymous voices subjected to corroborating *piqittum* rituals, we now find recurring figures who are personally "accredited" as authoritative (intuitive) intermediaries by the imperial bureaucracy itself.[32]

---

[29] On the functions of central intermediaries, see Wilson, *Prophecy and Society,* 83–85, here 84.

[30] Wilson (*Prophecy and Society*, 86) explicitly acknowledges that "both [central and peripheral] intermediaries are part of a continuum, and individuals may move along that continuum in either direction."

Graphically, the typology sketched in this section may be summarized as follows, with preliminary indications of the kinds of intermediaries found in each of its classes:

| **Means or Manner of Intermediation** (intuitive/technical) | **Social Position of Intermediary** (peripheral/central) | |
|---|---|---|
| | *Peripheral Intuitive* (professional prophets for minor deities, or non-professional dreamers and lay prophets) | *Central Intuitive* (established, state-sanctioned representatives of major deities) |
| | *Peripheral Technical* (diviners for hire, primarily in the service of private citizens) | *Central Technical* (scholarly diviners, primarily in the service of the state) |

---

[31] On the divinatory corroboration of prophetic oracles at Mari, see n. 62 below.

[32] On the disparate status of intuitive intermediaries in Mari and Neo-Assyria, and their apparent "accreditation" in the latter context, see Van der Toorn, "Immanence," 77–79.

**Figure 3.1. Typology of Epistemic Intermediation**

The actual instantiations of this typology in the ancient Near East will be more thoroughly discussed below (see 3.4.2), particularly as they relate to the virtual structure of intermediation presented in the next section (see 3.3). As noted above, social forces play a decisive role in determining both the presence and prominence of the different types of intermediaries, but at this point in my analysis, it is even more important to understand that any given society is but one actor in the grand drama of epistemic intermediation. Although the approval of (some part of) society is a necessary condition for the emergence of intermediaries, social forces do not suffice on their own to account for all the features and functions of these figures. For *epistemic* intermediation, unsurprisingly, it is the possession and dissemination of *knowledge* that truly distinguishes the intermediary in a society where the conditions of possibility for her office are already met.[33] In the complex movements of this knowledge and those who interact with it, a distinctly Deleuzian structure springs to life.

## 3.3. Structuring Epistemic Intermediation: Knowledge, Authority, and the "Word = *x*"

### *3.3.1. Differential Construction of the Revelation and Proclamation Series*

How, then, can we discern such a structure in the dynamics of epistemic intermediation? We should note, first of all, that this phenomenon presents us with three main "actors": the supernatural forces or powers (e.g., a deity) that serve as the *source* of revelation; the intermediary (e.g., a prophet or diviner) who initially *receives* the revelation and subsequently disseminates it; and the society, at least some part of which must *support* the intermediary in this endeavor. In fact, the role of this last actor is somewhat more complex than mere support. Since intermediation always occurs within the concrete context of a specific society, some part of that society also serves as the intended *audience* of the revealed message. This audience may overlap to some extent with the intermediary's support group, but it need not. Moreover, the size and composition of the audience may vary considerably from one act of intermediation to another: it can be as small as a single individual, such as a monarch or a private client, or as large as the population of a city or an entire nation. In the ancient Near East—or, at least, in its extrabiblical sources—the most frequent subjects of prophetic messages are kings and other individual elites, although collective audiences are by no means unattested.[34] In the Hebrew Bible, notably, the ratio is reversed: a small minority of messages are directly addressed to kings (e.g., 2 Sam 7; Jer 21–23), but many more are spoken to popular, indeed plenary audiences that often encompass whole nations, both foreign (as in the common genre of "oracles against the nations") and domestic (i.e., Israel or Judah, depending on the specific context of the prophet in question).[35] As I show below (see 3.4), this point of divergence between the biblical prophets and their extrabiblical congeners reflects deeper differences in the actualization of the structure of intermediation in each of these domains.

---

[33] My use of feminine language in general statements about prophecy rests as much on empirical features of ancient intermediation as it does on ethical concerns about equity and inclusion in the modern world. Throughout the ancient Near East, female intermediaries are widely attested; in some cases, such as the prophets of Neo-Assyria, they are even the norm. On the biblical evidence, see Esther J. Hamori, *Women's Divination in Biblical Literature: Prophecy, Necromancy, and Other Arts of Knowledge*, AYBRL (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015); cf. H. G. M. Williamson, "Prophetesses in the Hebrew Bible," in Day, *Prophecy and Prophets*, 65–80. On Mari and Neo-Assyria, and the latter's preponderance of female prophets, see Stökl, "Female Prophets in the Ancient Near East," in Day, *Prophecy and Prophets*, 47–61.

---

[34] On the different audiences attested at Mari, for example, see Herbert B. Huffmon, "The Expansion of Prophecy in the Mari Archives: New Readings, New Information," in *Prophecy and Prophets: The Diversity of Contemporary Issues in Scholarship*, ed. Yehoshua Gitay, SemeiaSt (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 9-22, here 18.

[35] Although the utterance of oracles against foreign nations may seem to presuppose an audience that lies outside the intermediary's own society, the true significance of these declarations consists not "in what they 'said' to the enemy but rather in the function which they performed within the context of [their own] society"; on the function(s) of such oracles in Israel, see John H. Hayes, "The Usage of Oracles against Foreign Nations in Ancient Israel," *JBL* 87 (1968): 81–92, here 81. See also the similar, and more recent, assessment in Anselm C. Hagedorn, "Looking at Foreigners in Biblical and Greek Prophecy," *VT* 57 (2007): 432–448.

At this point, though, we should recall that these three actors—the *deity* as source of revelation; the *prophet* or other intermediary as its recipient and messenger; some segment of the broader society as its *audience*—are essentially the same as those featured in Thomas Overholt's model of the process of prophecy (*sensu lato*).[36] As discussed at the end of Chapter 1 (see 1.4), the actors in this model are connected by a "triangular" set of dyadic relationships. Of these, the most important are those that link the deity and the prophet, on the one hand (the deity–prophet axis), and the prophet and the audience, on the other (the prophet–audience axis). Because their constitutive relationships are reciprocal, both axes are bidirectional: they involve not only *disclosure*, whereby information moves from deity to prophet (as "revelation") and from prophet to audience (as "proclamation"), but also *feedback*, whereby the prophet reacts to the deity's revelations much like the audience responds to the prophet's proclamations. As for the relations on the third side of the triangle, which bypass the prophet so as to link the audience and the deity directly, they are too tenuous to constitute an "axis" on a par with these others. Whereas the relations of revelation and proclamation are bidirectional, the only immediate relationship between the deity and the audience is unidirectional: namely, the latter's *expectation* that the prophet's message will somehow be confirmed or denied by the former.[37] In fact, as I show below, this relationship is adequately accounted for within the structure formed by the other two "axes"; it need not be treated as a third axis in its own right.

---

[36] Importantly, Overholt's model of this process accounts not only for intuitive intermediation (i.e., prophecy *sensu stricto*) but also for its technical counterparts (i.e., divination). For his analysis of the latter, see *Channels*, 117–147; he concludes that "[i]n terms of their social role and function…diviners must be considered alongside prophets as legitimate intermediaries" (147). Still, for the sake of simplicity, I use "prophet"/"prophecy" and "intermediary"/"intermediation" interchangeably in the remainder of this section, until the distinction between (intuitive) prophecy and (technical) divination becomes directly relevant to the discussion in the next (see 3.4.2 below).

[37] Of course, a prophet's audience may enjoy direct relationships with the deity that have little or nothing to do with epistemic intermediation, through practices such as communal worship or personal prayer.

At the most basic level, each of these axes describes a kind of *event* that plays out among the three actors involved in the prophetic process.[38] The supernatural revelations of the deity–prophet axis are first and foremost *experiential* events. Like all experiences, they are necessarily private and internal to the mind of the individual who experiences them. In sharing even our most mundane experiences, we can go no further than verbalization or other inevitably imperfect forms of external representation. While I can put my own experiences into words, I can never put those very experiences into the mind of another; even two persons viewing the same scene at the same time must do so from different and to some extent incommensurable perspectives. Of course, in most mundane cases of sensation and communication, we are able to get along perfectly fine despite these philosophical difficulties.[39] Supernatural revelation, however, is no mundane experience: it requires an encounter with divinity that is not only physically outside but metaphysically *beyond* the mind of the one who receives it. This transcendent or "transpersonal" dimension raises revelation to a phenomenological plane that is quite literally *extra*ordinary.[40]

---

[38] Throughout this chapter, I use the term "event" in its common meaning of "a particular occurrence," "something that happens," "a certain state of affairs," etc. I should note, as a potential source of confusion, that Deleuze himself draws a sharp distinction between "events" and "states of affairs," and employs both as technical terms. For Deleuze's own presentation of this distinction, see LS 1-3; cf. James Williams, "If Not Here, Then Where? On the Location and Individuation of Events in Badiou and Deleuze," *Deleuze Studies* 3 (2009): 97–123. This is not to say, though, that my events are irredeemably at odds with Deleuze's conception thereof. Deleuzian events are essentially active moments of becoming, better expressed by verbs than substantives, and are discoverable as such in my events of revelation and proclamation; this is particularly true of the *singular points* that define the participants in these events, on which see 3.3.2 below.

[39] On these problems and their solutions, see Willard V. Quine, *Word and Object* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1960).

[40] On the necessarily "transpersonal" nature of prophetic revelation, see Abraham J. Heschel, *The Prophets*, vol. 2 (New York: Harper Colophon, 1962), 206–226. Cf. Nissinen, "Spoken, Written, Quoted, and Invented: Orality and Writtenness in Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy," in *Writings and Speech in Israelite and Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy*, ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Michael H. Floyd, SBLSymS 10 (Atlanta: SBL, 2000), 235-271, here 239-240: "[D]ivine revelations are a matter of subjective experience beyond everyday perception and unattainable to other persons without any share in the same experience."

Even in cases where contact with the supernatural is attenuated almost to the point of absence, as in astrology and many other forms of technical divination, revelation still rests on recondite recesses of privileged knowledge that are obscure, if not entirely opaque, to the layperson.[41] In contrast, the proclamations that characterize the prophet–audience axis are comparatively ordinary and concomitantly transparent: these are public and external events that play out, in plain view, between the prophet and other persons. In a word, they are not transpersonal but *interpersonal*. As a result, events of proclamation are not only more "tangible" than those of revelation, since they are always experienced jointly by multiple firsthand observers (i.e., the prophet and an audience of at least one), but also more "critical" or "existential," because it is the audience's positive or negative response that most immediately validates or vitiates the revealed message, as well as the prophet who bears it.[42]

At the end of Chapter 1, I respectively rechristened the deity–prophet and prophet–audience axes as the *revelation series* (or "*r*-series," for short) and the *proclamation series* (or "*p*-series"). My initial presentation of these series was motivated chiefly by the mimetic features of the book of Jeremiah, but it must not be thought that they pertain only to that particular text. While these two series do help to explain the presentation of prophecy in Jeremiah and other ancient prophetic literature (see 3.4.1 below and Chapter 4), it is only because they constitute a more foundational *virtual* structure that grounds all *actual* forms of epistemic intermediation: both technical and intuitive, both central and peripheral, both the sociohistorical phenomenon of intermediation and the diverse textual depictions of that phenomenon. We are now, at last, in a position to understand these structural implications of Overholt's model.

---

[41] On the role of "revelation" in divination, see 3.4.2 below.

[42] See Overholt, "Jeremiah and the Nature of the Prophetic Process," in *Scripture in History & Theology: Essays in Honor of J. Coert Rylaarsdam*, ed. Arthur L. Merrill and Thomas W. Overholt, PTMS 17 (Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1977), 129-150, here 132; cf. the discussion in 1.4. Of course, for predictions and other messages that make claims about the future, validation may come in the form of a state of affairs that confirms the message, regardless of any immediate hostility on the part of the audience (this is essentially what happens to Jeremiah). Even in such a case, though, the prophet cannot continue to function in that role without a certain baseline receptivity from the audience, in advance of any future confirmation.

We have already seen that both revelations and proclamations entail two distinct relations among their participants: the transfer of information, or *disclosure,* as well as the reaction to that information, or *feedback*. If we look more closely at these relations, we will see that they are properly differential: they arise, respectively, from differences in *epistemic content*—that is, knowledge—and *epistemic authority,* or the ability to legitimate knowledge *as knowledge*, as opposed to deception or delusion. Through disclosure, knowledge moves from a knowing deity to a prophet who does not (yet) know, just as it will move from the prophet who (now) knows to an audience that does not. In both revelations and proclamations, the relations of disclosure depend on differences between the two participants with respect to their possession of certain epistemic content. On the other hand, feedback concerns not merely the possession of knowledge but its authorization: it is the means by which one person affirms or denies the value of the claims to knowledge made by another. The relations of feedback thus constitute a kind of mirrored inversion of those of disclosure. The audience responds to the prophet's disclosures so as to legitimate them, or not; similarly, the prophet must react to the deity's disclosures in order to recognize them as real revelations (and not, say, bad dreams) and receive them as such. Together, these relations of disclosure and feedback account for the reciprocal determination of elements in the *r*- and *p*-series.

At the same time, if we compare the underlying epistemological dynamics of these relations as they appear in revelations and proclamations, it becomes clear that their status in each series is markedly asymmetrical. In the *r*-series, disclosure takes the form of a strictly "downward" movement of knowledge, which travels from a "higher," eminently inaccessible supernatural domain to a "lower," essentially accessible earthly one.[43] Though methods of accessing the supernatural are numerous, and highly variable across cultural contexts, these methods are united in allowing divine knowledge to travel across a "gap" that is at once ontological and epistemological. The events that we recognize as "revelation" find their source in a separate order of supernatural beings that enjoy, by their very separateness, a uniquely privileged perspective on the course of human affairs.[44] In a revelatory event, such a being deigns to speak from this perspective to (and through) an intermediary, to whom supernatural knowledge is thereby disclosed. Through such direct contact with divinity, revelatory disclosures are imbued with a certain *sublimity*, which all but ensures that an intermediary will accept whatever it is that they reveal. Although the intermediary may well struggle to discern the divine will, or to digest the potentially unpalatable information that it discloses, the dictates of the deity tend overwhelmingly to triumph in the end.[45] Accordingly, in the *r*-series, the relations of feedback, proceeding from prophet to deity, are strictly secondary to the relations of disclosure that proceed from the deity to the prophet. Feedback here serves more to clarify or come to terms with the content of revealed knowledge than to determine whether that knowledge has any value in the first place.

---

[43] The terms "higher" and "lower" here refer, respectively, to a transcendent realm and the world in relation to which it is transcendent. The spatial orientation is merely metaphorical; a chthonic god is no less capable of revelation than a celestial one. In the ancient Near East, the gods were thought to maintain intimate connections to human spaces and places, such as temples and cities, that tend to scramble our modern notions of "transcendence"; see Mark S. Smith, *Where the Gods Are: Spatial Dimensions of Anthropomorphism in the Biblical World*, AYBRL (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016). In any case, whether the gods are truly transcendent or simply superhuman, this downward epistemological dynamic remains unchanged.

[44] On this "gap" as a prerequisite for intermediation, see Wilson, *Prophecy and Society*, 28–29. Of course, no less than the methods of crossing it, the conception of the "gap" itself may vary across cultures. For example, see Van der Toorn, "Immanence," 80–84 on the different loci of prophetic knowledge in Mari and Neo-Assyria: for the former, the gods spoke from their images in earthly temples, whereas the latter understood divine messages to come from a properly heavenly realm.

[45] The theme of the prophet's relative powerlessness in the face of the divine will to prophesy is well attested in cultural depictions of prophecy, like those of the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Jonah and, indeed, Jeremiah; cf. also the famous declaration of Amos 3:8), but it is supported equally well by the empirical evidence of prophecy in modern societies, on which see Wilson, *Prophecy and Society*, 49–50.

The *p*-series likewise presents us with differential disclosures of knowledge, which moves, as noted above, from an intermediary already informed by supernatural revelation to an audience that has yet to be so informed. Importantly, though, the intermediary cannot reveal anything to the audience with the same private, numinous power whereby revelation is first received from the deity. In revelation, the prophet drinks directly from the fount of divine knowledge, but once ingested and regurgitated, that previously pristine knowledge becomes muddled by the dangers of misapprehension and mendacity that threaten all interpersonal communication. Whereas revelation involves the "vertical" movement of a message from the revealing deity down to the prophet, the proclaiming prophet can only ever promulgate the message "horizontally," as a mere human among other humans. This is why the power of epistemic authorization rests with the audience and not with the intermediary, since the intermediary is ultimately unable to cow or compel the audience into accepting a divine message that the latter refuses to recognize as such. Relative to the *r*-series, then, the relations of feedback and disclosure acquire opposite values in the *p*-series: the forces of feedback become most decisive, while the disclosures that prompt them recede to a more causal or instrumental role.

In the preceding descriptions of disclosure and feedback, I have presented these relations as essentially dyadic, connecting the deity and the prophet in revelation, and the prophet and the audience in proclamation. In truth, both relations are better understood as *triadic*, although the identity of the third term varies in accordance with the event in question. In the events of revelation, disclosure and feedback between deity and prophet are always augmented by the *audience*. Supernatural disclosures necessarily involve the audience insofar as their content must somehow pertain to the audience's concerns and interests if it is to be worth disclosing, let alone promulgating, at all. Prophetic feedback to these disclosures must likewise account for the potential reactions of the audience by which they will ultimately be judged. In the interpersonal relations of proclamation, on the other hand, it is the *supernatural* that serves as the supplementary term. A prophet's putative disclosure of the divine will must, by that very fact, make reference to the deity responsible for the disclosure, just as the audience's feedback presupposes certain expectations about the revealing deity: for example, whether it intended for the prophet to bear the message, and whether it intends to bear out the message over the course of subsequent events. According to Overholt's model, these expectations would constitute a third, more attenuated "axis" of the prophetic process, but we can see now that this "axis" is adequately encompassed by the *p*-series itself: much like the audience in the *r*-series, the supernatural power participates implicitly in the events of proclamation as an integral yet "superempirical" actor. More generally, for both revelations and proclamations, the third term is not so much directly involved in these events as it is indirectly *invoked*, remaining continually but crucially outside the frame of the action.

In these ramified relations of disclosure and feedback, the three actors of Overholt's model—the deity, the intermediary, and the audience—are (re)defined, differentially, as so many terms of the revelation and proclamation series. In terms of Deleuze's structuralism, each of these appellations denotes a "species" or class of beings that incarnates or embodies a certain configuration of differential relations within the structure of intermediation (HRS 178). The revealing deity is defined primarily by its preeminence in the relations of disclosure, while the receiving audience is chiefly characterized by its no less paramount position in the relations of feedback; each of these beings is likewise defined by its more marginal relation to the events of proclamation and revelation, respectively. The intermediary, unsurprisingly, is defined by its intermediate position between the two other figures. What is more, these beings "exist only through the relations they maintain with one another" (LS 50). In the absence of any one of the three, not only the intermediary but also the deity and the audience would thereby lose their defining differences and, to that extent, disappear.

Following Deleuze's lead, these reciprocal determinations ought to be supplemented by the "complete determination" of distributions of singularities or singular points, corresponding to the differential relations of disclosure and feedback and characterizing parts, functions, or roles for the beings defined by those relations. Recalling the discussion of singularities in the previous chapter—"a triangle for example has three singular points" (HRS 176)—we can rightly expect that Overholt's model would yield a threefold distribution of these points.[46] Of course, in reformulating the relations of the model, we have witnessed the deformation of its original shape, but some semblance of triangularity nonetheless persists in the triadic relations of the *r*- and *p*-series that have replaced the trio of dyads in Overholt's original schema. Indeed, among the three terms identified above, an equal number of roles may be discerned: 1) the informed *source* disclosing special knowledge; 2) the comparatively uninformed *recipient* to whom that knowledge is directly disclosed, and who reacts to it through feedback; and 3) the indirect *object* of the knowledge, to whom it implicitly yet necessarily refers. Although these roles do not constitute a separate series "capable of an autonomous development" (HRS 182), as in the last chapter's example of the series of morphemes vis-à-vis phonemes, they serve nonetheless to

---

[46] See the discussion in 2.2; cf. Figure 1.2 for the shape of Overholt's model.

"relate" the terms of the *r*-series and *p*-series to one another insofar as the same three roles recur in each series.[47]

It is important to remember, though, that singularities are more closely related to *verbs* than to substantives; they describe characteristic actions ("greening," "pluralizing") more than they denote any concrete entity that might be characterized by those actions (a green tree, the morpheme "-s").[48] This is no less true for the singularities of the structure of intermediation. Behind the superficial stasis of each role named above ("source," "recipient," "object") lies a far more dynamic cluster of actions or functions that truly defines the role, and from which it ultimately derives. The nature of these actions will become clearer in the next section (3.3.2), but we can see even now that there is no single, immutable identification of these structural roles, *qua* actions, with the serial elements (deity, intermediary, audience) that fill them. Instead, as we move from one series to the other, those figures perform different actions, and thus come to occupy different roles. In the *r*-series, the supernatural acts as source, the intermediary as recipient, and the audience as object; in the *p*-series, we instead find the intermediary as source, the audience as recipient, and the supernatural as object.

In these distributions of singular points, then, we also discover the "relative displacement" that is to be expected among structural series (HRS 184), whereby they correspond and communicate without simply doubling or mirroring one another. In fact, such displacement is evident not only in the singular points of the *r*- and *p*-series, as just described, but also in the differential relations whence these points arise: the relations of disclosure that are paramount in the *r*-series assume a subsidiary status in the *p*-series, and vice versa. Although the supernatural power and the human prophet occupy structurally analogous roles as source in the disclosure of knowledge, only the former can disclose that knowledge with the full noetic force of the *mysterium tremendum*, at once unstoppable and unfathomable. Similarly, both prophet and audience act as recipients offering feedback in response to disclosure, but the prerogative of outright repudiation rests with the audience alone. Like the previous chapter's diagrammatic depiction of the structure of Poe's *Purloined Letter* (cf. Figure 2.1), these various aspects of the structure of intermediation may be (literally) drawn together as follows:

---

[47] See the discussion in 2.4.

[48] See the discussion in 2.2.

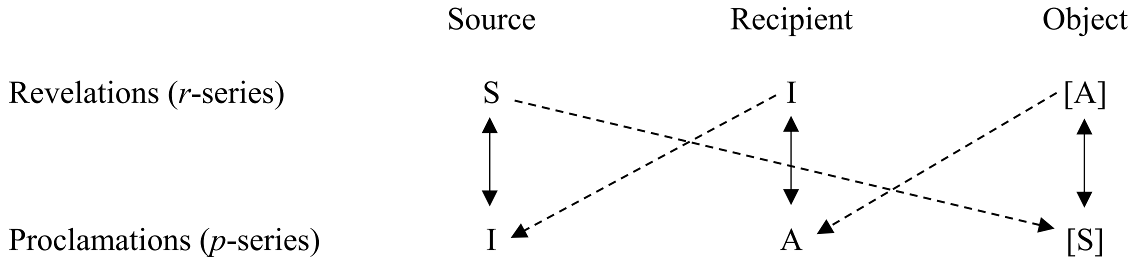


**Figure 3.2. Structure of Epistemic Intermediation**

Here, the letters "S," "I," and "A" refer respectively to the supernatural, the intermediary, and the audience. The brackets around the object reflect its secondary position in the relations of disclosure and feedback, which play out, on both axes, primarily between the source and the recipient. The solid lines link corresponding roles in each series, while the dotted lines track the relative displacements of the occupants of those roles from one series to the other.

Of these displacements, the most consequential is that of the supernatural. In abdicating its role of source in the *r*-series and moving to the more marginal role of object in the *p*-series, the supernatural cedes the former role to the intermediary. And yet, no matter how faithfully and fervently the intermediary transmits the information disclosed by the deity, the intermediary's own disclosures will inevitably pale in comparison to their initial revelations. By being "brought down to earth," so to speak, revealed knowledge is shorn of its supernatural sublimity as it collides with the corporeal constraints on interpersonal communication: the one who most intimately possesses such knowledge cannot validate it, just as the one(s) who can most immediately validate it cannot know it with such intimacy. Surprisingly, in the Hebrew Bible, it is not the Prophets but the Pentateuch that preserves the most pointed articulation of this displacement internal to epistemic intermediation. Charging the prototypical prophet Moses with leadership of the exodus from Egypt, God makes this striking declaration: "See, I have made you God to Pharaoh, and"—yet—"your brother Aaron will be your prophet" (Exod 7:1; cf. 4:15–16).[49]

### *3.3.2. Paradox at the Heart of Prophecy: The "Word = x"*

In the foregoing discussion, I have further developed Overholt's model of the prophetic process by discerning therein a virtual structure of epistemic intermediation. In this structure, the deity, the intermediary, and the audience are connected by differential relations of disclosure and feedback, according to which each of these actors is defined in relation to the others. Across the two series of the structure, moreover, these beings variously occupy three distinct roles: the source of revealed knowledge, its recipient, and an indirect object implicitly invoked in this interaction. However, I have mostly overlooked a fourth component of the process of intermediation, and arguably the most critical of them all: the *divine message* itself, wherein the very knowledge at issue in this process is to be found. Without some account of this critical element, my analysis of the structure remains fundamentally incomplete.[50]

---

[49] This displacement is most literally embodied in cases of prophetic *discipleship*; see the discussion in 3.3.2 below.

[50] Although the message itself is not a focal point of Overholt's model, it is more adequately addressed in those proposed by other scholars. For example, from the complex definition of "prophecy" articulated by Manfred

Setting aside the specific question of intermediation, it is worth noting that my analysis thus far must also be considered unfinished strictly within the framework of Deleuze's structuralism. Recalling the enumeration of essential structural features at the end of the previous chapter (see 2.5), it becomes clear that I have not yet addressed the third of these features: namely, the "paradoxical element," or "object = *x*," around which the two heterogeneous series of a structure should converge. Like the divine message within the process of prophecy, we have seen that this strange object is perhaps the most important component in the whole system of Deleuze's structuralism: while the creative activity of a subject or "structuralist hero" is necessary for the formation of structures (HRS 191), only the perpetual circulation of an object = *x* suffices to synthesize the structural assemblage and thereby set it in motion. In fact, I contend that the analogous importance of the message, in prophecy, and the object = *x*, in structuralism, is no mere coincidence: in the structure of epistemic intermediation, *the message contains the paradoxical element* that enables the entire edifice to function. This element is not so much the supernatural message itself but a strange semiotic marker—the *divine datum* or *Word* = *x*—that attends and identifies it as such. In what follows, I analyze this object in terms of four paradoxes that describe its operation.

Before we can appreciate the peculiar properties of the divine datum, though, we should better understand the nature of the message that bears it. In particular, it should be noted that, despite their divine attribution, ancient Near Eastern prophetic messages tend to be surprisingly mundane in their contents. Much as they may claim to disclose "the secrets of the gods"

---

Weippert, Nissinen distills a fourfold enumeration of the process's key components: these are none other than Overholt's three actors ("the divine sender of the message," "the prophet" or "transmitter of the message," and "the recipient of the message") and, crucially, "the message" (or "revelation") itself. See Nissinen, "What is Prophecy," 20; cf. Weippert, "Prophetie im Alten Orient," *Neues Bibel-Lexikon* 3:196–200, here 197 (cited and translated in Nissinen).

(*niṣrētum ša ilī*), these messages offer no arcane insights about profound mysteries of the universe—unlike later apocalyptic literature—but rather speak to contemporary circumstances that cohere, in large part, with the concrete concerns of the intermediary's audience.[51] For example, in the two primary corpora of extrabiblical prophetic literature from Mesopotamia (Mari and Neo-Assyria), oracles are overwhelmingly spoken in support of the reigning king and his dynasty.[52] For all their individual rhetorical flourishes, these encouraging exhortations are, on the whole, rather formulaic and repetitive: almost without fail, the king is promised victory over his enemies, stability in his kingdom, longevity of his own life and his dynasty, etc. In other cases, both in these collections and (especially) in their biblical counterparts, the message are more negative or critical, reproaching the king or (more often, in the biblical texts) the nation as a whole for improper devotion to the deity. For both positive and negative oracles, however, their contents never stray far from the immediate interests and, presumably, intuitions of their audience; as a rule, "hints of transcendence coexist with down-to-earth ideas about the activities of the gods on behalf of their human devotees."[53] When an Assyrian prophet expresses divine support for the king (e.g., "I [Ishtar] will flay your enemies and give them to you"), we can easily imagine the king himself wishing the same in his own thoughts and prayers.[54] When an Israelite prophet censures the nation for its departures from religious orthodoxy (e.g., “They have gone after other gods to serve them…”), we can likewise suspect that many of the nation’s more conservative citizens would have held similar sentiments.[55] Strictly at the level of their informative content, these divine messages rarely tell the audience anything that they could not have begun to think, however incompletely and uncertainly, for themselves.[56]

---

[51] On the "secrets of the gods," see Nissinen, *Ancient Prophecy*, 260, 321; the phrase comes from an oracle to Ibalpiel of Ešnunna from the goddess Kititum. See also Alan Lenzi, *Secrecy and the Gods: Secret Knowledge in Ancient Mesopotamia and Biblical Israel*, SAAS 19 (Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2008). On the difference between prophecy and apocalypticism, see n. 56 below. The stipulation of secrecy is also one of several differences between (intuitive) prophecy and (technical) divination, as this condition was applied more stringently to the latter in the ancient Near East; see the discussion in 3.4.2 below, esp. nn. 147, 149.

[52] For a comparative overview of the content of oracles from both these contexts, see Robert P. Gordon, "Prophecy in the Mari and Nineveh Archives," in *"Thus Speaks Ishtar of Arbela": Prophecy in Israel, Assyria, and Egypt in the Neo-Assyrian Period*, ed. Robert P. Gordon and Hans M. Barstad (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 37–57.

[53] Gordon, "Archives," 43.

[54] For this example, see Simo Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies*, SAA 9 (Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1997), 4 (1.I.18).

This is all to say that whatever decisively identifies a certain message as divine knowledge cannot be located solely in the content of the message itself. The defining feature of such knowledge is instead to be found in the *definitive form* wherein its content is expressed. What the audience hopes or fears as a mere possibility or probability, the intermediary asserts with supernatural certainty; the characteristic form of a prophetic message is not “this *may* happen,” nor even “this *should* happen,” but “the gods themselves declare that this *will* happen!” The “esoteric” status of an intermediary’s knowledge thus has more to do with the privileged acquisition of that knowledge (e.g., through personal supernatural revelation) than with the specific information that it conveys.[57] As a modern analogy, we might consider a situation in which two individuals, a thoughtful layperson and a veteran epidemiologist, are commenting online about recent reports of a novel coronavirus circulating in East Asia. Assume for the sake of argument that both the layperson and the epidemiologist predict, equally presciently and pessimistically, that the virus will cause an unprecedented global pandemic. Even so, in relation to the layperson, the epidemiologist is able to make her prediction with a confidence and conviction borne of cultivated, credentialed expertise. Whereas the layperson may offer what turns out to be a well-founded intuition, the epidemiologist alone can claim to provide something approaching *knowledge*, albeit partial and provisional.[58]

---

[55] In this case (Jer 11:10), the deity’s consternation over “other gods” (אלהים אחרים) echoes the (presumably non-prophetic) narrator of the Deuteronomistic History.

[56] This is less true of later prophetic texts (e.g., the books of Ezekiel and Zechariah, or the so-called “Akkadian prophecies”) that begin to indulge in more properly esoteric explorations of eschatology or cosmology, which eventually come to define *apocalypticism* as opposed to prophecy. On the relationship between these distinct epistemological enterprises, see Stephen L. Cook, “Apocalyptic Prophecy,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, ed. John J. Collins (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 19–35. As Cook puts it, prophets are merely “sentinels or coast guards” stationed on the terrestrial shore, whereas “apocalyptic visionaries” dare to venture out as “aquanauts” across a transcendent ocean (22).

[57] Cf. n. 11 above.

My concept of the "divine datum" is meant to denote the peculiar semiotic marker or *sign* that, in the context of epistemic intermediation, similarly clothes an intermediary's utterances in the dignified dress of authoritative knowledge. To mark a message with the divine datum is to endow it, borrowing a phrase from Martin Buber, with "all the seriousness of truth."[59] As such, this datum ordinarily appears as a mere attachment to the prophetic message, even as it constitutes an integral component of its total meaning. This is the first of the datum's constitutive paradoxes: to be at once the most peripheral, syntactically or materially, and the most pivotal, semantically or semiotically. As a strictly superfluous sign, the divine datum exhibits a striking degree of morphological variability. It appears in many different forms throughout the extant corpora of ancient prophetic literature, each of which reveals one of its many aspects, but none of which can be uniquely or exclusively identified with it. Perhaps its most paradigmatic form is the "Word of God"—hence the alternate designation "Word = *x*"—since it occurs commonly and cross-culturally in this guise: for example, the "word of YHWH" (דבר יהוה) in Israel and Judah, or the "word of Ishtar" (*abat Issār*) in Neo-Assyria.[60] Yet the formal potentialities of the datum are by no means exhausted by this one phrase. In some cases, more complex formulations arise from the “Word of God” itself, such as the “word-event formula” (*Wortereignisformel*) most commonly attested in the biblical books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel: “And the word of YHWH was to [the prophet] as follows…” (ויהי דבר יהוה אל-[הנביא] לאמר).[61] Other, more distinct forms include the so-called “messenger formula” (*Botenformel*), “Thus says [the god]” (כה אמר יהוה or *umma* [DN]-*ma*); the phrase “utterance of YHWH” (נאם יהוה); divine “self-identifications” (“I am Ishtar” or “I am YHWH”); and even the exhortation “Fear not!” (אל תירא or *lā tapallah*).[62] Lest it be thought that the Word = *x* is a phenomenon restricted to language (and thus disproportionately present in prophetic texts; see 3.4.1 below), we may also find it in a range of non-linguistic signs.[63] These include actions, such as standing before a divine image or performing “acts of power,” but also objects, such as those used at Mari to authenticate intuitive prophecies through technical divination; with the proper verification, a lock of hair and scrap of clothing from a Mari prophet (*šārtum u sissiktum*, lit. “hair and hem”) could constitute an *ad hoc* sign of epistemic authority.[64] Through its multifarious manifestations—alone or in combination, linguistic or otherwise—the divine datum asserts all the auspices of supernatural certainty for the message that bears it.

---

[58] Of course, the elevated epistemological status of the epidemiologist's claim owes at least as much to the societal support for her scientific authority as it does to her education and expertise. In a different (sub)cultural context, the opinion of another professional, or even that of the layperson, may be more highly valued. For better or (more likely) worse, the epidemiologist in this example could be replaced with a talk-show host, a podcaster, or a political idealogue, and the point would still stand.

[59] Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith, 2nd ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), 34.

[60] On the "word of Ishtar" in Neo-Assyrian oracles, see Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies*, lxv.

---

[61] The recognition of this formula goes back to Walther Zimmerli’s commentary on the book of Ezekiel: see Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, trans. Ronald E. Clements, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 25, 144–145. For Jeremiah, see Peter K. D. Neumann, “‘Das Wort, das Geschehen Ist…’ Zum Problem der Wortempfangsterminologie in Jer. I–XXV,” *VT* 23 (1973): 171–217; Theodor Seidl, “Die Wortereignisformel in Jeremia: Beobachtungen zu den Formen der Redeeröffnung in Jeremia, im Anschluß an Jer 27,1.2,” *BZ* 23 (1979): 20–47; John I. Lawlor, “Word Event in Jeremiah: A Look at the Composition’s ‘Introductory Formulas,’” in Kaltner and Stulman, *Inspired Speech*, 231–243. See also 4.3.3 in the next chapter.

[62] On the legitimizing function of the *Botenformel*, see esp. Dirk U. Rottzoll, “Die kh ʾmr…-Legitimationsformel,” *VT* 39 (1989): 323–340; see also James F. Ross, “The Prophet as Yahweh’s Messenger,” in *Israel’s Prophetic Heritage: Essays in honor of James Muilenburg*, ed. Bernhard W. Anderson and Walter Harrelson (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962), 98–107; Rolf Rendtorff, “Botenformel und Botenspruch,” *ZAW* 74 (1962): 165–177; Koch, “Macrosyntax,” 210-221. On “utterance of YHWH,” see Rendtorff, “Zum Gebrauch der Formel *n*$^{e}$*’um jahwe* im Jeremiabuch,” *ZAW* 66 (1954): 27-37; Friedrich Baumgärtel, “Die Formel *n*$^{e}$*’um jahwe*,” *ZAW* 73 (1961): 277–290. On self-identifications, see Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies,* lxv. On “fear not,” see Nissinen, “Fear Not: A Study on an Ancient Near Eastern Phrase,” in idem, *Prophetic Divination*, 195–232; cf. Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies,* lxvi. Arguably the most marginal of these phrases, “fear not” may derive some of its asseverative force in prophetic contexts from an exhortative use “as part of stereotypical language…to give comfort and assurance” in military contexts; see Edgar W. Conrad, *Fear Not Warrior: A Study of ’al tîrā’ Pericopes in the Hebrew Scriptures*, BJS 75 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), here 2. See also 4.3.3 on the first two of these formulas as they appear in Jeremiah.

[63] In at least some cases, linguistic appearances of the datum may have less to do with the process of prophecy itself than with the process of prophecy’s *textualization*: for such an account of references to the “word of YHWH” in Jeremiah, see Christoph Levin, “The ‘Word of Yahweh’: A Theological Concept in the Book of Jeremiah,” trans. Margaret Kohl, in *Prophets, Prophecy, and Prophetic Texts in Second Temple Judaism*, LHBOTS 427 (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 42-62. However, the occurrence of similar formulas in prophetic texts from Mari and Neo-Assyria, which stand a good deal closer to the historical realities of prophecy than the biblical literature does,

But of course, like any performative utterance or “speech act,” the application of the datum cannot simply take any arbitrary statement and thereby make it into an authoritative claim to supernatural knowledge. The content and form of a putative divine message must align with the circumstances of its initial reception and eventual delivery in such a way as to allow the datum to function, lest the attempt at intermediation amount to a mere “infelicity.”[65] As we have seen, the validation of a prophetic message, and thus the efficacy of the divine datum, depend in large part on the positive or negative feedback of the prophet’s audience, and to a lesser extent on the feedback of the prophet herself; among other things, the datum requires that both prophet

---

strongly suggests that the use of such phrases was more than a mere scribal convention (or invention); on these texts, see 3.4.1 below.

[64] The divine image, and proximity thereto, was especially important among the prophets of Mari; see Van der Toorn, “Immanence,” 82, although this interpretation is disputed in Gordon, “Archives,” 42. On “acts of power,” see n. 14 above. On the importance of the “hair and hem” for Mari prophets, see Matthew J. Lynch, “The Prophet’s *šārtum u sissiktum* ‘Hair and Hem’ and the Mantic Context of Prophetic Oracles at Mari,” *JANER* 13 (2013): 11–29; see also Stökl, *Prophecy*, 81–86. Even more so than other manifestations of the datum, the “hair and hem” is unevenly attested. The empirical evidence from Mari shows that such confirmation procedures were disproportionately imposed on female prophets as well as those of ambiguous gender (the *assinnū*); see Hamori, “Gender and the Verification of Prophets at Mari,” *WO* 42 (2012): 1–22. In linking the structure of intermediation with that of gender, the “hair and hem” recalls Deleuze’s claims that “all structures are infrastructures” and that the object = *x* marks the “perforated site” of interstructural articulation (HRS 188); see 2.4.

[65] The philosophical theory of “speech acts” is most famously articulated in J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words: The William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975); on “infelicities,” or “things that can be and go wrong” in the performance of such acts, see esp. 12–52, here 14. For an application of Austin’s theory to the “Word of God” as speech act, see Terence E. Fretheim, “Word of God,” *ABD* VI:961–962.

and audience accept the authenticity of the revelatory experience(s) that gave rise to its message. This peculiar precarity of the divine datum, hovering uncertainly between deity and intermediary and audience, leads to its second defining paradox: although the datum circulates as a mobile marker of epistemic power, it is powerless without the cooperation of other entities that reside outside its immediate orbit. Specifically, in each of the two series where it appears, the divine datum necessarily refers to a being that belongs principally to the other, without which the datum could not operate. The objects of this double reference are none other than the "objects" that were discerned, in the previous section, on the margins of the series of revelations and proclamations, each lurking as a third term in the relations that link source and recipient. In the *r*-series, the datum is always already anticipating the audience, fully present only in the *p*-series, to whom it must ultimately submit for authorization. In the *p*-series, the datum remains inextricably bound up with the supernatural being that first disclosed it, even though that being is directly accessible only in the *r*-series.

A third paradox helps to explain the dynamic relationships that emerge as the divine datum moves through the structure of intermediation: like all objects = *x*, the Word = *x* is "displaced in relation to itself" (HRS 185), admitting of no firmer identity than a constitutive contradiction. As already suggested by its relations to the object of each series—which push the datum, in the *r*-series, toward its terrestrial audience, only for it to be pulled back toward the transcendent deity in the *p*-series—the divine datum is suspended uneasily between two distinct modes of being. On the one hand, insofar as it is "divine," it invokes a transcendence that necessarily exceeds human knowledge; on the other, insofar as it is nonetheless a "datum," it insists on an immanence proper to interpersonal communication, the very essence of which is for one person to make something known to another. Far from a hypostatic union expressing the complete coherence of humanity and divinity, the Word = *x* embodies all the irreducible tension between these two ontologically disparate domains.[66] It stands always with one foot in the ethereal events of the *r*-series and another in the earthly affairs of the *p*-series, and as soon as we grasp it in either of these aspects, we are driven at once toward the other.[67] In the veritable oxymoron of the "divine datum," the Word = *x* shows itself to be "its own metaphor, and its own metonymy" (HRS 184).[68]

In the previous chapter, we saw that the relative displacements of structural terms result from their absolute displacement in relation to the ever-mobile object = *x*. This holds as well for the Word = *x* in relation to the deity, the prophet, and the audience as terms in the series of revelations and proclamations. Even though they come to occupy different positions in each series, both the supernatural power and the human audience can be more durably defined, respectively, by their persistent *excess* and *deficiency* relative to the divine datum. Since the movement of the datum originates in its disclosure by a divine being, divinity lays claim to the datum internally and by its very nature. Conversely, of all the actors in this structure, the datum is received both last and least by the audience, who can only ever engage with it secondarily and externally. Moreover, if we look beyond these actors to the differential relations that define them, we will see that the absolute displacement of the datum accounts for the asymmetries of those relations across the structure of intermediation as a whole. The relations of disclosure takes precedence in the *r*-series because this series involves the *ultimate* source of the datum and its message (i.e., the supernatural, which never functions as recipient), while the precedence of feedback in the *p*-series stems from the presence, in that series, of the ultimate recipient (i.e., the audience, which never functions as source). As for the intermediary, we will see momentarily that this figure's relationship to the divine datum is more complex: whereas the deity relates to the datum from within, and the audience from without, the intermediary alone encounters it in *both* these aspects.

---

[66] Something like this tension is acknowledged in William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapters 1–25*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 32, who notes that the word-event formula (*Wortereignisformel*) "carries with it the whole *paradoxical* experience of the overwhelming inbreaking of God's revelation into the consciousness of the one who is to speak and act for God" (emphasis added). On the *Wortereignisformel* as a form of the Word = *x*, see n. 60 above; on the formula's role in Jeremiah, see 4.3.3.

[67] As *Botenformel*, for instance, the inherently ambiguous Word = *x* inhabits the speech of both deity and prophet; on the variability of this formula, particularly in Jeremiah, see Karin Finsterbusch, "YHWH as the Speaker of the So-Called 'Messenger Formula' in the Book of Jeremiah," *RB* 124 (2017): 369–380.

[68] Deleuze (ibid.) describes metaphor and metonymy as "structural factors" *par excellence*, "in the sense that they express [respectively] the two degrees of freedom of displacement, from one series to another and within the same series."

In the structure of intermediation diagrammed in the previous section, the Word = *x* makes its presence known in at least *three* distinct ways. First, we should recall that an object = *x* constitutes "the principle of the emission of singularities" for its structure (LS 51).[69] As such, the Word = *x* accounts for the distinctive actions that define the singular points of source, recipient, and object, thereby relating the *r*-series and the *p*-series insofar as they share these roles. In relation to this datum, and regardless of series, the source is characterized first and foremost by speaking, saying, or otherwise *making known* (Hebrew דבר, אמר, ידע *hiphil*, etc.). The recipient is defined instead by *knowing*, chiefly in the dual aspect of *hearing and heeding* (Hebrew ידע *qal*, שמע, קשב, etc.); positive or negative feedback from the recipient is captured, respectively, by the affirmation or negation of these verbs (e.g., "to hear" or "*not* to hear"). The actions of the object are somewhat more obscure, since this role is characterized more by the *distance* of its actions than by their nature. For the supernatural *qua* object, the crucial function is no longer "making known" but something like *having-made-known*; for the audience, no longer "knowing" but *to-be-knowing*.

---

[69] See the checklist of structural elements in 2.5.

As for the intermediary, this figure stands alone in occupying not only the role of recipient (in the *r*-series) but also that of source (in the *p*-series). In the framework of Deleuze's structuralism, this unique mobility is of paramount importance: it identifies the intermediary as the "structuralist hero" or "nomad subject" (HRS 190-191) that accompanies the Word = *x* as it circulates throughout the structure of prophecy.[70] Prophetic subjectivity thus proves to be thoroughly intersubjective, caught between the opposing forces of revealing divinity and reacting humanity. This intersubjectivity is already apparent in the inability for intermediaries to exist, much less function, without a "support group" of other subjects (see 3.2 above), but it becomes especially evident when some of those supportive subjects begin to acts as *disciples* who are themselves authorized to speak in the intermediary's stead. Just as the prophet stands ambiguously between the supernatural and the audience as a companion to the ever-mobile Word = *x*, the disciples come to occupy a similarly ambiguous space between prophet and audience; the interpersonal distribution of prophetic authority through discipleship both reinforces and reproduces the intersubjective constitution of the prophetic subject itself.[71] In the end, the unique confluence of structural roles in the prophetic subject will help to explain the peculiar potency of the "persona" that purports to embody that subject in certain literary depictions of prophecy, particularly those found in the book of Jeremiah.[72]

Second, the Word = *x* plays a decisive role in the asymmetrical determination of one series of the prophetic structure as *signifying* (or "subordinating"), and the other as *signified* (or

---

[70] See the discussion in 2.4.

[71] On the place of discipleship in the social dynamics of prophecy, see Overholt, *Channels*, 44–45; cf. n. 48 above. For discipleship in Jeremiah, see the discussion of Baruch and Seraiah in 4.4.2.

[72] See 3.4.2 below and 4.4 in the next chapter. For the concept of the prophetic "persona," see Timothy Polk, *The Prophetic Persona: Jeremiah and the Language of the Self*, JSOTSup 32 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984).

"subordinated"). In the signifying series of any structure, the object = *x* is present in excess, as a "supernumerary pawn" or "occupant without a place"; in the signified series, this object is always lacking, as an "empty square" or "place without an occupant" (LS 50).[73] In this case, we have already seen that the excessive and deficient aspects of the Word = *x* are associated, respectively, with the deity that initially reveals a supernatural message and with the audience that ultimately receives it, and that this asymmetry extends to encompass the series of revelations and proclamations in their entirety. From this perspective, it is clear that the *r*-series should be regarded as signifying, and the *p*-series as signified. In the manifestly divine events of revelation, the divine datum is essentially redundant, a supernumerary pawn in the service of supernatural forces that would be palpable enough even in its absence. On the other hand, to the extent that the supernatural is itself absent from the interpersonal events of proclamation, the divine datum is deficient in these events as well. Stripped of its self-evident sublimity, the Word = *x* can only ever be proclaimed among humans as an empty square, waiting to be filled by the fulfillment of the message that bears it. A fitting illustration of this inherent disequilibrium of the divine datum is offered by the unusually detailed depiction of the prophetic process in Jer 32:1–15. After receiving a revelation from YHWH (32:6–7), Jeremiah *subsequently* recognizes it as the "word of YHWH" on the basis of the revelation's seemingly instantaneous confirmation (32:8). The datum is superfluous here to the extent that its belated entrance merely supplements and corroborates a supernatural revelation that had already presented itself as such (cf. the proleptic *Wortereignisformel* of 32:6).[74] Later in the passage, however, Jeremiah's proclamation to his audience (32:14–15) *immediately* invokes the datum (twice over, as *Botenformel* at the beginning of each verse) in making claims about the eventual restoration of Judah. In contrast to its role in the revelation, the datum here comes not last but first: it functions strictly as an empty square awaiting future confirmation, rather than a supernumerary pawn supplementing what had already been revealed.

---

[73] See the discussion in 2.4.

[74] This reading thus resolves an issue identified in William McKane, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah*, *Volume II: Commentary on Jeremiah XXVI-LII*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 839–840, who struggles to reconcile "[t]he representation that a word of Yahweh only acquires certitude…when its prediction eventuates" and "the status which is claimed by a prophet for [the word of YHWH] when he is proclaiming it"; these depictions can be explained, respectively, by the excess of the Word = *x* in the *r*-series (as depicted in 32:6–8)

Since the signifying *r*-series thus subordinates the signified *p*-series, the terms of the former assume the status of virtual conditions, in relation to which those of the latter provide certain "dimensions of actualization" (HRS 189). What exactly do these determinations entail for the structure of intermediation? Basically, they mean that actualizations of this virtual structure proceed from revelations to proclamations, rather than the reverse. Although a revelation must precede (some part of) its proclamation in time, the structural relations of signification and subordination cannot be reduced to spatiotemporal terms alone.[75] What matters here is not so much the directionality of time, but of "different/ciation."[76] The revelation itself contains a total set of hermeneutical potentialities, perfectly differen*t*iated but essentially undifferen*c*iated, that will come to be progressively narrowed down and concretized (i.e., differen*c*iated) in the course of its proclamation(s).[77] To return to an analogy from the last chapter, the virtual epistemic and

---

and by its deficiency in the *p*-series (as depicted in 32:14–15). Cf. Levin, "Word of Yahweh," 58-60, who attributes both mentions of the divine word in 32:6b, 8 to a "word of Yahweh revision" that sought to elevate and emphasize this concept as "the formal theological principle of prophecy" (62).

[75] Proclamation may be said to partially precede revelation in cases where an audience proactively seeks divine guidance from an intermediary, as in Jer 21:1-8 and 42:1-22. Such an overlap between revelation and proclamation is to be expected in "divinatory chronicles," as these texts would be considered in the typology of David Petersen (see n. 109 below).

[76] See the discussion in 2.3.

[77] Cf. Brennan W. Breed, *Nomadic Text: A Theory of Biblical Reception History*, ISBL (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), 138, whose claims about the actualization of texts through reading can be applied to the analogous actualization of revelations through proclamation: "[W]e may think of reading as a series of limiting selections or choices that continue to narrow the potentials of a virtual multiplicity until what emerges is an

semiotic totality of revelation is akin to the virtual chromatic totality of white light, which may actually produce any one (or more) of the colors of the visible spectrum depending on the specific conditions of its emission and transmission. In much the same way, a supernatural revelation comprises a virtual multiplicity of many different (indeed, differen*t*iated) messages and meanings, any one (or more) of which may be actualized in accordance with the specific circumstances surrounding its proclamation at a given moment.[78]

Finally, to return to the divine datum that drives these movements of actualization, it is worth acknowledging a superficially similar interpretive tradition from which my approach to the datum should be distinguished. I am hardly the first to wax philosophical (or, more often, theological) over the unique power or "dynamische Kraft" of the "Word of God," particularly as it appears in biblical literature.[79] As *Wortereignisformel*, for instance, the peculiar activity of the divine datum is all too easily assimilated into traditional patterns of divine agency: the very term "word-*event* formula" seems to imbue its referent with an almost miraculous capacity to intervene "als plötzliches *Ereignis* in einen Geschehenszusammenhang…und ihm eine andere, unvorhergesehene Richtung gibt[.]"[80] In general, such readings reflect the overinterpretation of an expression that likely had more to do with the formal conventions of written correspondence than with any putative "prophetic 'theology of the word.'"[81] As Jutta Krispenz notes, when

---

individual reading." The connection between proclaiming and reading is especially clear in the case of prophetic *texts*, on which see 3.4.1 below.

[78] The products of actualization in this domain are not limited to the meanings of prophetic messages, but encompass the various textualizations of prophecy as well; see 3.4.1 below.

[79] For this particular phrase, see Neumann, "Wortempfangsterminologie," 176; cf. Koch, "Macrosyntax," 220.

[80] Neumann, "Wortempfangsterminologie," 176, emphasis original. Cf. Lawlor, "Word Event," 241, for whom the formula "represent[s] the incursion of potent, sovereign word into the life of prophet and nation."

[81] For this formula, terminological identification has long been fraught with theological interpretation: see, in the first place, Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 144–45. For an overview of the formula as well as issues with the theologically

compared with ancient messages sent by mere mortals, "[a]llein die herausgehobene Stellung JHWHs gibt dem JHWH-Wort eine über den Befehl einer hochgestellten Person hinausgehende Bedeutung."[82] Against approaches that would overload the "Word of God" with theological significance, my conception of the "Word = *x*" emphasizes its inherent *emptiness* as the "zero" of the structure of intermediation.[83] Beyond its abstract claim to absolute certainty, the Word = *x* contains no concrete content in its own right. It devotes itself to no particular deity, swears allegiance to no particular polity, neither confirms nor denies the occurrence or existence of any particular thing. The divine datum is simply the "authority formula" *par excellence*, declaring on behalf of its message nothing more (nor less) than, "Know this—!"[84] Indeed, in this efficacious emptiness, we find the datum's fourth and final paradox: to know nothing itself, and yet to make things known with all the power of the gods.

With this last paradox, we can also identify the third effect of the Word = *x* in the structure of intermediation. Whereas the first two effects (emission of singularities and direction of signification) concerned relations internal to the structure, this effect pertains to the *external* connections between epistemic intermediation and what lies outside it. The constitutive paradoxes of the Word = *x* mark out a "perforated site" or "tear" in this structure, through which

---

charged readings of Zimmerli and others, see Jutta Krispenz, "Wortereignisformel/Wortempfangsformel," *WiBiLex* (2014): 1–14, http://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/stichwort/35010.

[82] Krispenz, "Wortereignisformel/Wortempfangsformel," 11; for this reason, the "word-event formula" may be more accurately described as a "word-*reception* formula."

[83] On Deleuze's object = *x* as a structuralist "zero element," see Catharine Diehl, "The Empty Space in Structure: Theories of the Zero from Gauthiot to Deleuze," *Diacritics* 38 (2008): 93–99, 101–109; see also the discussion in 2.4.

[84] On (Yahwistic) manifestations of the datum, specifically כה אמר יהוה and נאם יהוה, as "authority formulas," see Joseph M. Henderson, *Jeremiah under the Shadow of Duhm: A Critique of the Use of Poetic Form as a Criterion of Authenticity* (London: T&T Clark, 2019), 270.

it connects to those at other orders or levels of virtuality (HRS 188).[85] At this juncture, or puncture, the differences between my (post)structuralist notion of the Word = *x* and more conventional conceptions of the "Word of God" become particularly palpable. What we see through the perforation is no supernatural sovereign governing the process of prophecy by singlehanded fiat, but the densely ramified radiance of a multidimensional structural manifold. Of this grand virtual multiplicity, I can offer here only the roughest sketch. Outside the structure of intermediation itself, we should expect to find first of all the sociocultural structures of religion more broadly, and around them, others that are by turns linguistic, economic, psychological, physiological, biological, chemical, physical—all of which collectively determine the forms and functions that intermediation assumes in any given domain. This is not to say that the Word = *x* refers us to nothing transcendent, but only that it draws its unique semiotic power from an altogether different source. Before the divine datum can be heard from above, it must emerge from around and below, as the cacophonous crescendo of a chorus of structural voices that are at once terrestrial and transcendental, immanent and imperceptible, comprising all the disparate forces of human life and the earth that sustains it. Far from enervating the venerable Word, this reorientation should encourage us to consider more closely its place in the world, not only whence it came and but where it may still go. The age of prophecy may have ended in antiquity, but modernity's secular sheen should not distract us from a more fundamental continuity: as long as we wish to claim for our words the full force of truth's seriousness, intermediation and its datum will somehow persist.

---

[85] Cf. Diehl, "Zero," 109: "The ultimate value of the concept of the zero" consists in its "potential to demarcate the relationship between structure and its outside." See also n. 62 above on the interstructural connection of intermediation to gender via the Word = *x*.

### 3.4. Ancient Near Eastern Actualizations of the Structure of Epistemic Intermediation

In analyzing the structure of prophecy and other forms of epistemic intermediation, it must be remembered that Deleuze's structuralism encompasses two distinct dimensions of reality, the virtual and the actual. Apart from a few anticipatory forays into actuality, the structure discerned in the previous section belongs, as structure, to the realm of the virtual. As much as I may have said about the abstract processes and performances involved in intermediation, I have thus far done relatively little to account for the concrete forms that this structure has assumed in actual human societies, especially those of the ancient Near East that are most germane to the Hebrew Bible and the book of Jeremiah. In particular, I have not yet connected the structure of epistemic intermediation to the typology outlined at the beginning of this chapter: to what extent, if any, does this structure appear or operate differently in intuitive as opposed to technical intermediation, and in peripheral intermediation as opposed to central?

In addition, I have yet to address equally critical questions about the relationship between prophetic *texts* and prophecy as a social institution more generally. Although I have frequently pointed to features of prophetic texts as illustrations of the structure of prophecy, the virtual potentialities of this structure cannot be equated with, much less exhausted by, the actualities of such texts. At the same time, from a modern perspective, the textual actualizations of intermediation can easily appear to eclipse all the others. For Israel and Judah no less than the rest of the ancient Near East, texts that preserve actual prophecies—as well as those that merely portray, perhaps accidentally, various aspects of the prophetic process—represent only fragments of the total phenomenon of epistemic intermediation as it existed in these societies.[86] The predominance of textual evidence in contemporary discussions of ancient prophecy is not so much a testament to the literary proclivities of ancient intermediaries (although some of them were surely gifted rhetors, if not also authors) as it is a reminder of some basic lessons from the natural sciences: as a rule, people and even papyri do not last, but inscribed stones and tablets do.[87] This principle explains not only the priority necessarily accorded to textual corpora in the study of intermediation, but also the very existence of those corpora and their uneven distribution. Other than the continuously transmitted texts of the Hebrew Bible, the most extensive witnesses to ancient Near Eastern prophecy come from the literature of two cuneiform cultures: the Old Babylonian kingdom of Mari (ca. 18th cent. BCE) and the Neo-Assyrian Empire (ca. 8th cent. BCE).[88] While it is undeniable that epistemic intermediation played a major role in both these societies, the disproportionate perdurability of their lithic texts should not prejudge questions about the presence and prevalence of prophecy or other forms of intermediation, especially in different contexts from which no texts happen to survive.[89]

---

[86] On these textual sources and their limitations, see Nissinen, *Ancient Prophecy*, 47-48. An awareness of the gulf between historical prophecy and its literary depictions has increasingly come to characterize scholarship on prophecy in Israel and the Hebrew Bible as well: see, *inter alia*, Ferdinand E. Deist, "The Prophets: Are We Heading for a Paradigm Switch?", in *Prophet und Prophetenbuch: Festschrift für Otto Kaiser zum 65. Geburtstag*,

For these reasons, the systems of intermediation discovered at Mari as well as in Neo-Assyria (hereafter, "Assyria"), in addition to those long recognized in Israel and Judah (hereafter, "Israel") via the Hebrew Bible, should not be treated as contiguous stages in a continuous evolutionary process, but as discrete snapshots showing distinct actualizations of the virtual

---

ed. Volkmar Fritz, Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, and Hans-Christoph Schmitt, BZAW 185 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1989), 1-18; Nissinen, "The Historical Dilemma of Biblical Prophetic Studies," in *Prophecy in the Book of Jeremiah*, ed. Hans M. Barstad and Reinhard G. Kratz, BZAW 388 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), 103-120; Brad E. Kelle, "The Phenomenon of Israelite Prophecy in Contemporary Scholarship," *CBR* 12 (2014): 275-320.

[87] Here as elsewhere, stone scrambles human temporalities: see Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Stone: An Ecology of the Inhuman* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 75-126.

[88] For an overview of these sources, see Nissinen, *Ancient Prophecy*, 57-115. The texts from Mari are collected in Jean-Marie Durand, *Archives Épistolaires de Mari I/1*, ARM 26 (Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1988); for the Assyrian texts, see Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies*. See also Nissinen with C. L. Seow and Robert K. Ritner, *Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East*, WAW 12 (Atlanta: SBL, 2003).

[89] Even for Israel, in particular, extrabiblical evidence of prophecy is surprisingly scant; see n. 99 below.

structure of intermediation in different historical settings. Even so, these momentary glimpses will help to clarify the structural interrelationships of the diverse forms of epistemic intermediation practiced in the ancient Near East, as well as the various types of texts that they produced. In the rest of this chapter, I begin by describing two distinct "meta-genres" that may be discerned within the extant corpora of prophetic literature, in light of the virtual structure of intermediation: "*r*-texts," which recount divine revelations apart from any concrete account of their actual proclamation, and "*p*-texts," in which the representation of revelation is embedded within just such an account. Finally, I conclude by returning once more to the typology of epistemic intermediation, as well as Deleuze's structuralism. Using Deleuze's concept of two "accidents" internal to structure, I explain how intermediation functions differently, even deficiently, in its most highly technical or tightly centralized forms, with important implications for the contrasting portrayals of prophecy found in the Hebrew Bible.

### *3.4.1. From Two Series of Prophecy to Two Types of Prophetic Literature*

Mari, Assyria, and Israel all produced prophetic literature, at least some of which has survived into the present, but certain divergences within and among the extant sources make clear that texts played different roles in the systems of intermediation at work in each of these societies. Although all such texts constitute products of the same virtual structure, the texts do not embody or incarnate all aspects of this structure equally. Rather, certain dimensions of the structure are emphatically expressed in some texts while remaining submerged or suppressed in others; these others may, in turn, manifest still other dimensions that the former texts do not. In particular, many prophetic texts explicitly encompass both series of the structure of prophecy, in recounting the contents of a revealed prophetic message together with the context of its proclamation. I call such texts "*p*-texts" (*proclamation texts*) because they depict the signifying *r*-series from the perspective of the signified *p*-series. In addition to a revelation with its inherent virtual potentialities, these texts also include some account of the proclamation through which those potentialities are to be actualized.

The *p*-text proves to be the primary presentation of prophecy in the literature of Mari. The requisite combination of revelatory and proclamatory material is implied already in the genre of these texts, which take the form of *letters* that frequently juxtapose prophecy with other topics and themes.[90] For the most part, these epistles contain the correspondence of high-ranking officials and members of Mari's royal family, primarily during the reign of Zimri-Lim (ca. 1774-1760 BCE), from which most of the prophetically salient letters derive.[91] By the same token, these letters were rarely, if ever, written directly by the prophets themselves.[92] Rather, prophetic words are preserved "only to the extent that the writers of the letters have considered them worth quoting and bringing to the addressee's knowledge."[93] In many cases, to be sure, indications of the context of proclamation in these letters are cursory and minimally informative. They often begin by simply stating that "[a prophet] arose and said" something, which is then related to the recipient; they may conclude with a similarly brief acknowledgment that the "hair and hem" (*šartum u sissiktum*) of the prophet have been enclosed with the message, for use in its verification via technical divination.[94] In other cases, however, the proclamation of the message receives no less attention than the message itself: perhaps the most notable example is a letter describing the prophetic activity of an ecstatic (*muḫḫûm*), who consumed a raw lamb as part of the public delivery of an oracle![95] Regardless of the robustness of the description, though, the mere presence of an overarching proclamatory framework for the prophetic message, especially one that is supplied externally by a person other than the prophet who received the message, suffices to mark these compositions as *p*-texts. In portraying the virtualities of revelation alongside the actualities of proclamation, they deliver a message that is always already actualized to some significant extent within the concrete context of specified sociohistorical circumstances.

---

[90] For a thematic survey of the Mari letters, see Jack M. Sasson, *From the Mari Archives: An Anthology of Old Babylonian Letters* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015), esp. 278-281 for letters with prophetic content. See also the collections of Durand and Nissinen cited in n. 86 above.

[91] Nissinen, *Prophets*, 15.

[92] Nissinen (ibid.) notes that one letter presents a prophet of Šamaš as the sender, but the "impersonal introductory formula," rendered in the third person instead of the second, "may suggest that the actual writer of the message is someone else." See also Nissinen, "Since When Do Prophets Write?," in *In the Footsteps of Sherlock Holmes: Studies in the Biblical Text in Honour of Anneli Aejmelaeus*, ed. Kristin de Troyer, T. Michael Law, and Marketta Liljeström, CBET (Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 585-606, esp. 589-590 on the aforementioned letter.

[93] Nissinen, *Prophets*, 13.

In Assyria, the literary landscape around the institution of prophecy looks quite different. Whereas the messages of intermediaries at Mari were transmitted incidentally and preserved accidentally, embedded in the text of letters that only count as "prophetic texts" because of the specific content that they happen to bear, the Assyrian royal archives provide a corpus of properly and generically prophetic compositions: namely, *oracular reports* that isolate and reproduce the contents of prophecies in their own right.[96] Such reports exist in two main forms, corresponding to the two formats of tablet used to write them. Smaller, "horizontal" tablets (*uʾiltu*) each contain the words of a single oracle, presumably "composed only to preserve the message until it had reached its destination”; these oracles could then be collected and archived on larger, “vertical” tablets (*ṭuppu*), which exhibit traces of “editorial selection and stylization” so as to incorporate the prophecies into a “written tradition transcending specific historical situations and retaining its relevance in changing circumstances.”[97] Importantly, in both forms, the text of the oracle is left to stand more or less on its own, without any overarching contextualization to detail the actual circumstances in which it was promulgated by the original prophet or received by its original audience. Instead of the comprehensive epistolary-proclamatory frameworks attested at Mari, the Assyrian texts include only concluding *colophons* that indicate no more than the general provenance of the message: the name, gender, and (usually) city of the prophet who spoke it.[98]

---

[94] For an example of a letter with both these features, see Nissinen, *Prophets*, 21-22. On the use of divination to verify prophecies at Mari, see n. 62 above.

[95] On this text, see Huffmon, "Expansion," 13-14; cf. Sasson, *Archives*, 279. As a distinct class of intermediary, the *muḫḫû* were primarily ecstatics who prophesied only secondarily, rather than prophets who went into ecstasy; see Stökl, *Prophecy*, 10.

[96] The relevant texts have been compiled by Simo Parpola; see the collection cited in n. 86 above. Per Nissinen, *Ancient Prophecy*, 93-94, standalone oracle reports are wholly unattested at Mari: while we cannot conclude on this basis that "such texts were not written at all" (94), it seems reasonable to assume that, if they were written, they were held in lower esteem than their Assyrian counterparts.

In contrast to the *p*-texts of Mari, wherein the receipt of the message (i.e., the perspective of the *p*-series) predominates, the Assyrian prophetic literature chiefly comprises “*r*-texts” (*revelation texts*), which present the content of revelation without depiction of a corresponding act of proclamation.[99] Of course, the transpersonal nature of revelation precludes any direct representation of the encounter with divinity as such; in the words of William McKane, “All language is human language and God does not speak.”[100] Whatever revelation itself entails, an *r*-text can only ever describe it using the same flawed and finite medium as a *p*-text. The defining features of *r*-texts are thus not to be found in *what* they represent, but rather in *how* they represent it. The lack of a specific proclamatory framework is one such feature. Whereas the interpretation of a *p*-text is substantially shaped in advance by the actions and circumstances of the original prophet and her audience—or, more accurately, by literary depictions of those figures, actions, and circumstances—*r*-texts mostly omit such internal constraints, relying proportionately on the intentions and imaginations of their readers to generate meaning. Another notable characteristic of *r*-texts is an elevated, if not entirely poetic style, rich in imagery and rife with implications. In my (admittedly biased) judgment, this style reaches its zenith in the *r*-texts of the Hebrew Bible, but it sounds as well within the Assyrian oracles.[101] Robert Alter’s assessment of the appropriateness of poetic language for prophetic mimesis applies alike to both corpora: “Since poetry is our best human model of intricately rich communication…it makes sense that divine speech should be represented as poetry.”[102]

---

[97] Nissinen, *Prophets*, 98; on the ability of vertical-format prophetic collections to transcend the immediate circumstances of their promulgation, see also Van der Toorn, “Immanence,” 74-77. This model for the textual development of Assyrian prophecies is disputed in Stökl, *Prophecy*, 129-131, who finds it “more likely to assume a situation [in Assyria] more akin to Mari” (130), with letters as the primary mode of prophetic communication. This debate is ultimately orthogonal to my argument here. Even if Stökl’s thesis is affirmed, and the extant Assyrian prophetic oracles are regarded as somehow derivative of or dependent on Mari-like letters, the former would be no less distinguishable from the latter on the basis of their representational content alone.

[98] On the colophons, see Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies*, lxii-lxiii; for their historical-critical significance, see Nissinen, *Ancient Prophecy*, 98.

[99] Like Mari, Assyria also produced plenty of letters, at least some of which should be considered *p*-texts on the basis of their contextualized quotation of prophetic speech. See Nissinen, *Ancient Prophecy*, 87-89 and, for an example, Nissinen with Parpola, “Marduk’s Return and Reconciliation in a Prophetic Letter from Arbela,” in Nissinen, *Prophetic Divination*, 245-265, esp. 257-258 on the features that mark this letter as a *p*-text. Although Mari offers no (extant) oracle reports like those of Assyria, at least one potential *r*-text survives from the contemporary kingdom of Ešnunna: a divine letter (*šipirtu*) containing supernatural speech directed at the king, presumably disclosed through a prophet but lacking any indication or description of such disclosure within the text; see Nissinen, *Prophets*, 93-95 and Beate Pongratz-Leisten, *Herrschaftswissen in Mesopotamien: Formen der Kommunikation zwischen Gott und König im 2. Und 1. Jahrtausend v.Chr.*, SAAS 10 (Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1999), 203-204.

As we turn at last to Israel, we must recognize that its prophetic literature stands at a far greater distance from its historical prophets than the texts of either Mari or Assyria do from theirs. Even the compilation of the Assyrian collections, some of which anthologize multiple oracles from an individual prophet in a manner reminiscent of the biblical prophetic books, pales in comparison to the multigenerational redactional reworkings of texts that made their way into the scriptural canon.[103] Against the comparative abundance of Mari and Assyria, extrabiblical witnesses to prophecy in Israel are meager indeed. For example, a letter from Lachish (Ostracon 3) preserves a vanishingly brief reference to a prophecy, attributed to an anonymous "prophet" (הנבא), which has been distilled down to a single word: "Beware!" (השמר).[104] Despite the radical concision of its prophetic content, the third-person epistolary context suffices to identify this composition as a *p*-text in the style of Mari.

---

[100] McKane, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah. Volume I: Introduction and Commentary on Jeremiah I-XXV*, ICC (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), xcix.

[101] On the “surprisingly high stylistic level” of the Assyrian oracle reports, see Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies*, lxvii.

[102] Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, rev. ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 176.

A somewhat less proximate but far more productive parallel to biblical prophetic literature is the West Semitic inscription (its exact language is debated) discovered at Deir Alla in 1967 and dated ca. 800-700 BCE. The inscription, which once adorned the wall of a small room used for religious ritual or scribal education, is most famous for containing a story about "Balaam son of Beor," a "seer" (*ḥzh*) known also from the Hebrew Bible (Num 22-24).[105] Although the text is too fragmentary to allow for a complete reconstruction, enough of the inscription has survived to identify it as a *p*-text: Balaam's account of a nocturnal revelation from the supernatural "Shadayin" (*šdyn*, cf. Hebrew שדי) is framed by a short description of his interaction with an audience of “his kinsfold” (*ʿmh*), who solicit the account by asking Balaam about the weeping and fasting that the revelation has provoked in him.[106] What sets the Deir Alla inscription apart from the other *p*-texts considered thus far is the nature of its proclamatory framework, which is cast not as a letter but as a *narrative*. The “frame story” for much of the inscription “is the biography of a prophet,” comparable in form to the biblical stories about Elisha (esp. 2 Kgs 8:6-13), Michaiah ben Imlah (1 Kgs 22), or Amos (Amos 7:10-17)—all *p*-texts.[107] Rudimentary and introductory as the Deir Alla narrative may be, it nonetheless brings us considerably closer to these and other *p*-texts that populate the Hebrew Bible, where the extrabiblical ratio of prophetic letters to prophetic stories is essentially reversed.[108] With the notable exception of the letter in Jer 29 (see 4.3.1), the biblical *p*-texts are almost always rendered as narratives, including the bulk of the Balaam pericope in Numbers (specifically, 22:1-21 and 22:36-24:25).[109]

---

[103] The most notable example of such an Assyrian anthology is a *ṭuppu* containing five oracles all attributed to a single prophet, La-dagil-ili, and united by a focus on the coronation of Esarhaddon: see Parpola, *Prophecies*, lxiii-lxiv. As for the literary development of the biblical prophetic books, see *inter alia* Ehud Ben Zvi, "The Concept of Prophetic Books and its Historical Setting," in *The Production of Prophecy: Constructing Prophecy and Prophets in Yehud*, ed. Diana V. Edelman and Ehud Ben Zvi (London: Equinox, 2009), 73-97; Van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 173-204; Nissinen, *Ancient Prophecy*, 144-162.

[104] For this text, see James M. Lindenberger, *Ancient Hebrew and Aramaic Letters*, ed. Kent Harold Richards, WAW 4 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 111-112; cf. Nissinen, *Ancient Prophecy*, 92-93.

[105] For the text, see J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij, eds., *Aramaic Texts from Deir 'Alla*, DMOA 19 (Leiden: Brill, 1976); Jo Ann Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir 'Allā*, HSM 31 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1984). On the material details of the inscription, as well as the proposed functions of the text and its site, see Nissinen, "Oracles as Artefacts: The Material Aspect of Prophecy," in *When Gods Speak to Men: Divine Speech according to Textual Sources in the Ancient Mediterranean Basin*, ed. Stéphanie Anthonioz, Alice Mouton, and Daniel Petit, OBO 289 (Leuven: Peeters, 2019), 49-64, here 54-57.

The Hebrew Bible deserves attention not only for its plethora of *p*-texts, but also for a similarly substantial assortment of *r*-texts. Variously formed texts of each type can be identified across a range of genres, reflecting the extraordinarily high level of literary development in the biblical prophetic corpus. The texts of this corpus may be form-critically divided into five main categories: "divinatory chronicles" (e.g., Jer 38:14-28), which recount an intermediary's response to queries posed by a client; "vision reports" (e.g., Amos 7:1-9), describing the symbolic contents of visionary experiences; "prophetic speeches" (e.g., Mic 6:1-8), which use a variety of rhetorical techniques to convey the divine will through direct discourse; "legends" (e.g., 2 Kgs 6:1-7), telling prose stories of prophets and their deeds; and "prophetic history," which encompasses the mantically inflected historiography of the Deuteronomists.[110] Of these generic categories, the vision report and the prophetic speech constitute clear examples of *r*-texts, insofar as they communicate revelation from the perspective of its prophetic recipient without describing any concrete context of proclamation. The other three genres most often take the form of *p*-texts. Chronicles, legends, and histories all presume a narrative context in which a prophet appears as but one person among others, with whom the prophet interacts primarily as a source of revealed knowledge (as in the *p*-series) rather than its recipient (as in the *r*-series).[111] As a result, in the Hebrew Bible, *p*-texts are overwhelmingly concentrated in the Former

---

[106] In addition to the editions cited in n. 103 above, see also the analysis of the inscription’s structure and genre(s) in Meindert Dijkstra, “Is Balaam Also among the Prophets?,” *JBL* 114 (1995): 43-64.

[107] Dijkstra, “Balaam,” 62. On the *p*-text in Amos 7:10-17, see also 4.2.2.2 in the next chapter.

[108] Besides Deir Alla, one of the few clear extrabiblical examples of a narrative *p*-text is found in the Egyptian “Report of Wenamon” (ca. 1080-1070 BCE), whose titular first-person narrator describes the proclamation of a prophet in ecstasy; for the relevant portion of the text, see Robert K. Ritner, “Report of Wenamon,” in Nissinen, *Prophets*, 219-220.

[109] The episode with the donkey in 22:22-35 should be considered an unusual, but not unprecedented, example of a *narrative* r-*text*. Unlike the surrounding material, this “intercalation” completely ignores the prophet’s human companions, which include two servants (22:22b) as well as “the officials of Moab” (22:21b, 35b), “as though Balaam is not traveling with a larger entourage”; see Michael L. Barré, “The Portrait of Balaam in Numbers 22-24,” *Int* 51 (1997): 254-266, esp. 260-261, here 260. In humorously dramatizing Balaam’s revelatory relationship with YHWH, the donkey episode resembles the narrative *r*-texts that bookend the story of Jonah, namely Jonah 1:1-2:1 and (especially) 4:1-11; on these texts, see 4.2.2.3.

---

[110] On these genres, and the (potentially overlapping) prophetic roles that they reflect, see David L. Petersen, "Rethinking the Nature of Prophetic Literature," in Gitay, *Prophecy and Prophets*, 23-35; idem, "Defining Prophecy and Prophetic Literature," in Nissinen, *Prophecy in Context*, 33-44, esp. 41ff.

[111] There are exceptions, of course. In adapting Petersen's form-critical and sociological categories for the rather different purposes of analyzing literary mimesis, I have understandably come to different conclusions about the status of certain texts that pose limit cases. For example, Petersen ("Nature," 25-26) identifies both Ezek 20 and Zech 7-8 as divinatory chronicles, going so far as to call the latter "the most straightforward case of a prophet receiving a request for a divine oracle and then providing the expected response" (26). In my mimetic framework, however, both these pericopes should be classed as *r*-texts, albeit ones with an unusually high level of contextualization. Ezek 20 begins in a divinatory context (20:1) but precedes directly into a lengthy divine diatribe; much as the prophet's delivery of this tirade is anticipated (20:3, 27, 30), it is never described or depicted as an event contemporaneous with those narrated in 20:1-2. Zech 7-8 opens with an even more concrete divinatory entreaty (7:1-3) but similarly pivots to a lengthy recounting of revelation without any narration or indication of its actual delivery (8:18-19 comes close, but does not refer to the original audience). Perhaps these texts, which imply proclamation without representing it as such, could be considered "degenerate" *p*-texts, in the mathematical sense that three collinear points constitute a degenerate "triangle." See also 4.2.1 on Zechariah and 4.2.2.5 on Ezekiel.

Prophets, while *r*-texts predominate in the Latter, with one important exception: the book of Jeremiah (see Chapter 4).

Before turning to some non-textual aspects of ancient Near Eastern actualization of the structure of intermediation (3.4.2), I would do well to offer a few concluding words of clarification and caution about *r*-texts and *p*-texts. First, these textual categories do not constitute "forms" in the technical sense that that term has come to bear in biblical studies. No consistent set of stereotypical features unifies these texts, and neither can be straightforwardly referred to a particular *Sitz im Leben.*[112] In fact, texts of both types can emerge at a number of different, but by no means mutually exclusive, points in the progressive unfolding of the structure of prophecy in textual forms. Depending on the context, either an *r*-text or a *p*-text may be produced in the initial inscription of a prophetic message (as seen, respectively, in the horizontal *uʾiltu* tablets of Assyria and the letters of Mari), but both are just as likely to stem from much later stages of the process of textualization, when an intermediary's words and deeds have been enshrined in an authoritative and properly literary tradition (as in the archival Assyrian *ṭuppu* or the biblical prophetic narratives).[113]

---

[112] To be sure, the form criticism of the Hebrew Bible has advanced a great deal since its advent in the work of Hermann Gunkel, and few "new" form critics would uphold the Gunkelian ideal of a "rigid association between form and social institution" that has frequently attended the concept of *Sitz im Leben*; on "new form criticism" and the changing role of this concept therein, see Colin M. Toffelmire, "*Sitz im* What? Context and the Prophetic Book of Obadiah," in *The Book of the Twelve and the New Form Criticism*, ed. Mark J. Boda, Michael H. Floyd, and Colin M. Toffelmire, ANEM 10 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 221-244, here 229, and the other essays in that volume.

[113] For a hypothetical reconstruction of the process of prophetic textualization, see Nissinen, "Spoken, Written, Quoted, and Invented," 268-269. This is to say, from another perspective, that *r*- and *p*-texts may be found on both sides of Armin Lange's dichotomy between "written prophecy," motivated by the immediate exigencies of interpersonal communication at a distance, and "literary prophecy," crafted for repeated reuse and "recontextualization" by future generations of readers; see Lange, "Literary Prophecy and Oracle Collection: A Comparison between Judah and Greece in Persian Times," in *Prophets, Prophecy, and Prophetic Texts in Second Temple Judaism*, ed. Michael H. Floyd and Robert D. Haak, LHBOTS 427 (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 248-275, here 250. Lange's framework is ultimately orthogonal to my own, such that we would need to speak of *written r-* and *p*-texts, on the one hand, and *literary r-* and *p*-texts on the other. However, Nissinen (*Ancient Prophecy*, 93) offers a somewhat different definition of "written prophecy" as a subset of *r*-texts: "texts recording prophetic oracles either as such or with minimal annotations, not embedding them in a context such as a letter or a narrative."

Second, and along those same lines, we should not expect easy historical-critical payout from this literary-critical distinction. For instance, there is no reason to think that all or only *r*-texts were produced by prophets and their disciples, while their non-prophetic audiences were responsible for the creation of *p*-texts. In all likelihood, most prophets produced no writing whatsoever. Both types of text are better attributed to various kinds of *scribes*, whether in the employ of royal officials in Mari and Assyria or among the elite "literarti" of marginalized imperial communities in postexilic Yehud.[114] Following Ehud Ben Zvi, however, we may rightly regard the scribes of this last group as "quasi-prophetic" figures, in virtue of their "self-identification as animators of the prophets and YHWH"—a confluence of "prophetic and scholarly roles" not attested in other ancient Near Eastern contexts.[115] Even if the advent of quasi-prophetic scribal practice heralded the "death of the prophet" as the primary intermediary in Judean society, it did not mark the end of prophecy *qua* epistemic intermediation, but rather the transformation of this structure through its actualization under new social and technological circumstances.[116] As such, the activity of quasi-prophets plays a key role in the structural dynamics of biblical prophetic literature (see 4.3.3).

---

[114] On the scribal origins of the Mari letters, see Nissinen, *Ancient Prophecy*, 85; Sasson, *Archives*, 2-3; on the Assyrian collections, see Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies*, lv. For the development of the biblical prophetic books, see n. 103 above.

[115] For scribes as "quasi-prophets," see Ehud Ben Zvi, "Introduction: Writings, Speeches, and the Prophetic Books—Setting an Agenda," in Ben Zvi and Floyd, *Writings and Speech*, 1-29, here 14. On the uniqueness of this phenomenon in the ancient Near East, see Nissinen, "Sources," 396, although Lange ("Literary Prophecy," 265-266, 273-274) notes that editorial and prophetic roles are also combined in the Greek chresmologues, or oracle collectors, whose "hermeneutics of atomization and recontextualization…resemble[s] the interpretational strategies used in the interpretation of the biblical prophetic books" (273).

[116] See Joachim Schaper, "The Death of the Prophet: The Transition from the Spoken to the Written Word of God in the Book of Ezekiel," in Floyd and Haak, *Second Temple Judaism*, 63-79; idem, "Exilic and Post-Exilic Prophecy and the Orality/Literacy Problem," *VT* 55 (2005): 324-342. See also Nissinen, "The Dubious Image of Prophecy," in Floyd and Haak, *Second Temple Judaism*, 26-41 on changing depictions of traditional (i.e., non-textual) prophetic activity in Second Temple literature.

Lastly, I should make clear that *r*-texts and *p*-texts are not so much conventional "genres" as they are *meta*-genres, or perhaps "superforms," under which a range of more familiar forms of prophetic literature may be subsumed on the basis of their relations to the virtual structure of intermediation. More pointedly, these meta-genres are *mimetic* categories: they address a text's total provisional presentation (that is, actualization) of the structure, including not only the acts and actors portrayed in the text but also the position(s) of the reader(s) in relation thereto. For this reason, the apparently binary categories of "*r*-text" and "*p*-text" are really two polarities along a spectrum of gradual differences. As the next chapter's examples show (see esp. 4.2 and 4.3.1), some prophetic texts gravitate unmistakably toward one side of the structure or another, while others appear as limit cases marking out a tentative boundary within the spectrum. The difference between these poles depends, at bottom, on the *distance* at and from which a text depicts the process of prophecy. On the whole, this distance is greater in *p*-texts than in *r*-texts. In the former, the reader is merely invited to identify *with* the audience of the prophetic message; the reader of a *p*-text is no more than one part of an audience that also includes, at the very least, the person(s) to whom the message was originally proclaimed, as described by the text.[117] On the other hand, *r*-texts collapse this distance between the original audience and later readers by inviting the latter to identify *as* the audience of the message, such that each reading of the text constitutes a new, text-assisted "proclamation" in its own right.[118] Much the same holds for the portrayals of the prophet and the deity in these texts. The voice of the prophet—and, by extension, the deity—is mediated in *p*-texts through the *narratorial* perspective of a third party, most often rendered in the third person.[119] In *r*-texts, however, such a perspective is entirely absent, or at least extremely attenuated, so that these texts read instead as more or less direct transcripts of the words of the prophet (and *ipso facto* the deity).[120] Whereas *p*-texts speak *on behalf of* the prophet in the voice of another, such as an official from Mari or the biblical narrator, *r*-texts purport to speak *as* the prophet, in relation to whom they position the reader as audience.

---

[117] Since ancient prophets did not normally compose their own texts (see n. 92 above), even the intended reader-recipient of an epistolary *p*-text would thereby share "audienceship" with the original writer-witness of the message.

[118] The distinction between *r*-texts and *p*-texts would thus sharpen the concept of "point of standing" outlined in Harry P. Nasuti, "The Poetics of Biblical Prophecy: Point of View and Point of Standing in Prophetic Books," in *Thus Says the Lord: Essays on the Former and Latter Prophets in Honor of Robert R. Wilson*, ed. John J. Ahn and Stephen L. Cook, LHBOTS 502 (New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 99-113, here 109-112. While it is true that the generalized (and often second-person) language of any prophetic book "enables [it] to involve its readers in a way that is rare in standard narrative texts" (109), this involvement works somewhat differently in *r*-texts and *p*-texts—a distinction that Nasuti himself seems to sense when he subsequently limits the comparison to "narrative texts that do not themselves contain prophetic discourse" (ibid.).

From a Deleuzian standpoint, the aforementioned distinction between *r*- and *p*-texts may be sharpened by reformulating the notion of mimetic "distance" as a matter of degrees of different/ciation. As noted above (see 3.3.2), revelations constitute virtual multiplicities of potential meanings that, as such, are thoroughly differen*t*iated but essentially undifferen*c*iated. It is only through the concrete circumstances of an event of proclamation, supplying the revelation with "dimensions of actualization," that the virtual totality can be progressively determined and narrowed down (i.e., differen*c*iated or actualized), so as to select for a much smaller number of actual meanings at the (temporary) expense of all the others. In *r*-texts, which lack an explicit description of these dimensions, the reader engages with this virtual multiplicity most directly; these texts are maximally differen*t*iated, but relatively undifferen*c*iated.[121] Martti Nissinen's observations about the hermeneutical openness of the Assyrian prophecies can be extended to all *r*-texts: once detached from the context of its original promulgation, the (re)writing of a prophetic revelation allows for its continual "re-actualization" as "part of a written tradition that could be used and reinterpreted by posterity."[122]

---

[119] Although third-person *p*-texts are the norm, a notable exception is Jer 32:1-15, esp. 6-15, where Jeremiah recounts his own interactions with other persons in the context of a prophetic performance; even here, however, the prophet's first-person narrative is framed by the narrator's third-person language in 32:1-5.

[120] More precisely, many biblical *r*-texts replace the narrator's perspective with a different kind of "literary construction," which Nasuti ("Poetics," 111-112) dubs the "presenter" or "unifying voice," that cannot be entirely equated with the prophet *or* deity as characters in the prophetic book.

[121] This is not to say that *r*-texts are completely devoid of concrete contextual information. In the Assyrian oracles, for example, a range of historical references suggest links to specific events in the reigns of Esarhaddon and

In *p*-texts, however, the reader finds less freedom for such reinterpretation. By combining the content of a revelation with a depiction of the context of its proclamation, these texts ensure that the virtualities of the former will always already be shaped, to a significant degree, by the actualities of the latter. Compared to *r*-texts, then, *p*-texts are less robustly differen*t*iated and proportionally more differen*c*iated. Of course, this is not to say that *p*-texts contain no virtual reservoir of potential meanings at all. Textualization itself—the inevitably selective, necessarily partial process of written description and inscription—entails that any *p*-text will be less firmly anchored in and determined by its original sociohistorical context than the actual proclamation that it recounts (or, in some cases, imagines).[123] Yet, to the extent that the (re)making of meaning in divine messages pertains primarily to *r*-texts and their readers, *p*-texts are better distinguished by their ability to inform readers about the specific circumstances, whether factual or fictive, in

---

Ashurbanipal; for this dating, see Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies*, lxviii-lxxi. Similar details have allowed biblical scholars to posit dates for the *r*-texts of the Hebrew Bible since the very advent of historical criticism. The key difference between *r*-texts and *p*-texts consists is that the former contain mostly *implicit* traces of the *general* milieu of a prophetic message, whereas the latter offer some amount of *explicit* description of the *specific* and singular event of the message's proclamation.

[122] Nissinen, *Prophets*, 101; cf. Van der Toorn, "Immanence," 73-77. While Nissinen's conception of "(re)actualization" is not influenced by Deleuze, I would argue that a Deleuzian reading of the term complements, or at least coheres with, his intended meaning. However, this aspect of Nissinen's assessment of the Assyrian *r*-texts is disputed in Lange, "Literary Prophecy," 253.

[123] On the inherent "re-contextualization" (and, by that same token, *de*-contextualization) involved in the textualization of prophecies, and the resulting increase in opportunities for their reinterpretation, see Ronald E. Clements, "Prophecy Interpreted: Intertextuality and Theodicy—A Case Study of Jeremiah 26:16-24*," in *Uprooting and Planting: Essays on Jeremiah for Leslie Allen*, ed. John Goldingay, LHBOTS 495 (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 32-44, here 33-35. Importantly, these determinations do not depend on the historicity of a prophetic text: even if the prophetic events in question are "imaginary" (see HRS 171-173 and *passim*), they are no less subject to actualization than (other) "real" ones.

and from which such messages are said to originate. In particular, the descriptive scope of *p*-texts readily accommodates a wide range of detail about the life and deeds of individual prophets, who may appear in these texts as full-fledged characters interacting with other clearly defined persons in an equally definite social milieu or narrative setting.

Dense as they are with divine meaning, *r*-texts can offer only a cursory and skeletal sketch of the prophet *qua* person, chiefly through bibliographical references in peripheral "paratexts" like the Assyrian colophons or the superscriptions to biblical prophetic books.[124] At the same time, insofar as *r*-texts publicize (some part or version of) the content of revelatory experiences that are fundamentally private, these texts are more amenable than *p*-texts to the portrayal of a prophet's attitudes and overall mindset in the course of their vocation. This is especially true of narrative or dialogical *r*-texts that address not only the content of a revelation but the reaction that it elicits from the prophet in relation to the deity, such as the confessions of Jeremiah (see Chapter 1) or the visions of Ezekiel (see 4.2.2.5). The distinctive powers of *r*-texts and *p*-texts will become clearer in the next chapter, where I show how the unprecedented convergence of these texts in the book of Jeremiah leverages the capacities of both meta-genres to construct its titular figure as a purely and paradoxically prophetic subject, at once less and more than a mere person.

### *3.4.2. Between Technocracy and Autocracy: The Structural Significance of Biblical Prophetic Literature*

---

[124] For the concept of the "paratext," see Gérard Genette, "Introduction to the Paratext," trans. Marie Maclean, *New Literary History* 22 (1991): 261–272. On superscriptions, see Gene Tucker, "Prophetic Superscriptions and the Growth of a Canon," in *Canon and Authority: Essays in Old Testament Religion and Theology*, ed. George W. Coats and Burke O. Long (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 56–70; Klaus Koch, "Profetenbuchüberschriften: Ihre Bedeutung für das hebräische Verständnis von Profetie," in *Verbindungslinien: Festschrift für Werner H. Schmidt zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Axel Graupner, Holger Delkurt, and Alexander B. Ernst (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2000), 165–186; see also the discussion in 4.2.1.

Ancient Near Eastern actualizations of epistemic intermediation are not limited to literary sources, even if these are overrepresented by nature in the extant evidence. Beyond and behind the texts lie the actual intermediaries to whom they refer, and the multiple social systems to which those intermediaries belonged. The general positions and functions of these figures were already outlined in the two-dimensional typology above (see 3.2), but it remains to be seen how that typology relates to the structure that I have devised in the meantime (3.3). At the same time, the ultimate focus of this project is not the particular sociohistorical institutions of prophecy at work in the ancient Near East or elsewhere, but the literary products of just one of those institution: namely, the biblical prophetic books of ancient Israel. As much as I have said about the phenomena of intermediation in this chapter, it has mainly served to develop a conceptual and theoretical framework—of virtual *r*- and *p*-series, differentially embodied in actual *r*- and *p*-texts—that may, with luck, shed new light on the biblical depictions of prophecy, above all those of the unusually complex book of Jeremiah. While I expect that the distinctive features of my structure would be discernible in any domain where epistemic intermediation is practiced—including the scientific systems that reign in our modern world—the fact regrettably remains that a detailed examination of those domains, even one that is restricted to Israel and its nearest neighbors, cannot fit within the scope of this study. In place of such a survey, I conclude this chapter with a far more limited look at the *technical* and *central* forms so often assumed by intermediation in the ancient Near East. This brief overview will proceed just far enough to identify the uniqueness of the biblical prophetic literature in its ancient environment, on structural rather than theological grounds.

To resume the typological analysis of epistemic intermediation, recall that this practice may be subdivided into four interrelated forms along two distinct axes: 1) *peripheral intuitive*, which encompasses prophets, visionaries, and dreamers who stand at some distance from the bastions of power in their society; 2) *central intuitive*, denoting prophets and similar intermediaries who are integrated into the ranks of the social and political elite; 3) *peripheral technical*, which describes diviners employed by private clients rather than the state and its leaders; and 4) *central technical*, pertaining to those diviners who served primarily as scholarly advisers to the king and other officials.[125] As noted above, the distribution of intermediaries among these classes differs as a function of the society in which they operate; for instance, while both technical diviners and intuitive prophets are amply attested in Mari as well as Assyria, the Mari prophets appear to have been subordinated to their divinatory counterparts to a far greater degree than the Assyrian prophets were a millennium later.[126] On the whole, the boundaries between these classes are fairly fluid. In many cases, both technical and intuitive methods of intermediation could be variously employed by a single mantic professional.[127] Similarly, the social status of such professionals could shift based on nothing more than the predilections of the elites who happen to constitute the "center" at a given moment. In Assyria, for example, a central role for intuitive prophets is only attested during the reigns of Esarhaddon (681-669 BCE) and his successor, Ashurbanipal (668-627 BCE). These kings' unprecedented preference for prophecy most likely stemmed from their personal devotion to Ishtar of Arbela, with whom the Assyrian prophets were predominantly affiliated.[128] At Mari, textual evidence for the influence of intuitive intermediation on the centers of power is likewise limited to the reign of Zimri-Lim, the last king of Mari; of the extant corpus of prophetic letters, only three date to the time of earlier rulers.[129] In contrast to intuitive prophecy, technical divination was always held in high esteem throughout Mesopotamia, but this relationship was apparently reversed in ancient Israel. Other than the established instruments of priestly divination, the *urim* and the *thummim*, virtually all other forms of technical intermediation are proscribed by the biblical text, itself a reflection of the ideology of Israel's elites.[130] At the same time, the tenor and tenacity of such proscriptions suggests that divination was widely practiced on the peripheries of Israelite society, if not also at its center.[131]

---

[125] See Figure 3.1 above.

[126] On the subordination of intuitive to technical divination at Mari, see n. 63 above.

[127] See Frederick H. Cryer, *Divination in Ancient Israel and Its Near Eastern Environment: A Socio-Historical Investigation*, JSOTSup 142 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994), 245-250. A fitting and familiar testament to the overlapping of prophetic and divinatory roles is found in the figure of Balaam; see Grabbe, *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages*, 128-130.

[128] Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies*, xxxix-xl; Nissinen, *Prophets*, 98-99; idem, *Ancient Prophecy*, 96.

The sheer diversity of mantic arts attested in these and other ancient Near Eastern contexts defies concise categorization. Although modern scholarship tends to treat the word "prophet" as a kind of catchall, this term represents just one of the many roles and titles borne by ancient Near Eastern intuitive intermediaries. Biblical Hebrew alone preserves no fewer than four distinct titles: not only נביא "prophet" but also ראה and חזה (both meaning something like "seer") and איש האלהים ("man of God").[132] With the exception of חזה and, to a lesser extent,

---

[129] These are Zimri-Lim's predecessor, Yasmaḫ-Addu (ca. 1785-1775 BCE; two letters) and the still earlier Yaḫdun-Lim (ca. 1810-1794; one letter); see Nissinen, *Ancient Prophecy*, 75-76.

[130] For an overview of divination in biblical and cross-cultural perspective, see Grabbe, *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages*, 119-151. On the *urim* and *thummim*, see Cornelis van Dam, *The Urim and Thummim: A Means of Revelation in Ancient Israel* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997); Cornelius Houtman, "The Urim and Thummim: A New Suggestion," *VT* 40 (1990): 229-232. On the persistence, or perhaps (re)appearance, of this apparatus in the Second Temple period, see Lisbeth S. Fried, "Did Second Temple High Priests Possess the *Urim* and *Thummim*?," *JHS* 7 (2007): 1-25, https://doi.org/10.5508/jhs.2007.v7.a3. Cryer (*Divination*, 273-276) affirms the divinatory purpose of the *urim* and *thummim* but questions the antiquity attributed to these instruments in the biblical text (e.g., Exod 28:30).

[131] Grabbe, *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages*, 128, 150. See also Diana V. Edelman, "From Prophets to Prophetic Books: The Fixing of the Divine Word," in Edelman and Ben Zvi, *Production of Prophecy*, 29–54, here 35-36.

[132] For these titles and the roles they reflect, see David L. Petersen, *The Roles of Israel's Prophets*, JSOTSup 17 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981), as well as the essays cited in n. 109 above.

נביא, these terms are also distinct from those used by Israel's neighbors, who talk instead of the *āpilum/āpiltum* "spokesperson" (a common term in the Mari corpus), the *muḫḫûm/muḫḫūtum* or *maḫḫû/maḫḫūtu* (both "ecstatic," used respectively in Mari and Assyria), the *raggimu/raggintu* (the standard term for "prophet" in Assyrian sources), and the *ʿdd* ("messenger"), among many others.[133] The terminology around technical divination is even more formidable. Place the stem of well near any Greek noun before the suffix "-mancy," and you will have thereby denoted some actual divinatory practice, to say nothing of the many culturally conditioned titles that apply to the practitioners themselves.[134]

Setting aside the specific media and methods of these technical practices so as to consider them abstractly and structurally, it becomes clear that they involve essentially the same roles and relations as intuitive intermediation. No less than prophecy, technical divination requires an intermediary (or diviner), an audience (or client), and a deity (or other supernatural power). Insofar as they participate in the act of divination, these beings are each defined by intermediation's constitutive differential relations of disclosure and feedback, which proceed, respectively, from the deity to the divining intermediary to the client and from the client back to the diviner.[135] As such, divination and prophecy both generate the same threefold distribution of singular points—source, recipient, and object—distributed analogously across two distinct series.

---

[133] For these terms, see Stökl, *Prophecy*, 38-69 (on Mari), 111-127 (on Assyria); Nissinen, *Ancient Prophecy*, 32-42. A cognate of חזה occurs in the Deir Alla inscription (see 3.4.1 above), among other places. A single Mari text preserves a potential cognate of נביא (*nabûm*), albeit in a context of technical rather than intuitive divination; see Stökl, *Prophecy*, 63-64.

[134] My suggestion for mantic "Mad Libs" is hyperbole, of course, but the semantic sprawl of terms for technical divination is truly remarkable: consider *lecanomancy* (oil), *libanomancy* (smoke or incense), *necromancy* (departed spirits), *oneiromancy* (dreams), in addition to the many others that do not conform to this etymological model (astrology, haruspicy/extispicy, augury, etc.). For an overview of these methods and those who used them, see Cryer, *Divination*, 124-208 (on Mesopotamia), 255-305 (on Israel).

[135] Compare the respective diagrams of prophecy and divination in Overholt, *Channels*, 23 and 146.

In the *r*-series, the diviner (as recipient) employs established procedures for ascertaining the divine will (source) regarding the inquiry of a client (object); in the *p*-series, the diviner becomes the source who delivers the verdict of the god(s), now distanced from the proceedings as object, to the client, who now functions as recipient.[136]

As the structure is actualized across concrete cases, however, some notable differences between divination and prophecy begin to emerge. First, the standard temporal sequence of events determined by the series is reversed. In prophecy, a revelation is normally (though not always) received in advance of its proclamation: the prophet encounters the audience on the basis of a prior encounter with divinity.[137] In divination, however, the event of "proclamation" is much more likely to begin before the technical procedures that produce the "revelation," as it is usually the client who approaches the diviner with a specific query in mind. For this reason, it may be more appropriate to refer to divinatory events of the *r*- and *p*-series as "observations" and "consultations," respectively, rather than "revelations" and "proclamation." At the same time, this divergent temporal tendency of divination's actualization does not impinge on the underlying structural dynamics of intermediation itself. Although the standard sequences of prophetic and divinatory events are opposed in actuality, the relations of signification or subordination between the revelatory and proclamatory series remain unchanged in virtuality. Just as proclamation shapes and determines the concrete meaning(s) of a revelation, the omina and phenomena observed by the diviner are made intelligible by the specific entreaties and general circumstances involved in the consultation.[138]

---

[136] At least for the ancient Near East, the language of "verdict" is no mere metaphor, as "divination was conceived throughout its history as a function of the 'judicial' activities of the gods"; thus Cryer, *Divination*, 197. See also Rochberg, *Heavenly Writing*, 53, on use of the term *purussû* ("verdict" or "decision") in Mesopotamian omen lists.

[137] For some possible exceptions, see n. 74 above. However, it is telling that these potential counterexamples primarily represent "divinatory chronicles" (see nn. 109-110 above), where the role of the prophet comes closest to that of the diviner; on this genre, see Petersen, "Nature," 25-26.

While the overall operation of the structure thus remains more or less consistent from prophecy to divination, a second differences lies in the organization of the series themselves. Specifically, the relations of the *r*-series become more distanced or "mediated" in divination than they are in prophecy. Although the diviner's observations are no less predicated on supernatural agency than the revelatory encounters of prophecy are, the contribution of this agency differs markedly in each case. In contrast to prophecy's spontaneous and direct contacts between humanity and divinity, systems of divination find their supernatural support in a more regular and predictable (though not simply causal) "correspondence" between "macrocosmic" and "microcosmic" phenomena: the will of the gods is inscribed "sowohl in die Konstellation der Gestirne wie auch in die Anatomie der Leber im Moment des Opfers," such that both reflect the divinely decreed progression of human history.[139]

As such correspondences accumulate, they constitute an increasingly complex body of specialized knowledge that can also effect changes in the divining intermediary. While prophecy is not without learned methods for communing with the divine (e.g., by cultivating states of possession or trance), these skills generally pale in comparison to those required of the diviner, who must learn to manipulate and interpret a wider range of intricate external objects. Of course, it would be a mistake to assume on this basis that the diviner is deprived of the prophet's creative intuition and "trapped by an inflexible technique."[140] At the same time, the stature of the diviner, much more than that of the prophet, seems to increase in proportion to the complexity of the divinatory system: such a system sets the diviner *qua* specialist apart from the layperson who is not "initiated" (Akkadian *mūdû*, lit. "one who knows"), insofar as it is entirely intelligible to the former but essentially (and often explicitly) inaccessible to the latter.[141] Prophecy, on the other hand, remains open in principle to any simpleton visited by the capaciously capricious spirit of inspiration.

---

[138] The temporal priority of consultation over observation applies mainly to "provoked" or "impetrated" omens, which are actively sought out or requested by the diviner. In cases of "unprovoked" omens, which are observed first and then interpreted, the sequence of divinatory events more closely resembles the process of prophecy. For this distinction, see Rochberg, *Heavenly Writing*, 47-48.

[139] Thus Pongratz-Leisten, *Herrschaftswissen*, 12-13; cf. Rochberg, *Heavenly Writing*, 58-60.

This aggrandizement is especially applicable to diviners in the ancient Near East, or at least those regions influenced by Mesopotamian culture, for which the two most prominent modes of technical intermediation, astrology and haruspicy, dealt with phenomena that fall firmly within the purview of modern empirical sciences (namely, astronomy and anatomy). Unlike prophets, dreamers, or most other intermediaries, astrologers and haruspices were not only religious professionals but *scholars* (*ṭupšarrû*, from *ṭuppu* "tablet") in the fullest sense, possessing tremendous education in the texts and techniques of their field as well as high social status as advisers to the uppermost echelons of their society.[142] As such, the practitioners of these arts stood at the pinnacle of a hierarchy of intermediation seen not only in Mesopotamia but throughout its broader sphere of influence; at Mari, as noted above, the technical diviners were uniquely qualified to verify divine messages obtained via other (intuitive) methods.[143]

---

[140] Overholt, *Channels*, 138.

[141] Cryer (*Divination*, 197) notes that Mesopotamian divinatory texts disproportionately "enjoyed the designations *niṣirti/pirišti ilāni rabûti*, 'secrets of the great gods"; in this and other contexts, "it is by no means unusual for divination to be kept secret or at least highly privileged" (n. 4); cf. Rochberg, *Heavenly Writing*, 212-219.

[142] On these professionals, see Rochberg, *Heavenly Writing*, 209-236; idem, *Before Nature: Cuneiform Knowledge and the History of Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 61-102. Cryer (*Divination*, 196-200) disputes that the Mesopotamian diviners were "proto-scientist[s]" or "specialist[s]" (198), but the real target of his argument is an overly sharp, mutually exclusive distinction between the "'secular' (i.e., quasi- or proto-scientific) [and] 'cultic' (i.e., quasi-priestly) status" of these professionals (196), which is more than I want or need to claim here.

A third and, for my purposes, final difference between prophecy and divination as actualizations of the structure of epistemic intermediation concerns the place of *texts* in these systems. As already indicated by the etymology of the Akkadian term *ṭupšarru*, textuality was tightly intertwined with identity for scholarly diviners, due in no small part to the centrality of texts to their mantic activities. The Mesopotamian diviners produced lengthy "series" of topically associated omens, such as *Enūma Anu Enlil* ("When Anu and Enlil") and *Šumma ālu* ("If a city"), covering celestial and terrestrial phenomena, respectively.[144] Although we have seen that texts were also produced in the context of ancient Near Eastern prophecy, those compositions were largely incidental to a prophetic process that played out first and foremost in oral and auditory media, which were the primary channels of revelation and proclamation. On the other hand, omen texts were integrally involved in the act of divination itself, not merely as an aid to supernatural revelation but as a veritable substitute for it. When a diviner "interpreted the meaning of a phenomenon by reference to the omen compendi[a], the authority of the interpretation was grounded in the text, not on a claim to divine inspiration."[145]

For understanding the structural uniqueness of ancient prophecy and of its biblical depictions in particular, two effects of divination's divergent actualization vis-à-vis prophecy merit closer consideration. The first is what might be called the greater *stability* or *tractability* of technical divination compared to intuitive prophecy. Beyond the sheer erudition they required, practices like astrology and haruspicy merited such high regard in ancient societies because of the unparalleled clarity or definiteness (*Eindeutigkeit*) of their results.[146] A dream, vision, or other revelation may admit of countless disparate and even contradictory interpretations, but less uncertainty surrounds the anatomy of a liver or the geometry of the stars.[147] More generally, whereas an intuitive intermediary must appeal to private and irreproducible experiences from the past, divinatory technicians point to external objects in the present, and to a body of authoritative scholarship on which their interpretation of those objects rests. As the divinatory apparatus grows more rigorous and more regimented, however, more powers of the structure, which would normally be shared among the other participants in intermediation (namely, deity and audience), come to be concentrated in the figure of the diviner. On the side of the deity, the diviner's fixed procedures strive to domesticate the supernatural source by directing its disclosures through certain predetermined channels (e.g., the protases and apodoses of the omen lists).[148] On the side of the audience, the diviner assumes a greater share of responsibility for responding to the deity's disclosures by virtue of divination's close connection to defensive and apotropaic magic, such as the Mesopotamian *namburbû* ("undoing") rituals.[149]

---

[143] On this hierarchy, see Pongratz-Leisten, *Herrschaftswissen*, 14-15; cf. n. 63 above.

[144] For these and other omen collections, see Rochberg, *Heavenly Writing*, 49-97.

[145] Rochberg, *Heavenly Writing*, 217.

The positive efficacy of these structural shifts must not be overlooked: much more so than prophecy, ancient divination anticipated aspects of the scientific disciplines that so effectively exercise the powers of epistemic intermediation in our modern world.[150] Yet divination is not without its disadvantages, at least as far as the hermeneutical potential of its textual products is concerned. Since the textual tools of technical divination are hardly intelligible, much less usable, without the proper training and expertise, their value becomes merely academic in the absence of the requisite intermediaries and their social institutions. Even in antiquity, the scholarly literature that supported Mesopotamian divination was treated as a closely guarded secret, known only to the scribes responsible for its transmission and application.[151] As a consequence of the aforementioned enlargement of the diviner's structural role, then, the disappearance of this figure brings the whole divinatory edifice down with it. Prophecy, in contrast, may be said to outlive its practitioners insofar as prophetic texts maintain a greater capacity for meaning-making even in the hands of non-specialists.

---

[146] See Pongratz-Leisten, *Herrschaftswissen*, 68; cf. 14.

[147] Of course, this does not mean that there was no room for multiple "conflicting approaches" to interpretation of the same divinatory phenomena; for an astrological example, see Koch-Westenholz, *Mesopotamian Astrology*, 140-149, here 145.

[148] In Mesopotamia, divination was so synonymous with the casuistic conditional form that the omen series themselves came to be known collectively as "the ifs" (ŠUM.MA.ME); see Rochberg, *Heavenly Writing*, 53.

[149] On these rites, see Rochberg, *Heavenly Writing*, 50-51; Richard I. Caplice, "Participants in the Namburbi Rituals," *CBQ* 29 (1967): 346-352.

If actualizations of intermediation in the ancient Near Eastern tended more toward systems of divination than prophecy, there is a similarly noticeable and arguably even more consequential trend of *centralization* at work along the perpendicular axis that charts the social position of the intermediaries themselves. By "centralization," I mean to capture a certain *drift* that draws intermediaries of all types toward centers of political power and their interests: not only central prophets and diviners, located by definition in close proximity to the powers that be, but also peripheral ones, for whom loyalty to the reigning monarch was usually a necessary, if not also sufficient, condition on their legitimacy and livelihood. In an extensive study of Mesopotamian intermediation, Beate Pongratz-Leisten has explicated this drift through the concept of *Herrschaftswissen*, which denotes "nicht das praktische und organisatorische Funktionärswissen, sondern Wissen zur Identitäts- und Herrschaftssicherung" on behalf of the state and its rulers.[152]

---

[150] On the complex relationship of cuneiform knowledge and later scientific paradigms, see Rochberg, *Before Nature*, 17-37 and *passim*.

[151] See Lenzi, *Secrecy*, 135-215.

In the most powerful ancient polities, such as the Neo-Assyrian Empire, the centralizing drive of *Herrschaftswissen* came to be realized in what Jacob L. Wright describes, in quasi-Weberian terms, as a *Wissensmonopol*, under which the state possesses a veritable monopoly on the production and dissemination of knowledge.[153] An epistemic monopoly was most easily maintained among the central (technical) intermediaries of such states, like the Mesopotamian haruspices (*barû*), who not only corresponded regularly with the king but were sworn to secrecy by the same.[154] Yet intuitive and/or peripheral intermediaries were by no means free from this gravitational pull toward the center. In fact, because intuitive intermediaries (prophets, dreamers, etc.) could discern the divine will based solely on more or less spontaneous revelations, these figures posed a distinct danger to the state: especially under conditions of social marginality, prophetic spontaneity may give rise to novel, supernaturally sanctioned proclamations encouraging political reorganization and even rebellion. As a result, peripheral-intuitive intermediaries may have felt the homogenizing forces of *Wissensmonopol* even more palpably and pervasively than their central-technical counterparts, for good and for ill. Suspect prophets were subject to state surveillance—royal treaties compelled their parties to report any inducement to insurrection spoken by such an intermediary—but loyal ones were richly rewarded (with food, clothing, lodging, etc.) for their service to the throne.[155] Under the Assyrian *Wissensmonopol*, accordingly, support for the king and his dynasty, or lack thereof, became the chief criterion for distinguishing "true" and "false" prophecy, respectively.[156] Perhaps unsurprisingly, most of the extant prophetic oracles from Assyria, and from Mesopotamia more generally, proclaim nothing but peace and prosperity for the reigning monarch; at Mari, genuine reproach or criticism of the king is levied only by prophets operating *outside* the royal sphere of influence.[157] On the whole, for intermediaries in these societies, to reject monarchic power altogether was not merely to inhabit the periphery but to flee to the wilderness. We should not assume that all such outcasts would have been so blessed as Elijah, to be sustained by angels while they sojourned there (1 Kgs 19:1-8).

---

[152] For this definition, see Pongratz-Leisten, *Herrschaftswissen*, 1.

[153] See Wright, "Prolegomena to the Study of Biblical Prophetic Literature," in *Comment devient-on prophète? Actes de colloque organisé par le Collège de France, Paris, les 4-5 avril 2011*, ed. Jean-Marie Durand, Thomas Römer, and Micaël Bürki, OBO 265 (Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 78-85.

[154] Wright, "Prolegomena," 78. Cf. Lenzi, *Secrecy*, 42-45 for an example from Mari.

From a structural standpoint, the centralizations effected by *Herrschaftswissen*, particularly as realized in an ideal *Wissensmonopol*, considerably distort the dynamics of epistemic intermediation. As political pressure to affirm the authority of a monarchic audience grows, the relations of *feedback* from that audience become disproportionately determinative, even to the point of eclipsing the divine disclosures that ought to predominate in events of revelation (i.e., the *r*-series). Although the norms and expectations of the audience always constrain the content of a prophetic message to some degree, these constraints become so much stricter as to differ in kind when they are imposed by a ruler wielding absolute power and functionally unlimited resources. For prophets weighing the rewards for desirable disclosures against the risks that accrue in their absence, it places no strain on the imagination to suppose that their revelations would thus skew toward messages more acceptable to the monarchy. Whereas technical divination tends to amplify the role of the intermediary over that of other actors, the centralization of all methods of intermediation raises the audience (i.e., the king) to a similarly disproportionate status within the structure. To the extent that the dictates and desires of a ruler preemptively shape the disclosures from a deity, the role of the ruler, as audience, and the deity, as source, begin to overlap. In proportion to this intersection of source and audience, the role of the intermediary recedes: in the most extreme cases, the prophet or diviner is reduced to a mere propogandist, who grants divine imprimatur to the specific policies and general power of the king.[158]

---

[155] See Wright, "Prolegomena," 80-82. Of course, the central technical intermediaries could also rebel against the king, and loyalty among these figures was no less lucrative than it was for prophets and other, more peripheral intermediaries; see Wright, "Prolegomena," 79 for the status of diviners under *Wissensmonopol*.

[156] On this criterion, see Pongratz-Leisten, *Herrschaftswissen*, 73; cf. Nissinen, "Falsche Prophetie in neuassyrischer und deuteronomistischer Darstellung," in idem, *Prophetic Divination*, 419-440.

[157] On such cases of prophetic dissent in (or, more accurately, around) Mari, see Pongratz-Leisten, *Herrschaftswissen*, 73.

Another look at the system of Deleuze's structuralism shows that the structural shifts or distortions of both highly technical and highly centralized forms of intermediation are in fact interrelated. Each form impinges in its own way on the structural role of the "nomad subject" or "structuralist hero"—and thus on the construction of the prophetic or divinatory subject, insofar as it fills this role in the structure of intermediation. After sketching his inherently intersubjective understanding of the subject in relation to the "object = *x*" (as "empty square") in the final section of the "Structuralism?" essay, Deleuze writes:

> Henceforth, two great accidents of the structure may defined. Either the empty and mobile square is no longer accompanied by a nomad subject that accentuates its trajectory, and its emptiness becomes a veritable lack, a lacuna. Or just the opposite, it is

---

[158] In Assyria, for example, there is evidence that such propagandistic prophecies were "announced to the king in front of the people during state ceremonies"; see Wright, "Prolegomena," 81.

> filled, occupied by what accompanies it, and its mobility is lost in the effect of a sedentary or fixed plenitude (HRS 190).[159]

Despite the language of “accidents,” Deleuze makes clear that these risks are not external and contingent impositions on a structure, but rather “immanent” or “ideal events that are part of the structure itself” (HRS 191). In both cases, however, the accident depends on a disruption of the intimate and integral relationship between the nomad subject and the paradoxical object, such that the subject is no longer suspended and constructed within a dynamic network of differential relations driven by the movement of the object. In the first accident, that of lack, this subject disappears, and the paradoxes that should define the ever-mobile object = *x* begin to exhibit nothing but an ever-present emptiness. In the accident of excess, on the other hand, the subject oversteps its own boundaries, so as to saturate the paradoxical element and stop its circulation. The former accident accounts for “the challenge of nihilism,” as James Williams puts it, while the latter amounts to a kind of “false orthodoxy.”[160]

Within the structure outlined in this chapter, I posit that the accident of lack best describes the dangers of overly centralized intermediation, while the accident of excess is more likely to threaten intermediation’s highly technical forms. In the latter, as we have seen, the role of the diviner may become so enlarged as to encroach on those of the deity and the audience. As a result, the diviner’s techniques arrest the movement of the divine datum, which no longer circulates throughout the whole structure—from the deity, through the message, to the audience, and back again—but becomes stuck, so to speak, on the divinatory object itself (a liver, a planet, an *urim* or a *thummim*, etc.) and the texts that govern its interpretation. In highly centralized intermediation, on the other hand, the intermediary abdicates her unique structural role in becoming a mere instrument of royal power. The Word = *x* likewise removes itself from such circumstances, leaving little more than a lacuna to be filled by a new and altogether different sort of object—a Word = Esarhaddon! The structure of intermediation is thus bordered on one side by the Scylla of *technocracy*, and on the other by the Charybdis of *autocracy*.

---

[159] For Deleuze’s concept of (inter)subjectivity, see the discussion in 2.4.

[160] James Williams, *Understanding Poststructuralism* (London: Routledge, 2014), 70.

In focusing so intently on Mesopotamian technical intermediation in my presentation of these two accidents, it may seem that the intuitive intermediaries of Israel could have avoided them entirely. If so, my analysis would simply add another chapter to that tired tale of the "Old Testament against its environment," in G. E. Wright's titular turn of phrase, according to which a monotheistic Israel, behind the vanguard of its virtuous prophets, stood valiantly opposed to the benighted pagans around it.[161] Such a view is as far from my intention as it is from the truth. Even if the putative preeminence of prophecy in Israelite society allowed its intermediaries to avoid a drift toward technocracy, there is little reason to think that they would have been any less inherently susceptible to the attraction of autocracy.[162] The prophetic stories of the books of Kings are replete with references to prophets who are every bit as beholden to the king as their Mesopotamian congeners (e.g., 1 Kings 22:5-12), and we should not assume that the canonical or "classical" namesakes of the Latter Prophets were any more immune. For example, in comparing oracles against Israel and its king, Jeroboam, ascribed to the biblical Amos of Tekoa (for whom, as a Judean, Jeroboam was a foreign king) with those of the Assyrian prophet Bayâ of Arbela in support of Esarhaddon, Nissinen posits that "both derive from the same Near Eastern prophetic tradition of proclaiming blessing to one's own king and destruction to the enemy…. The two oracles seem to be two sides of the same coin, a coin which has the king's image on it."[163] Conversely, even under the epistemic monopolies of the Mesopotamian empires, prophets and other intermediaries were not simply sycophants; they could readily critique the conduct of the king if it fell out of line with established principles of royal ideology and theology. As Nissinen observes in a different study, "Herrschaftswissen ermöglichte also Herrschaftskritik[.]"[164]

---

[161] G. Ernest Wright, *The Old Testament Against Its Environment*, SBT 2 (London: SCM Press, 1968).

[162] And, given the considerable historical and ideological distance between the (highly diversified) practices of intermediation in ancient Israel and their depiction in the Hebrew Bible, there is ample reason to doubt the latter's picture of prophecy's primacy; see Edelman, "Fixing the Divine Word," 47-48.

Yet, even if Israel's prophets were not all that different from the prophets of other nations, it cannot be denied that Israel's prophetic *literature* differs markedly from all other ancient Near Eastern texts relating to epistemic intermediation. More often than not, the biblical prophetic texts savagely critique Israel's kings, and its people more generally, to a degree that would be utterly unthinkable for the prophets and other intermediaries of Mari and Assyria. In truth, though, these differences have relatively little to do with the theology of Israelite religion, and much more to do with the geopolitics of Israel and Judah as minor states in a world dominated by stronger kingdoms and empires. If the prophets that allegedly lie behind the biblical literature were any more willing than their peers abroad to express divine dissent from and disdain for their state, it is only because the kings of Israel and Judah lacked the sustained martial and economic success, and concomitant executive clout, to gain and maintain a *Wissensmonopol*.[165]

---

[163] Thus Nissinen, "Comparing Prophetic Sources," 388.

[164] See Nissinen, "Das kritische Potential in der altorientalischen Prophetie," in idem, *Prophetic Divination*, 163-194, here 192.

[165] Lenzi (*Secrecy*, 386) offers a similarly geopolitical explanation for the relative lack of secrecy in Israel's "prophetically-based, open-source understanding" of supernaturally derived knowledge.

Furthermore, the ideological differences between the biblical and extrabiblical prophets in their attitudes toward the state reflect underlying *compositional* disparities in their respective textual traditions. In sharp contrast to extrabiblical prophecies, which were buried and soon forgotten along with the kingdoms or empires that made them, the biblical books of this genre "assumed [their] transmitted contours *after the defeat of the state*."[166] In the provincial backwater of (post)exilic Yehud, where the biblical prophetic books were most likely completed, if not also created, the greatest powers (i.e., those traditionally served by *Herrschaftswissen*) were no longer proximate but distant: they were not native kings but foreign emperors, for whom the local powers (governors, satraps, etc.) were mere proxies. Under these conditions, what would become the biblical prophetic literature developed as the literate and "quasi-prophetic" leaders of a reconstituted "Israel" drew on authoritative voices from the past to make sense of their community's traumatic downfall, miraculous renewal, and precarious persistence.[167] Crucially, the authoritatve voices (re)used by these "quasi-prophets" far outlived the actual prophets (and other persons) to whom they might have originally belonged—and, no less importantly, the kings to whom those original prophets might have owed some measure of autocratic allegiance.

This is not to say, of course, that forces of social and political power played no role in the creation of biblical prophetic literature. In fact, just the opposite is true. Insofar as they were crafted by a highly educated scribal elite, or "literati," power lies at the very root of these writings.[168] What matters, instead, is the difference between the diffuse authorial agency wielded by such scribes, writing anonymously or pseudonymously on behalf of prophets of the past under present conditions of remote imperial domination, and the centralizing compulsions of *Herrschaftswissen*, concentrated in the absolute authority of a local monarch, around which the lives of the past prophets themselves would have been compelled to revolve. To appreciate the significance of this difference, we may turn one last time to Deleuze's essay. Near the very end, where he at last introduces his concept of the "structuralist hero," Deleuze sees in this hero a way forward from the two aforementioned accidents of structuralism. His charge to would-be structuralists is worth quoting at length:

---

[166] For these differences between biblical and extrabiblical prophets and the literature ascribed to them, see Wright, "Prolegomena," 84 (emphasis original). Cf. Nissinen, *Ancient Prophecy*, 348-353, who links the "scribal turn" in prophecy to "the loss of native kingship" (351).

[167] On the scribal tradents of Israelite prophecy as "quasi-prophets," see n. 113 above. See also James M. Bos, "The 'Literarization' of the Biblical Prophecy of Doom," in *Contextualizing Israel's Sacred Writing: Ancient Literacy, Orality, and Literary Production*, ed. Brian B. Schmidt, AIL 22 (Atlanta: SBL, 2015), 263-280. Bos allows that some domestic oracles critical of Judah "might have arisen during the midst of the inner-Judahite diplomatic squabbles of the early sixth century" between pro- and anti-Babylonian factions (277), but regards "the majority of the biblical prophecies of doom as later *ex eventu* explanations of the disaster that used the few early oracles as a generic model" (278).

> [T]he empty place must be rid of the symbolic events that eclipse or fill it, and be given over to the subject which must accompany it on new paths, without occupying or deserting it. Thus, there is a structuralist *hero*: neither God nor man, neither personal nor universal, it is without an identity, made of non-personal individuations and pre-individual singularities. … For a new structure not to pursue adventures that again are analogous to those of the old structure, not to cause fatal contradictions to be reborn, depends on the resistant and creative force of this hero, on its agility in following and safeguarding the displacements, on its power to cause relations to vary and to redistribute singularities, always casting another throw of the dice. (HRS 191)

As noted above (see 3.3.2), the prophetic subject is precisely this hero upon which the validity and vitality of the structure of intermediation depend. Even so, the dual dangers of technocracy and autocracy threaten always to overtake this subject and, with it, the structure itself. Between and beyond these extremes, however, the scribal literati of Yehud blazed a different trail: not quite the stately thoroughfare of democracy that is so dear to us moderns, but a preparatory path toward the innovative ideal of a demos or *nation* as "a political community held together by shared memories and a will to act in solidarity."[169]

---

[168] On scribes as "literati," see Ben Zvi, "Introduction," 5-16. Cf. Bos, "Literarization," 271, who argues that the biblical prophecies of doom primarily "served the interests of the [postexilic] priestly elite, those working in Yahweh's new temple specifically."

More profoundly, in surrendering the structure of intermediation to the literary depictions of prophets as characters or personae, the quasi-prophets did what perhaps no prophet of flesh and of blood could have done: they freed the prophetic subject, *qua* structuralist hero, to accompany the Word = *x* with audacious alacrity, to follow it in the direction of new frontiers where no actual intermediary would have dared to venture.[170] In so doing, they not only adopted the heroic role themselves but extended it to all the other *writers and readers* of their prophetic personae, in (post)modernity as well as (post?)antiquity, without whose creative activity any such portrayal would remain altogether stagnant and sterile. As the next chapter will argue, the Hebrew Bible offers no better testament to the reality and potency of this structural heroism than the book of the prophet Jeremiah.

---

[169] See Wright, *Why the Bible Began: An Alternative History of Scripture and Its Origins* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), here 12.

[170] On the concept of a prophetic "persona," see n. 71 above as well as 4.4. in the next chapter.

# 4. 2 COMPLEX 2 JEREMIAH: STRUCTURES OF THE BOOK AND ITS PROPHET

> If it is true that structural criticism has as its
> object the determination of "virtualities" in
> language which pre-exist the work, the work is
> itself structural when it sets out to express its
> own virtualities.
> -Deleuze (HRS 186)

> Portraits are to daily faces
> As an Evening West,
> To a fine, pedantic sunshine –
> In a satin Vest!
> -Emily Dickinson

## 4.1. Introduction

In the foreword to the first volume of his 1986 commentary on Jeremiah, William L. Holladay puts forward a pair of simple abbreviations, "Jer" and "Jrm," to facilitate easy denotation of the work's two interrelated subjects: "Jer refers to the *book* of Jeremiah, and Jrm to the *man* Jeremiah."[1] Holladay repeatedly employs this shorthand throughout his commentary's thousand-plus pages, but he does not dwell much on the distinction itself. As of the publication of the second volume in 1989, such a straightforward terminological matter "hardly needs reiteration."[2] Of all the statements about Jeremiah—book *or* man—in Holladay's sprawling oeuvre, this one scarcely seems to deserve critical scrutiny.

As someone who often relies on clunky circumlocutions for differentiating the prophet Jeremiah from "the book that bears his name," I find Holladay's abbreviations to be convenient. Indeed, I use them extensively in this chapter, which at last resumes the exegetical project begun at the end of the first (see 1.4). What I intend to question here is not the stylistic utility of "Jer" and “Jrm,” but the binary distinction between “book” and “person” that these coinages were originally meant to serve. Holladay, for his part, ranks among those who have most doggedly pursued the person of the “historical Jeremiah.” Like John Skinner before him and Jack Lundbom after, Holladay leverages every available hermeneutical resource in order to reconstruct the life and thought of this ancient human being, under the assumption that Jrm was not only a religious visionary but also a literary artist who was deeply involved in the composition of (what would become) Jer.[3] The book, on this view, is like a realistic portrait that has been obscured by the sands of time: if we have the tools and tenacity to scrub away the layers of accumulated grime from “Jer,” we will eventually look upon the long-forgotten face of “Jrm,” smiling back at us with undimmed approbation.

---

[1] William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, Chapters 1-25*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1986), xi (emphasis original).

[2] Holladay, *Jeremiah 2: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, Chapters 26-52*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), xvii.

My approach in this study is rather different. Before Jeremiah was a prophet or a book, he and it alike were outcomes of actualization in the virtual structure of epistemic intermediation (see Chapter 3). As a structural product, like several other biblical prophetic books, Jer comprises an assortment of *r*-texts and *p*-texts. Unlike these books, however, Jer integrates such a wide range of texts with such systematic sophistication that it manages to constitute a new virtual structure in its own right. Importantly, this structure does not simply replicate the social dynamics of intermediation: while it maintains a certain homology with the parent structure, it also introduces considerable changes stemming from the shift to a primarily textual, literary domain. When I use “Jer” in this chapter, it refers properly to that literary structure, which lies ontologically behind all extant books of Jeremiah, chiefly the MT and LXX editions—though I inevitably employ the abbreviation to denote these latter texts as well. As for “Jrm,” Holladay’s fixation on "the man Jeremiah" overlooks a nearer and more accessible referent: the *literary character* Jeremiah, who necessarily constrains and mediates any attempt to locate the historical person that this character may represent. For reasons that have as much to do with the nature of mimesis as with the paucity of our available evidence, I am much less sanguine than Holladay about our ability to *reach* the historical Jeremiah, much less understand him. Accordingly, I mainly use "Jrm" to denote a strictly literary entity that emerges within the book (and structure) of Jer.

---

[3] Cf. John Skinner, *Prophecy and Religion: Studies in the Life of Jeremiah* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948); Holladay, *Jeremiah: Spokesman out of Time* (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1974); Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 21A (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press; London: Bloomsbury, 2021), 107-140.

In what follows, I begin by mapping the distribution of *r*- and *p*-texts in the rest of the Latter Prophets (4.2). Several of these books contain both types of texts, many of which resemble the *r*- and *p*-texts of Jer, but a sustained analysis of these books serves primarily to underscore Jer's structural uniqueness. While the other prophetic books are dominated by *r*-texts, Jer more evenly aggregates texts of both types into an "*r*-complex" and a "*p*-complex" that function as literary analogues to the *r*-series and *p*-series of epistemic intermediation (4.3). As the work of "quasi-prophetic" scribes, who adapted aspects of the prophetic consciousness to the transmission and interpretation of written texts, the textual components of each complex are defined by differential relations that reproduce aspects of the *r*- and *p*-series, even as they reconfigure those relations to fit the new needs of their literary medium. Although I address both the MT and LXX editions of Jer in this chapter, my analysis focuses on the former: not only to limit the scope of an already ambitious project, but also because MT frequently amplifies features and functions of the structure that are more latent or inchoate in LXX. After examining the nature of Jer and its two complexes, I argue in the end for a reworking of the relationship between the two (or more) "Jeremiahs" of history and literature (4.4). Even when it is not anchored in the "historical Jrm," the notion of a reflective correspondence between *any* person and the literary character misconstrues the latter as much as it misapplies the former: in Jrm, Jer gives us *the image of a prophet* without thereby committing us to *an image of the person* who once may have filled that role. In truth, as he is depicted in the book that bears his name, Jrm is a "simulacrum" that is at once more *and* less than a human being or the image thereof—a fact that we humans who read him would do well to remember.

## 4.2. Textual Actualizations of Epistemic Intermediation in the Latter Prophets

How does the structure of epistemic intermediation make its presence known in the book of Jeremiah? Across ancient Near Eastern prophetic literature, as surveyed in Chapter 3, the structure manifests in two distinct forms: the "*r*-text," wherein a (linguistic depiction of) divine revelation stands more or less on its own, and the "*p*-text," which somehow anchors or embeds a revelation within (a representation of) the interpersonal context of its proclamation (see 3.4.1). Among extrabiblical prophetic texts, the messages of prophets from Old Babylonian Mari are overwhelmingly preserved in the *p*-texts of letters, written by non-prophetic scribes or officials numbered among the prophets' audiences; as such, these compositions most readily describe the revealed message from an external, proclamatory perspective.[4] From the Neo-Assyrian Empire, on the other hand, we find mostly *r*-texts in the form of reports that record only the words of prophetic oracles, either individually or anthologically, without any concrete details about the immediate circumstances of their promulgation. In applying these labels to the biblical prophetic books, I observed a similarly asymmetrical attestation in that corpus: the biblical *p*-texts are located chiefly in the Former Prophets (namely, the books of Samuel and Kings), whereas *r*-texts are concentrated in the Latter Prophets.

---

[4] The epistolary form could also be used for *r*-texts, such as *šipirtu* letters containing direct speech from a deity to a king with no explicit indication of a human intermediary; on this genre, see n. 99 in Chapter 3.

I also noted there that the book of Jeremiah constitutes a clear counterexample to this trend. That claim must now be expanded and defended in greater detail, as the exceptional status of Jer relative to other ancient textual actualizations of the structure of epistemic intermediation is integrally and intimately bound up with the potency of Jrm as a prophetic figure. The salient feature of Jer, in this case, is the sustained combination and coordination of both *r*- and *p*-texts in one and the same prophetic book. To be sure, there are a handful of *p*-texts scattered across the other Latter Prophets, but those texts mark only occasional intrusions into otherwise unbroken sequences of *r*-texts. Although they momentarily express certain dynamics of the *p*-series, these texts all fall short, for one reason or another, of disrupting the overarching orientation toward the *r*-series in their respective books. In Jer, however, *r*- and *p*-texts stand on far more even (albeit not entirely equal) footing in regard to size, scope, subject matter, etc. More importantly, the texts of each type relate to one another in such a way as to generate a new, strictly literary structure that achieves, through countless differences, many of the characteristic features and forces of the social structure of epistemic intermediation—including, crucially, the constitution and circulation of something like a prophetic subject.

### *4.2.1. Prophetic Books without Proclamation Texts*

To assess the structural significance of Jeremiah’s singular status among the Latter Prophets, it is first necessary to delineate more precisely the distribution of *p*-texts throughout that corpus. As defined in 3.4.1, a *p*-text requires *both* a revealed message *and* a narrative or other (e.g., epistolary) framework that contextualizes the revelation by describing or depicting, however briefly, the circumstances of its proclamation to other persons. In short, whereas the manifest mimetic content of an *r*-text is restricted to events or elements of the *r*-series alone, a *p*-text explicitly encompasses both *r*- and *p*-series alike. In reading through the manifold texts of the Latter Prophets, however, it is remarkable how few of them manage to meet this criterion. Of the fifteen books in this corpus, just over half contain no *p*-texts at all. In Hosea, Joel, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Zechariah, the titular prophet often appears as little more than a proper name attached to an anthology of *r*-texts.[5] As a rule, the books that bear these names read like extended divine monologues—or, at times, like dialogues between deity and prophet—without the appearance of other characters in a narrative (or epistolary or other similar) setting. If the prophet acts, it is only to illustrate the deity's words (e.g., Hos 1:2-9, 3:1-3), rather than to announce them to an audience clearly and concretely represented within the text.[6] If the audience does happen to be heard, its voice is always quoted anonymously and usually secondhand, from the prevailing standpoint of the prophet or deity (e.g., Hos 6:1-3; Mic 2:4, 6; 3:5, 11).[7] What these books *do* portray are only (and in some cases, all) the essential dynamics of the *r*-series: disclosures to a human intermediary by a divine source, perhaps feedback proceeding in the opposite direction (e.g., Hab 1:2-4; 2:1; 3), and an audience present obliquely or implicitly as an "indirect object" on the periphery of these movements. As a result, these (collections of) biblical *r*-texts speak in a strikingly unmediated fashion to their *readers*, whom they position in a *p*-series reconstituted anew, and even anachronistically, apart from whatever contextualizing details may be gleaned from the *r*-texts themselves.[8]

---

[5] It is no surprise that all these books belong to the Twelve, which "contains little in the way of contextualization of speeches, biographic accounts, or autobiographical narratives"; see James D. Nogalski, "Where *Are* the Prophets in the Book of the Twelve?," in *The Book of the Twelve and the New Form Criticism*, ed. Mark J. Boda, Michael H. Floyd, and Colin M. Toffelmire, ANEM 10 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 163-182, here 167. Most of the (admittedly meager) biographical content of these books is concentrated in their headings or superscriptions, on which see n. 10 below.

[6] Hosea's wife Gomer may be read as a possible exception to this rule, albeit one that seems also to prove it. Although Gomer is a named character who is not a prophet herself, she nonetheless functions more as a *prop* than as an audience for her husband *qua* prophet. The poem in Hos 2:4-25 only ever quotes the wife's words from the perspective of her husband, whose voice in contrast "become[s] virtually indistinguishable" from that of God; thus Renita J. Weems, *Battered Love: Marriage, Sex, and Violence in the Hebrew Prophets*, OBT (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 49; cf. idem, "Gomer: Victim of Violence or Victim of Metaphor?," *Semeia* 47 (1989): 87-104. As for the narrative frame around the poem in Hos 1 and 3, the prophet never speaks to Gomer in the former chapter and does so only once in the latter, where he gives her not a prophecy but a command (3:3), which in turn illustrates the properly prophetic oracle that follows (3:4-5).

However, it is worth noting here that nothing about the *form* of the Hebrew of 3:4-5 excludes it from the statement to the woman (assumed to be Gomer) in 3:3. The decision of modern translators to place a concluding quotation mark at the end of 3:3 (as in NRSV, JPS, NIV, etc.) presumably derives from the public and political *content* of the oracle in 3:4-5, which seems out of place in a private and domestic dialogue between spouses. Yet, if we dare to imagine that Hosea speaks the whole of 3:3-5 to his wife, then Hos 3 would count as a *p*-text, and a rather interesting one at that; regrettably, since this reading cuts so drastically against the grain of conventional interpretation, it cannot be pursued further here. At the very least, we can recognize that the nearly proclamatory nature of Hos 3 and the neatly contextualizing framework of Hos 1 allow these narrative *r*-texts to function almost like *p*-texts, insofar as they actualize the abstract dialogue of Hos 2 in the more concrete personae of Hosea and Gomer; see Benedetta Rossi, "Do the Prophets Have a Private Life? Women as Literary and Redactional Tools," in *Prophecy and Gender in the Hebrew Bible*, ed. L. Juliana Claassens and Irmtraud Fischer with Funlola O. Olojede, BW 1.2 (Atlanta: SBL, 2021), 293-314, here 309-310.

To the extent that the *p*-series receives any overt expression in these books, it manifests most palpably in their introductory (or, in some cases, intercalary) *superscriptions*. The vast majority of these headings are universally recognized as secondary editorial additions to their books; in this regard, they are not so much prophetic texts as they are "paratexts" that facilitate the coherence and cohesion of the prophetic book as such, much like the covers that literally and figuratively bind together the contents of modern books.[9] While some of these superscriptions are so short as to contain nothing but a construct chain connecting the prophet's name to a technical term for the prophecy itself ("vision," "oracle," etc.), others may assign the prophet to a particular period in Israel's history (Hos 1:1; Zeph 1:1; Zech 1:1, 7:1, etc.) or even address his words to a general audience from that period (e.g., Isaiah 1:1, 2:1; Mic 1:1, Zech 7:2-3).[10] For the present study, the relevance of the latter headings consists in their resemblance to *p*-texts in function, if not form: what *p*-texts do locally to contextualize and actualize a prophecy or a prophet at certain moments, these superscriptions would seem to do globally for an entire prophetic book. This functional analogy offers a salutary reminder that any theory indebted to Deleuze's thought ought to be wary of absolute binaries and rigid categories. Neither *r*- and *p*-texts nor prophetic texts and paratexts can be distinguished along such strict lines.

---

[7] Cf. Harry P. Nasuti, "The Poetics of Biblical Prophecy: Point of View and Point of Standing in Prophetic Books," in *Thus Says the Lord: Essays on the Former and Latter Prophets in Honor of Robert R. Wilson*, ed. John J. Ahn and Stephen L. Cook, LHBOTS 502 (New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 99-113, here 107: in prophetic books, "the speech of Israel in its own defense…is usually presented as a quotation reported by God or the prophet in an exaggerated or parody-like way." Such representational subordination of the audience to the deity and prophet applies even to the most dialogical *r*-texts in the Twelve, such as the disputation speeches of Malachi, on which see 4.2.2.1 below.

[8] On "the communal reading and learning of [a prophetic] book [a]s akin to receiving prophecy," see Ehud Ben Zvi, *A Historical-Critical Study of the Book of Obadiah*, BZAW 242 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1996), 38; although Ben Zvi's analysis specifically concerns Obadiah, it can be extended to any biblical prophetic book, and especially those that (like Obadiah) consist only of *r*-texts. When Ben Zvi (40-41) posits an implicit reference to the audience in features like the first common plural verb שמענו ("we have heard…") in Obad 1, he illustrates the positionality of the audience as the obliquely represented "indirect object" of an *r*-text.

At the same time, Ben Zvi's claims about the intended "identification" of Obadiah's (re)readers "with" a prophetic audience implied by the text, which would seem to treat the book as a *p*-text (see my section 3.4.1), must be assessed against the book's disparate portrayals of the prophet and his audience: "the addressees [assumed but unnamed] in the book face a [named and thus minimally represented] prophet speaking to them about a divine message addressed to them, [while] the (re)readers of the book confront a book telling them about a prophet [represented by a proper name] addressing an audience [unrepresented by the same]" (41). This is one of the foremost differences between the mimetic situation of Obadiah's readership and "that of the (re)readers of Deuteronomy who were asked to identify themselves with the Israelites addressed by Moses" (ibid.)—if Moses is a prophet (Deut 34:10 and *passim*), then Deuteronomy is a *p*-text! (Cf. the extensive scene-setting in Deut 1:1-5.) In contrast, by downplaying the nature and number of Obadiah's addressees, this *r*-text allows its readership to identify more directly *as* (one of) the prophet's audience(s).

At the same time, it would be equally erroneous to collapse the distinction and conflate *p*-texts with paratexts altogether. It is not even accurate to treat the latter as a subset of the former. While some prophetic superscriptions may resemble *p*-texts in their capacity for contextualization, they nonetheless lack the mimetic concreteness and completeness that properly define *p*-texts as such. For example, at the outset of Micah (1:1), the reader learns metonymically that this prophet from Moresheth received supernatural messages about the Northern and Southern Kingdoms ("Samaria and Jerusalem") in the 8th century BCE ("the days of kings Jothan, Ahaz, and Hezekiah of Judah"), but these generalities do not suffice to establish any particular situation(s) in which Micah actually spoke such a message to any particular audience.[11] The absence of proclamatory particularities is even more conspicuous in a more detailed heading like Zech 7:1-3, which begins a rather lengthy and complex pericope that concludes at the end of Zech 8.[12] Though this introduction names specific persons to whom (some part of) the subsequent sequence of oracles is presumably addressed, going so far as to quote their entreaty for divine guidance (7:3b), the revelation itself is recounted without further reference to or engagement with this presumptive audience. Even the quoted entreaty generates no actual dialogue, as YHWH instead directs Zechariah to speak a more general message "to all the people of the land and to the priests" (7:5); despite the repeated use of prophetic quotation formulas (7:4, 8; 8:1-4, 6-7, 9, 14, 18-19), the rest of the text never denotes or describes the prophet's delivery of this message, much less the reaction it elicited in his audience.[13] For all its initial contextualization, Zech 7-8 must ultimately be considered a borderline *r*-text that just barely fails to meet the criteria for a *p*-text and thus helps to establish those criteria in the first place. While this passage exceeds the average *r*-text in detailing a *specific occasion* of revelation, it does not extend that same level of detail to the resulting proclamation itself.[14]

---

[9] For the concept of "paratext," see Gérard Genette, "Introduction to the Paratext," trans. Marie Maclean, *New Literary History* 22 (1991): 261–272. On superscriptions as paratexts, see Ian M. A. MacGillivray, "Prophetic Validation and the Nonregnal Dates in the Superscriptions to Jeremiah and Amos," *JBL* 142 (2023): 289-304.

[10] Technically, Zech 1:1 and 7:1 are "incipits," which are integrated into the texts they introduce, rather than superscriptions, which stand over and outside their texts; for this distinction, see John D. W. Watts, "Superscriptions and Incipits in the Book of the Twelve," in *Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve*, ed. James D. Nogalski and Marvin A. Sweeney, SBLSymS 15 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2000), 110–124, here 111-112. Although the integration of incipits blurs the lines of paratextuality, these texts resemble superscriptions in their rhetorical functions of contextualization, legitimization, etc. As for prophetic superscriptions *sensu stricto*, even the minimalistic construct chains are dense with implied meanings and unexpected connotations: for an instructively complex analysis of the two-word superscription to Obadiah (חזון עבדיה, "The vision of Obadiah"), see Ben Zvi, *Obadiah*, 11-19.

---

[11] For example, Micah 3:1 begins with the quasi-dialogical first-person verb ואמר ("and I said…"), but this verb lacks any contextual descriptions that could anchor it in a concrete sociohistorical setting; even the verse's explicit address to "the heads of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel" does little more than recall the monarchs mentioned in the opening superscription. A similar abstract verb of speaking occurs in Amos 1:2, on which see 4.2.2.2 below.

[12] On Zech 7-8 as a redactional unity, see Mark J. Boda, *Exploring Zechariah, Volume 1: The Development of Zechariah and Its Role within the Twelve*, ANEM 16 (Atlanta: SBL, 2017), 31-49.

[13] In this regard, Zech 7-8 resembles the "temple sermon" of Jer 7:1-8:3, an *r*-text which likewise lacks any overt reference to the delivery of the sermon and its reception; unlike Zechariah, however, Jer eventually elaborates extensively on exactly these details in the *p*-text of Jer 26 (see 4.3.2 below).

Overall, the position of the paratext is ambiguous, but insofar as these texts necessarily stand on the margins of whatever literary whole they bind and unify as such, they cannot attain a serial form that would allow them to intertwine and interact with *r*-texts in the same systematic manner as a series of *p*-texts.[15] In a prophetic book otherwise devoid of *p*-texts, even the most concretely descriptive superscription(s) cannot counter the sustained primacy of the *r*-series in the (*r*-)texts that follow.

### *4.2.2. Prophetic Books with Proclamation Texts*

Like Jeremiah, the rest of the Latter Prophets do contain *p*-texts, which go beyond the quasi-proclamatory frameworks that are supplied by superscriptions. Unlike in Jeremiah, however, these *p*-texts do not manage to form a literary structure with their book's *r*-texts, whether by virtue of the insufficient serial development of the former or the sheer numerical preponderance of the latter. Significantly, despite considerable differences in size and overall complexity, such impediments arise equally in the "major" prophets, namely Isaiah and Ezekiel, and their "minor" counterparts—in this case, Malachi, Amos, Jonah, and Haggai.

---

[14] Some of the mimetic peculiarities of this pericope may be the result of redactional expansion, on which see Boda, *Zechariah*, 40-45; cf. David L. Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984), 283-320. It is conceivable that an earlier version of the text (comprising, say, 7:1-3* and 8:18-19*) would have counted as a sparse *p*-text rather than a detailed *r*-text.

[15] Genette ("Introduction," 261) describes the paratext as "'[a]n undecided zone' between the inside and the outside" that can be understood as a "threshold," a "vestibule," a "border," or a "fringe."

#### 4.2.2.1. Malachi

Among the biblical prophetic books, Malachi is the last canonically and one of the latest chronologically. Its eponymous prophet is also one of the least known biographically, with some commentators going so far as to assume that “Malachi” (מלאכי) was no real person but a scribal invention based on 3:1 (“I am about to send my messenger [מלאכי] to prepare the way before me…”), perhaps for the sake of turning a would-be “Book of the Eleven” into the more numerically satisfying Book of the *Twelve*.[16] Malachi nevertheless merits the first position in this survey of biblical *p*-texts for two reasons. On the one hand, the uncertain anonymity of Malachi as a prophetic figure establishes an important theme that will recur throughout the rest of this chapter: the literary determinations of *r*-texts and *p*-texts do not depend on the authorial authenticity of their sources nor on the historical veracity of their contents. Whether Malachi or any other book may be traced back to “an original, genuinely prophetic personality” is ultimately irrelevant.[17] So long as a written work *purports* to communicate divine speech disclosed through a human intermediary, it is subject to the structural forces of epistemic intermediation as actualized in a textual domain.[18] On the other hand, Malachi contains just one *p*-text that minimally meets the mimetic criteria for this form. By virtue of its liminality, this text provides an instructive introductory example of the dynamic differentiation of *r*-texts and *p*-texts, which are not absolutely disparate sides of an irreducible dichotomy but distinct poles along a continuous spectrum of gradual differences (see 3.4.1).

---

[16] See Erhard S. Gerstenberger, “Twelve (and More) Anonyms: A Biblical Book without Authors,” in Boda et al., *New Form Criticism*, 119-136, here 119; Steven Tuell, *Reading Nahum–Malachi: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2016), 233-234. However, this thesis is disputed in Andrew E. Hill, *Malachi: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 25D (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 15-18; cf. Beth Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi: The Divine Messenger*, SBLDS 98 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 27-29.

[17] Hill, *Malachi*, 18, quoting Artur Weiser, *The Old Testament: Its Formation and Development*, trans. D. M. Barton (New York: Association, 1961), 277; cf. McDonald, *Malachi*, 29 (“a genuine prophetic figure”).

[18] In connection with this claim, I should make clear that my restricted focus on *r*- and *p*-texts in the Latter Prophets alone is merely a matter of organizational convenience. Both types of texts may be found wherever there is a textual report of divine discourse mediated by a human agent; see n. 8 above on Deuteronomy as a *p*-text. Nearer to the classical prophets, the book of Daniel is also amenable to this structural analysis: *p*-texts predominate in Dan 1-6, and *r*-texts in Dan 7-12.

At first glance, Malachi may appear to offer a wealth of possible *p*-texts as a result of its preferred genre, the "disputation speech" (1:2-5, 1:6-2:9, 2:10-16, 2:17-3:5, 3:6-12, 3:13-21).[19] As a literary genre, disputation seems to presuppose a certain amount of dialogue between the bearers of opposing viewpoints, and thus a concomitant degree of representation of those disputants. Yet, a closer look at Malachi's disputation speeches reveals that most of them should be counted as *r*-texts. Like the books discussed above (in 4.2.1), Malachi consistently subordinates the audience to the overarching perspective of the disputing deity, quoting or mentioning the former only within the speech of the latter. Specifically, the voice of the audience is repeatedly mediated by the "hypothetical" framing of the second-person plural verb **ואמרתם** ("and/but you say…"), such that the reader encounters "not the actual words of the community but rather what Malachi [*qua* YHWH!] imagines them to think."[20] Even if we more generously assume that the prophet is "report[ing] speech heard…in his normal discourse with the restoration community," the fact remains that this speech is fully filtered through and embedded in the first-person perspective of the prophet-*cum*-deity that drives and dominates the dialogue, as opposed to the more representationally distanced and proportionately evenhanded standpoint of a third-person narrator.[21] Overall, the Malachian *r*-texts employ the genre of disputation in an "attenuated" form with "restricted dialectical development": rather than fully expressing the voices of each interlocutor, as in the more fulsome dialogues of Plato or Job, Malachi reduces his opponents' contributions to no more than "brief questions which act as small links in the chain of the prophet's [reasoning.]"[22]

---

[19] See James Nogalski, *Redactional Processes in the Book of the Twelve*, BZAW 218 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1993), 182; Tuell, *Nahum–Malachi*, 236; Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 19-23.

[20] Tuell, *Nahum–Malachi*, 236; on the "hypothetical" nature of the audience's responses, see Paul L. Redditt, "Form Criticism in Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi: From Oral Sayings to Literature," in Boda et al., *New Form Criticism*, 265-304, here 282.

[21] For this reading, see Hill, *Malachi*, 148.

The sole exception occurs in the sixth and final disputation (3:13-21). While this passage begins like the others, with the alternation of divine statement (3:13a) and imagined response (3:13b-15), it eventually deviates from the revelatory paradigm of the preceding speeches by lapsing briefly into a *narrative* mode: "Then (אז) those who fear YHWH spoke to one another, and YHWH noticed and listened, and a book of remembrance (ספר זכרון) was written before him for those who fear YHWH and for those who esteem his name" (3:16).[23] Although the narratorial voice in this verse may be identified with the prophetic voice that speaks throughout the rest of the book, the content of the narration differs, subtly but substantively, from that of the surrounding discourse: instead of quotations or descriptions imputed in the second person, this verse appears to depict the reaction of an audience rendered in the *third* person.[24] Of course, in every other respect, the passage more closely resembles an *r*-text: for all its predicated piety, the audience remains entirely abstract, and the following verses immediately resume the first-person speech of the deity. Cryptic and concise as it may be, though, the explicit reference to an actual reaction to Malachi's message suffices to distinguish this admittedly minimalistic *p*-text from a comparatively detailed *r*-text like Zech 7-8 (see 4.2.1 above). In particular, Mal 3:13-21 contributes to the concreteness of this obscure prophet as a dimension of his literary actualization by inviting readers to imagine the feedback that Malachi received from his contemporaries.[25] To the extent that similar concretizations are effected by Zech 7-8 and other historically specific *r*-texts that fall just short of portraying proclamation as such, the example of Malachi reinforces the fundamental continuity of *r*- and *p*-texts as always already actualized outcomes of the virtual structure of intermediation.

---

[22] For a comparative evaluation of Malachi's disputations alongside other biblical and extrabiblical exemplars, see D. F. Murray, "The Rhetoric of Disputation: Re-Examination of a Prophetic Genre," *JSOT* 38 (1987): 95-121, here 111-113.

[23] On the narrative quality of this verse, see Nogalski, *Processes*, 184; Hill, *Malachi*, 337; Redditt, "Form Criticism," 282.

[24] For example, Redditt ("Form Criticism," 282) judges that 3:16-18 "reports the actions of certain obedient persons"; more generally, Nogalski (*Processes*, 206) observes that "beginning with Mal 3:16-18, the book concentrates on the response to the debates as a whole."

#### 4.2.2.2. Amos

In Amos, a prefatory "motto" (1:2) follows a verb of speaking (ויאמר) that uniquely takes the titular prophet as its subject, but this verb stands alone, unaccompanied by any adverbial or prepositional phrase that would situate the prophet in conversation with his audience.[26] The verb imbues the book with a "quasi-narrative dimension" that nonetheless remains latent through several chapters of uninterrupted *r*-texts (Amos 1:2-7:9), in which the prophetic or divine voice continually resounds without any remotely comparable depictions of the audience or its response.[27] It may be that these speeches intend to portray "a prophet in debate," as the title of Karl Möller's study of the book's rhetoric puts it, so as to capture the "dialogical dimension" of the "progressive interaction between the book's *dramatis personae* (e.g., Amos and his audience)."[28] If so, the transcripts of this debate are no less one-sided than the disputations of Malachi (see 4.2.2.1 above), dominated as they are by the privileged perspective of the prophet and his God!

---

[25] This invitation is illustratively accepted by Hill (*Malachi*, 337), who concludes from 3:16 that "[a]fter this final disputation, some from among the community (i.e., those revering Yahweh) took the speeches seriously and deliberated over their meaning and possible implication for postexilic Jerusalem."

[26] Karl Möller, *A Prophet in Debate: The Rhetoric of Persuasion in the Book of Amos*, JSOTSup 372 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 159, n. 21.

[27] On the narrative implications of this verb, see Göran Eidevall, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 24G (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017), 98, building on the insights of Möller (cf. n. 26 above). Occasional hypothetical vignettes (Amos 6:9-10) or snippets of quoted third-party speech (6:13) remain within the realm of the divine-prophetic imagination and thus do not meaningfully disrupt the flow of *r*-texts.

Just once does Amos's audience step out of revelation's rhetorical shadow, in the brief but much-studied narrative of the prophet's confrontation with Amaziah, a priest of Bethel and representative of King Jeroboam (7:10-17).[29] Regardless of its historicity or exact function(s) within the book, this small pericope makes a disproportionately large contribution, not only to the concreteness of Amos's audience and the clarity of its response to his message, but also to the characterization of the prophet himself. Amos answers Amaziah's admonition to "never again prophesy in Bethel" (7:13) with a terse list of his vocational credentials as "neither a prophet nor a prophet's son, but rather a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore trees" (7:14-15, here 14). In the scholarly reception of Amos, this ersatz resumé has more often been treated as an authoritative autobiography, one that can be readily "mined for information about the book's eponymous hero."[30]

---

[28] Thus Möller, *Debate*, 149.

[29] Studies on this short text include Gene M. Tucker, "Prophetic Authenticity: A Form-Critical Study of Amos 7:10–17," *Int* 27 (1973): 423–434; Francisco O. García-Treto, "A Reader-Response Approach to Prophetic Conflict: The Case of Amos 7.10–17," in *The New Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible*, ed. J. Cheryl Exum and David J. A. Clines, JSOTSup 143 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993), 114–124; Meindert Dijkstra, "'I Am neither a Prophet nor a Prophet's Pupil': Amos 7:9–17 as the Presentation of a Prophet like Moses," in *The Elusive Prophet: The Prophet as a Historical Person, Literary Character, and Anonymous Artist*, ed. Johannes C. de Moor, OtSt 45 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 105–128; Nili Wazana, "Amos against Amaziah (Amos 7:10–17): A Case of Mutual Exclusion," *VT* 70 (2020): 209–228. Whether the boundaries of this text should include 7:9 (as argued by Dijkstra, "Prophet like Moses," 113-116) is ultimately immaterial to my argument.

[30] Wazana ("Amos against Amaziah," 218-219) notes the extent to which Amos's language is shaped by that of Amaziah, such as its use of emphatic repetition. On the importance of the Amaziah pericope, together with the superscription in 1:1, for attempts to reconstruct the "historical Amos," see Eidevall, *Amos*, 5-7. This two-pronged biographical approach is manifest in brief historiographical sketches like that of Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, rev. ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 175, who asserts that "Amos the Tekoite speaks to a real assemblage of Israelites in Beth El during the reign of Jeroboam son of Joash, beginning two years before the great earthquake"; the sole detail in this statement that does not derive from the book's superscription is the association of the prophet with Bethel, which is only made explicit in 7:10-13 (cf. Eidevall, *Amos*, 207). Such a connection is

In the framework of the present study, the basis and impetus for this exegetical exploitation can be ascribed to the nature of the Amaziah episode as a *p*-text. By presenting divine revelation through the lens of interpersonal proclamation, this narrative reconfigures the interrelationship of deity, prophet, and audience that defines the *r*-texts found throughout the rest of the book. In fact, immediately surrounding the encounter with Amaziah, we find the book's most developed depictions of the *r*-series in the vision reports of 7:1-8 and 8:1-2, which go farther than any previous texts in recounting the private revelatory dialogue that links Amos and YHWH.[31] As YHWH momentarily recedes to the peripheral position otherwise occupied by the audience, however, the audience (via Amaziah) rises to speak directly to Amos, thereby compelling the latter to explain and justify himself as a mere human among other humans. Perhaps influenced by this unusually detailed account of prophetic conflict, without parallel in the Minor Prophets, the superscription to Amos does more to contextualize and concretize the prophet than any other heading in that corpus.[32] Indeed, as a source for prophetic biography, the superscription exceeds even the much-vaunted Amaziah episode: "in the scope of a single verse," this heading "contains more information about the life and times of Amos than do 7:10–17 and the remainder of the book combined."[33]

---

otherwise merely implied by the utterances *about* Bethel in 3:14, 4:4, 5:5-6 and the prophet's location at an unspecified "altar" in 9:1.

[31] On these visions, see Eidevall, *Amos*, 191-200, 213-215: after "remain[ing] in the background…throughout chapters 1-6…a prophet/seer named Amos appears on center stage" at the outset of Amos 7, "as the protagonist in a drama in which the other main characters are YHWH, King Jeroboam, and the priest Amaziah" (191-192). More specifically, the prophet appears alongside YHWH in the *r*-texts of Amos 7-8, whereas Amaziah and Jeroboam are confined to the *p*-text of 7:10-17. Cf. Nasuti, "Poetics," 103, who expresses the distinction between *r*-text and *p*-text in these chapters in terms of "point of view": a "first person vision narrative (7:1-9, 8:1-3)," which presents "the prophet's own testimony to his intercession with God on behalf of the people," and "a third-person…objective account of his treatment by Israel's representatives."

[32] See MacGillivray, "Nonregnal Dates," 304.

[33] Tucker, "Authenticity," 429; cited in Eidevall, *Amos*, 204. Cf. n. 30 above.

In particular, alongside its conventional regnal date, the superscription places Amos "two years before the earthquake" (1:1bβ). Vague as it may be for modern readers, this reference preemptively corroborates the book's seismically inflected oracles and visions of imminent destruction (3:14–15, 7:9, 8:8, 9:1–6, etc.), while also casting the presumed speaker of those oracles (i.e., the "historical Amos") as a real and reliable agent of the divine will.[34] Being *r*-texts essentially devoid of such historicizing details, the oracles and visions are largely unable to perform either of these validating functions for themselves. For all its biographical detail, though, the superscription itself is not a *p*-text; only in conjunction with the Amaziah pericope does it inaugurate an inchoate analogue to the *p*-series within the book of Amos.[35] In the end, this slim literary series does not suffice to place Amos on a par with Jrm, since Amos's lone *p*-text amounts to no more than the first piece of the prodigious *p*-complex that stretches across Jer (namely, 19:14-20:6; see 4.3 below).[36]

### 4.2.2.3. Jonah

Because the book of Jonah is "a story about a prophet" rather than a prophetic book per se, it may seem that *p*-texts should be more prevalent here than they are in a more conventionally revelatory book like Amos.[37] In sharp contrast to the other Latter Prophets, Jonah's "oracular material"—if it should even be treated as such—is limited to a scant half-verse of five Hebrew words: "Forty days more, and Nineveh will be overthrown!" (עוד ארבעים יום ונינוה נהפכת; 3:4b). What is more, this miniature oracle occurs squarely within a *p*-text (3:1-10) that is as unmistakable as it is unrealistic. In the capital city of Assyria, denounced elsewhere in the prophetic canon as a bastion of "endless evil" (Nah 3:19), Jonah's words provoke instantaneous and hyperbolic repentance, from the (unnamed) king down to the lowly beasts. Of course, scholars have long recognized the artistry and artifice of this narrative, which, like the book of Jonah itself, owes far more to the literary and ideological currents of postexilic Yehud than it does to the historical realities of the Neo-Assyrian Empire or the putative eighth-century prophet named "Jonah ben Amittai" (cf. 2 Kgs 14:25).[38]

---

[34] MacGillivray, "Nonregnal Dates," 293-297.

[35] Eidevall (*Amos*, 207) observes that, without 7:10-17 (but, I would add, *with* the superscription), it is "perfectly possible to read chapters 1-6 as a collection of oracles concerning Israel, uttered by a prophet who was active in Judah (see Isa 28:1-4)." The interplay of 1:1 and 7:10-17 in Amos may thus be understood as a more limited exercise of the *reciprocal determination* that defines the elements of Jer's *p*-complex; see 4.3.2 below.

[36] On Jer 19:14-20:6, see also 1.4.1. For similarities between this text and Amos 7:10-17, see Eidevall, *Amos*, 203; Wazana, "Amos against Amaziah," 226.

[37] Gene Tucker, "Prophetic Superscriptions and the Growth of a Canon," in *Canon and Authority: Essays in Old Testament Religion and Theology*, ed. George W. Coats and Burke O. Long (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 56–70, here 59, n. 5. James L. Crenshaw (*Prophetic Conflict: Its Effect upon Israelite Religion*, BZAW 124 [Berlin: de Gruyter, 1971], 64) once dubbed Jonah a work of "prophetic fiction"; cf. Tim Bulkeley, "The Book of Amos as

For this study, the origins and intentions of Jonah 3 are less important than its mimetic relationship to the rest of the book. Although none of the other texts in Jonah constitutes an *r*-text in the conventional sense (e.g., an oracle or a vision report), they can no more rightly be reckoned as *p*-texts; rather, these texts portray events of the *r*-series primarily from the standpoint of prophetic feedback to the disclosing deity. When Jonah interacts with the sailors in the book's opening chapter, he speaks to them not as a prophet but simply as a "Hebrew" (1:9). Whatever the sailors know of Jonah's mantic vocation, they are not so much the audience of a proclamation as they are mere witnesses to a revelation—or, more accurately, to a wayward

---

'Prophetic Fiction': Describing the Genre of a Written Work that Reinvigorates Older Oral Speech Forms," in Boda et al., *New Form Criticism*, 205-219, here 212-217. Ben Zvi (*Signs of Jonah: Reading and Rereading in Ancient Yehud*, JSOTSup 367 [London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003], 80-98) dubs Jonah a "meta-prophetic" book.

[38] Nogalski ("Where are the Prophets?", 171-172) describes Jonah as a "fictional narrative written in the late Persian or early Hellenistic period based upon the eighth century prophetic figure from the northern kingdom mentioned in 2 Kgs 14:25."

prophet's protracted struggle therewith.[39] Along these same lines, Jonah's poetic speech from the belly of the fish (2:1-9) is not a prophetic oracle but a psalm of personal thanksgiving, and the book likewise concludes with a private, post-proclamatory conversation between the irascible intermediary and the inscrutable deity (4:1-11). Far from a mere deficit or "accident" (see 3.4.2), the thoroughgoing inversion of the *r*-series in Jonah is a significant structural development in its own right. As much as it separates this book from more traditional prophetic literature, it will also help to elucidate the mimetic dynamics of Jer, since Jonah's "inverted" *r*-texts find suitable parallels in some of Jrm's more reflective and ruminative moments before the deity, such as the confessions or the prayerful dialogue of Jer 32:16-44 (see 4.3.1 below).

#### 4.2.2.4. Haggai

While Malachi, Amos, and Jonah set a precedent for prophetic books as collections of *r*-texts punctuated by occasional *p*-texts—a trend that will apply as well to Isaiah, Ezekiel, and even Jer—the small book ascribed to the postexilic prophet Haggai is distinguished by its clear preference for *p*-texts. The book opens with a lengthy *p*-text in Hag 1:1-15, which describes both the prophet's command to rebuild the temple of YHWH (1:1-11; *r*-series) and his postexilic audience's (eventual?) obedience to that exhortation (1:12-15; *p*-series).[40] Then, a shorter *p*-text about a conversation between Haggai and certain unnamed "priests" (2:10-19) separates two similarly brief *r*-texts, promising prosperity for the people (2:1-9) and sovereignty for their leader Zerubbabel (2:20-23). As a testament to the book's overall orientation toward the *p*-series, these *r*-texts are linked to the *p*-texts by a shared "connective tissue" of "prose narrative discourse" that contextualizes the prophecies of Haggai with highly specific and chronologically ordered date formulas.[41] Since these formulas are repeatedly accompanied by others that emphasize the divine origin of Haggai's words, the whole book "becomes self-consciously prophetic" through its sustained and almost unparalleled "attention to the prophetic nature of the material" that it contains.[42]

---

[39] Jack M. Sasson (*Jonah: A New Translation with Introduction, Commentary, and Interpretation*, AB 24B [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974], 121-122) argues that a lengthier, unquoted explanation of Jonah's prophetic mission is assumed by 1:10b: "For the men knew that [Jonah] was fleeing before YHWH, because *he had told them*." Although this reading is assumed by certain Targumic expansions, which specify that the sailors "knew that he was fleeing before *he would prophesy in the name of* the Lord…" (Sasson, *Jonah*, 120), it remains merely implicit in the Hebrew.

[40] In the view of Elie Assis, "To Build or Not to Build: A Dispute between Haggai and His People (Hag 1)," *ZAW* 119 (2007): 514-527, Haggai's audience did not heed the command immediately and on their own initiative, but only after a subsequent promise of divine presence ("I am with you," 1:13b). According to R. A. Mason ("The Purpose of the 'Editorial Framework' of the Book of Haggai," *VT* 27 [1977]: 413-421, here 414), except for this very promise in 1:13b, the book's editorial framework encompasses all of 1:12-15*, and thus all the material that makes Hag 1:1-15 a *p*-text. Additionally, while many commentators would end this text at 1:15a on the basis of the date formula within the verse, there is good reason to think that "the data provided by 1:15b complete the

If there is a parallel to Haggai in this regard, it is surely Jer, which also presents an unusually high proportion of *p*-texts supported by narrative frameworks and the extensive employment of formulas relating to historical chronology and prophetic authenticity.[43] Why then does Haggai fail to generate a literary structure of prophecy that might rival Jer? The reasons are fairly simple, but twofold. The first is Haggai's sheer brevity: with only two chapters and two pairs of *r*-texts and *p*-texts, this compact composition stands as far from Jer as its titular figure does from Jrm. As with Amos (see 4.2.2.2 above), Haggai's most prominent *p*-text (1:1-15) would account for just one portion of the far larger Jeremianic *p*-complex (namely, a

---

information given in the first chapter and that the mention of the "second year" applies to both chapter 1 and chapter 2"; thus Julia M. O'Brien, *Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, AOTC (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004), 89.

[41] For these regnal formulas and the dates they reflect, see Petersen, *Haggai*, 32.

[42] O'Brien, *Haggai*, 90.

[43] For a concise comparison of the literary form of Haggai and Jer, see Petersen, *Haggai*, 34-36, who attributes the similarities between Haggai and texts like Jer 26, 36, 37-41 to a shared genre of "brief apologetic historical narrative" (35) or *historische Kurzgeschichte*; for the latter concept, see Norbert Lohfink, "Die Gattung der 'Historischen Kurzgeschichte' in den letzten Jahres von Juda und in der Zeit des Babylonischen Exils," *ZAW* 90 (1978): 319-347.

historiographical narrative such as Jer 26, 36, or 37-41).[44] Second, and more significantly, Haggai's thoroughgoing tilt toward the *p*-series entails that book's slender *r*-texts are too narrowly focused on a single sociohistorical moment for a full-fledged prophetic structure to emerge.[45] Although both 2:1-9 and 2:20-23 exhibit a tendency toward "generalization" that facilitates the inherent hermeneutical openness of *r*-texts, each text is also tightly tethered to the central figure of Zerubbabel (2:2, 4, 21, 23) and to the specific vision of a postexilic Judean community reconstituted under his leadership.[46] As much as Jer's *r*-texts are likewise shaped by the historical realities of the Babylonian exile and its aftermath, those texts retain a far greater measure of thematic and mimetic independence that broadens not only their possible meanings but also their potential implications for Jrm's personality and career. Indeed, despite its wealth of well-developed *p*-texts, Jer resembles the other Latter Prophets in its overarching reliance on the *r*-text as the primary mode of literary prophetic discourse (cf. Figures 4.1 and 4.2-3 below). The disproportionate priority accorded to *p*-texts in Haggai, on the other hand, reveals this book to be an altogether different type of work: it "is not a typical prophetic collection, but is rather an apologetic history that uses prophetic oracles as its essential source."[47]

---

[44] See n. 43 above on these texts. As for 2:10-19, the most proximate Jeremianic *p*-text is 35:1-19, where Jrm engages in a similarly dialogical and symbolic exchange with the Rechabites.

[45] I should make clear that this judgment of Haggai's structural insufficiency is no categorical denunciation of the book or its literary and theological merits, like those described in O'Brien, *Haggai*, 92-93. As a witness to the political dimensions and ramifications of epistemic intermediation, among other equally important questions, Haggai has at least as much to offer as a more manifestly structural book like Jer.

[46] See John Kessler, *The Book of Haggai: Prophecy and Society in Early Persian Yehud*, VTSup 91 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 190-191, 239-240, who defines "generalization" as "the attenuation or deliberate obscuring of certain details of a theme, so as to render it applicable to a specific situation, one which may be different from its original setting" (190). An opposing tendency is "focalization," or the "highlighting of certain details of a theme or tradition" over others, whereby Haggai selectively emphasizes only those aspects of a theme that are most germane to his particular purpose and audience: for the *r*-text in 2:1-9, the focal point or "one central idea" is "the future adornment of the temple" (see Kessler, *Haggai*, 192-195, here 192).

[47] Thus Petersen, *Haggai*, 36. See also Michael H. Floyd, "'Write the Revelation!' (Hab 2:2): Re-imagining the Cultural History of Prophecy," in *Writings and Speech in Israelite and Ancient Eastern Prophecy*, ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Michael H. Floyd, SBLSymS 10 (Atlanta: SBL, 2000), 103-143, here 142, on Haggai as "a specifically

### 4.2.2.5. Ezekiel

The preceding discussion has shown that while Malachi, Amos, Jonah, and Haggai all textually actualize the socio-epistemological structure of prophecy more holistically than the other Minor Prophets, none thereby manages to generate a new structure that would operate in its own right at the literary level. What then of Isaiah and Ezekiel, Jeremiah's compatriots among the Major Prophets? While *p*-texts are somewhat more prevalent in Isaiah (see 4.2.2.6 below) than in the Twelve, just the opposite is true of Ezekiel, for which *p*-texts constitute a significantly smaller portion (~1.2%; see Figure 4.1 below) than they do for any of the books examined thus far. This is perhaps unsurprising for a prophet whose behavior and overall demeanor is so eccentrically esoteric that it has at times been diagnosed as psychopathological.[48] No other biblical prophet is so thoroughly submerged in the isolating and dissociating depths of divine revelation, with the "hand of YHWH" pulling him along as if by a leash (cf. Ezek 1:3, 3:14, etc.).[49] In the immediate aftermath of his overwhelming, otherworldly call to the prophetic office, Ezekiel is rendered catatonic (3:15). Even as he regains the ability to move and to act (e.g., 4:1-17), he nonetheless

---

prophetic kind of scribal historiography"; cf. idem, "The Nature of the Narrative and the Evidence of Redaction in Haggai," *VT* 45 (1995): 470-490, esp. 484-487 for Floyd's assessment of Petersen's (and, by extension, Lohfink's) generic analysis.

[48] See Edwin C. Broome, Jr., "Ezekiel's Abnormal Personality," *JBL* 65 (1946): 277-292; Kelvin van Nuys, "Evaluating the Pathological in Prophetic Experience (Particularly in Ezekiel)," *JBR* 21 (1953): 244-251; more recently, David J. Halperin, *Seeking Ezekiel: Text and Psychology* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993). For a more literary psychoanalytic reading, which avoids some of the pitfalls of the "dubious" project of "psychological diagnoses through literary texts," see Rhiannon Graybill, "Voluptuous, Tortured, and Unmanned: Ezekiel with Daniel Paul Schreber," in *The Bible and Posthumanism*, ed. Jennifer L. Koosed, SemeiaSt 74 (Atlanta: SBL, 2014), 137-155, here 137-138.

[49] Cf. Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, "Ezekiel: A Compromised Prophet in Reduced Circumstances," in *Constructs of Prophecy in the Former and Latter Prophets and Other Texts*, ed. Lester L. Grabbe and Martti Nissinen, ANEM 4 (Atlanta: SBL, 2011), 175-195, who describes Ezekiel as "God's marionette" (176), "God's ultimate tool" (177), and a "robot that automatically fulfills God's commands" (179), albeit one that exhibits some internal resistance to this role (179-180, 190-193).

remains unable to speak "anything beyond what God tells him to say" for well over half the book (until 33:22).[50]

Moments at which the *p*-series receives explicit expression alongside the *r*-series are few and far between in this book, with the longest and most unambiguous being the account of Ezekiel's wife's death in 24:15-27 (see esp. 24:18-20).[51] More often, the prophet's interactions with his audience are recounted strictly within the confines of a revelatory dialogue, either by the deity (e.g., 12:8-11, 26-28) or by the prophet himself (e.g., 20:49). A few passages even open on apparent events of proclamation, only to veer at once into pure revelation. In Ezek 14:1 and 20:1, for example, the prophet is approached by "certain elders of Israel" (אנשים מזקני ישראל) to seek counsel from YHWH—about what, we can only conjecture, as the text itself does not bother with such contextual concerns.[52] Where we might expect at least a brief verbal exchange between prophet and audience (as in, say, Jer 21:1-7, a simple *p*-text), we find only the words of the deity quoted at great length (as in Jer 7:1-8:3, a substantial *r*-text).[53]

---

[50] Tiemeyer, "Ezekiel," 189. On the motif of Ezekiel's muteness, see also Ellen F. Davis, *Swallowing the Scroll: Textuality and the Dynamics of Discourse in Ezekiel's Prophecy*, BLS 21 (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1989), 48-58, who rejects explanations of the prophet's dumbness as a psychological symptom or editorial device, arguing instead that the motif should be understood as "a metaphor for the move toward textualization of Israel's sacred traditions" (50).

[51] On this narrative, which is often interpreted as an autobiographical window into the life and mind of the historical Ezekiel, see Stephen L. Cook, "The Speechless Suppression of Grief in Ezekiel 24:15-27: The Death of Ezekiel's Wife and the Prophet's Abnormal Response," in Ahn and Cook, *Thus Says the Lord*, 222-233; a biographical orientation is manifest in such statements as "when bridled from mourning by God, Ezekiel's priestly mind must have jumped to the idea that he was about to become privy to some sort of hyper-priestly experience" (226-227).

However, Rossi ("Private Life," 298-303) argues against such readings on the basis of text-critical discrepancies (in addition to a shorter divine command at the end of 24:16, certain LXX manuscripts lack the crucial reference to Ezekiel's wife in 24:18), which suggest that MT deliberately expanded the simpler text of LXX so that the "life of the prophet [would be] dramatized exponentially" as a more potent symbol of divine judgment (302).

[52] For example, in Ezek 20, much depends on a brief quotation attributed to the audience: "We will be like the nations, like the tribes of the lands, worshipping wood and stone" (20:32). For a range of interpretations of the elders' intentions in light of this statement, see Dalit Rom-Shiloni, "Facing Destruction and Exile: Inner-Biblical Exegesis in Jeremiah and Ezekiel," *ZAW* 117 (2005): 189-205, here 194-202.

Even more notable in this regard is the visionary narrative that begins in Ezek 8:1. Ezekiel is described here, in the first person, as "sitting in my house while the elders of Judah were sitting before me" (8:1a). Just when a reader would expect the prophet to deliver a message to this attentive assembly, however, the hand of YHWH intervenes to transport him ecstatically and instantaneously to Jerusalem, hundreds of miles away (8:1b-3). The prophet is then given a tour of the temple and its precincts that is by turns sinister and sublime, juxtaposing horrifying scenes of blasphemy (8:5-15) and judgment (9:1-11) with ineffable images of God's manifest glory (10:1-22). Eventually, as part of this revelatory experience, the divine spirit compels Ezekiel to prophesy to certain wicked officials of Jerusalem (11:1-13), some of whom are even identified by name (11:1). Yet this "proclamation" is entirely and explicitly fictive, and its only "feedback" comes not from the officials but from the prophet himself, moved by the sudden death of one of his reticent non-respondents—"Oh Lord YHWH, you are making an utter end of the remnant of Israel!" (11:13; cf. 9:8). Once Ezekiel is deposited back in Babylonia (11:24), the long-anticipated proclamation makes its mimetically meager appearance: "And I spoke to the exiles all the things of YHWH (דברי יהוה) which he had shown me" (11:25). In vaguely recalling the proclamatory setting envisioned by 8:1, these concluding remarks attempt to make a minimally developed *p*-text out of what would otherwise be a highly developed *r*-text. For this reason, it is arguably more appropriate to treat 11:24-25 separately from the rest of the visionary narrative as a *p*-text *in nuce*, one that struggles but does not quite suffice to pull the prophet's intrapersonal revelations back to the interpersonal arena of proclamation.

---

[53] Commenting on these texts, Tiemeyer ("Ezekiel," 192) observes that God "intervenes in each instance before Ezekiel has said anything" to the elders seated before him; cf. Davis, *Swallowing*, 82. On the texts in Jer, see 4.3 below.

This all stands in stark contrast to Jer, where plentiful and often lengthy *p*-texts account for more than a third of the (Masoretic) book.[54] The considerable difference between the presentation of revelation and proclamation in Jer and Ezekiel is aptly encapsulated by the books' favored terms for identifying their titular prophets. Whereas the name "Jeremiah" occurs nearly a hundred times in the LXX, and well over a hundred times in the longer MT (often accompanied by "the prophet"), the name "Ezekiel" appears just twice in that book: once in its incipit (Ezek 1:3) and again in its preeminent *p*-text (24:24). In part, the paucity of Ezekiel's name is attributable to the prevalence of first-person speech throughout the book, which is itself emblematic of the book's orientation toward the *r*-series insofar as first-person prophetic discourse tends to recount revelatory experiences rather than proclamatory encounters.[55] While Jrm also employs first-person speech for this purpose (cf. Jer 1, 13, 18, 24, etc.), the *p*-texts' concentrated repetition of his personal name (and vocational epithet, as the case may be) serves not only to flesh out the character denoted thereby, but also to accord him a certain measure of dignity and public recognition as a person among other persons.

Ezekiel, on the other hand, is made to answer to the utterly anonymous and depersonalizing designation בן אדם, a phrase perhaps better rendered as "human" than the NRSV's "mortal," much less the stately yet overly literal "son of man" preferred by many translations (cf. NIV, ESV, KJV, etc.).[56] Such is the relationship between the obedient Ezekiel and his divine overlord: “Human, do this! Human, say that!” Of course, this asymmetry between supernatural source and terrestrial recipient is no incidental aberration, but an inherent feature of the structure of epistemic intermediation (see 3.3.1).[57] Jrm’s prophetic journey is fraught with its own forms of heavenly coercion and human compliance; famously, his acquiescence to the deity’s demands is compelled by “something like a burning fire shut up inside [his] bones” (20:9). In their own ways, both books speak to the disproportionate burdens that intermediation places upon its creaturely conduit, not least the instrumentalization of this subject for the inexorable interests of an inescapable god. For “Jeremiah the prophet,” however, the oppressive weight of private revelation is counterbalanced by the opposing pressures of public proclamation, thereby ensuring a precariously persistent visibility for the prophetic subject within the literary framework of the prophetic book.

---

[54] For differences between MT and LXX with respect to Jer's *r*- and *p*-texts, see 4.3 below, esp. the discussion around Figures 4.2 and 4.3.

[55] Notable types of *r*-texts that use the first-person are call narratives (Jer 1, Isa 6, Ezek 1-3, etc.) and vision reports, like those of Amos (7:1-9 and 8:1-2; see 4.2.2.2 above), Ezekiel (1:1-28, etc.), and Zechariah (1:7-21, etc.). First-person *p*-texts are much rarer: they include Ezek 24:15-27 as well as Jer 27 (esp. 27:12, 16), 32 (esp. 32:6-15), and 35 (esp. 35:3-5).

#### 4.2.2.6. Isaiah

Of all the biblical prophetic books, only Isaiah may be said to outrank Jer in both canonical position and exegetical attention.[58] With respect to the textual actualization of intermediation, however, it is Isaiah no less than Ezekiel that is outstripped by Jer, even though the superficial resemblance between the books is arguably greater in this case. Like Jer, that is, Isaiah contains long stretches of poetic oracles interspersed with prose passages about the titular prophet, including a call or commissioning narrative (Isa 6), symbolic action reports (Isa 8, 20), and descriptions of encounters with contemporaneous Judean kings (Isa 7, 37-39). Although the lengthy account of Isaiah's dealings with Hezekiah in Isa 36-39 has traditionally been treated as a mere borrowing from its largely verbatim parallel in 2 Kgs 18-20, the Isaianic narratives find a far more apposite analogue in the prose narratives of Jer 37-45; each pericope is best understood as a "prophetic narrative with extended dialogue," which differs in both form and function from the "narratorial historiography" of Kings.[59] These passages together stand out as the most extensive and complex (collections of) *p*-texts in the Latter Prophets: not only do they depict multiple instances of the prophet delivering divine messages to identifiable individuals at concrete historical moments, but those depictions are further supported and embellished by contextual (and more properly historiographical) narratives in which the prophet himself does not appear (cf. Isa 36, Jer 41).

---

[56] The CEB comes close to my suggested reading with its translation of “human one.” On the use and meaning of this phrase in Ezekiel, see Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1-24*, trans. Ronald E. Clements, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 131, who nonetheless opts for “son of man” in his translation.

[57] When Davis (*Swallowing*, 82) claims that Ezekiel’s “deliberately inglorious” epithet indicates his “status as the recipient, not the source, of the authoritative word,” she identifies the essential position of *all* prophets in the *r*-series; it is no surprise that the emphasis on this role would be greatest in Ezekiel, which focuses more intently and exclusively than any other prophetic book on the events of this series.

[58] Although the sequence Isaiah-Jeremiah-Ezekiel is standard in modern Jewish and Christian Bibles, the Talmud (*Bava Batra* 14b) commends a different order with Jeremiah first and Isaiah last: the rabbinic rationale is thematic (“we juxtapose destruction to destruction and consolation to consolation”), but Lundbom (*Jeremiah 1-20*, 57) notes that the books are thereby also “arranged in descending order according to size” (i.e., word count). As for exegetical attention, a rough proxy can be drawn from the *Atla Religion Database*, which returns (as of September 26, 2024) over twice as many results for the book of Isaiah as it does for Jeremiah (5,072 and 1,945, respectively).

Yet, as much as Isaiah and Jer may resemble each other in their textual parts, they arrange those parts into decidedly different literary systems. The distinctive features of the Isaianic system become most palpable at the boundary between First and Second Isaiah; namely,

---

Accordingly, the vast majority of this scholarship must remain outside the scope of my brief discussion of Isaianic *r*- and *p*-texts.

[59] For this comparison, see Shelley L. Birdsong, "The Narratives about Isaiah and Their Relationship with 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles," in *The Oxford Handbook of Isaiah*, ed. Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 95-110, here 100. Per Birdsong (ibid.), one of the reasons adduced for the dependence of Isa 36-39 on 2 Kgs 18-20 is the supposedly similar inclusion of 2 Kgs 25, with slight modifications, in Jer 52. However, whereas 2 Kgs 18-20 and Isa 36-39 are both (collections of) *p*-texts, the pure historiography of Jer 52 stands outside the structural framework of *r*- and *p*-texts altogether: it does not include Jeremiah nor any other prophet as a character, and it recounts neither revelation nor proclamation, nor even the necessary context for such an event (as in Isa 36 or Jer 41). On Jer 52, see 4.3.1 below.

the transition from Isa 39, as the conclusion of the aforementioned complex of *p*-texts, to Isa 40, as the beginning of a much longer sequence of *r*-texts that extends to the very end of the book. A striking feature of these latter chapters, widely regarded as later additions to a preexisting core of Isaiah traditions in Isa 1-39*, is their tendency toward mimetic austerity, at least as far as the process of prophecy is concerned. While the Deutero-Isaianic poems are almost unparalleled in the power of their rhetoric and the beauty of their imagery, they also exhibit a certain ambiguity of speaker, audience, and overall reference that prohibits any firm grounding in a particular prophetic identity or sociohistorical setting.[60] Apart from the famous references to Cyrus in 44:28-45:1, what little context accrues to these chapters derives largely from the *p*-texts that precede them, especially the exilically oriented discourse of Isa 39: "The closest thing to a setting for chapters 40ff. is the prophecy of Isaiah to Hezekiah in chapter 39 concerning the exile to Babylon," a moment which also marks "the last concrete historical reference in the Book of Isaiah[.]"[61]

It should be noted that these same texts also furnish much of the context for *First* Isaiah. Although this section of the book is not quite so bereft of historical references or prophetic personality, anchored as it is in the (image of an) eighth-century Judean intermediary named "Isaiah" (1:1 and *passim*), the *r*-series nonetheless predominates therein. Outside the aforementioned narratives of Isa 36-39 and a handful of quasi-proclamatory superscriptions (e.g., Isa 1:1, 2:1, 13:1, 14:28, 20:1), First Isaiah (and *a fortiori* the rest of the book) offers just one other *p*-text: the account of the prophet's interactions with Ahaz on the eve of the Syro-Ephraimite War (Isa 7).[62] A network of literary and ideological links between the pericopes about Ahaz and Hezekiah strives to cast the latter as an appropriately pious counterpart to the faithless former (cf., e.g., 7:10-13, 37:14-21), further suggesting that the Hezekiah narratives are no mere appendix imported from Kings, but an integral (if not necessarily original) piece of the Isaianic corpus.[63]

---

[60] For problems with identifying the speaker(s) of Isa 40-66 with the "First Isaiah" of eighth-century Judah or a new "Second Isaiah" active during the Babylonian exile, see Christopher R. Seitz, "The Divine Council: Temporal Transition and New Prophecy in the Book of Isaiah," *JBL* 109 (1990): 229-247. Cf. Roy F. Melugin, *The Formation of Isaiah 40-55*, BZAW 141 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1976), 176. See also Ulrich Berges, "Farewell to Deutero-Isaiah, or Prophecy without a Prophet," in *Congress Volume Ljubljana 2007*, ed. André Lemaire, VTSup 133 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 575-595, who attributes the "voice" of Isa 40-55 to an anonymous "group of prophetic poets who connected their composition to the Jerusalem Isaiah Tradition" (591).

[61] Thus Melugin, *Formation*, 177.

On the whole, with its comparable complexes of figurative *r*-texts (Isa 1-35 and 40-66) organized around a central axis of concrete *p*-texts (Isa 36-39), the book of Isaiah functions as something like a mirrored diptych. The (Masoretic) book of Jer, for its part, has also been likened to a diptych, with a first panel "governed by 'plucking up and pulling down' (Jer 1-25)" and a second "by 'building and planting' (Jer 26-52)."[64] But this mutual metaphor can only be pushed so far before the conceptual cords that bind its comparands begin to fray. Whereas the Isaianic diptych is more or less symmetrical, with similarly shaped panels of revelatory poetry surrounding a shared hinge of proclamatory prose, the two sides of Jer have assumed decidedly divergent forms. The first half of the book is chiefly (and, until Jer 19:13, exclusively) populated by diverse depictions of events from the *r*-series, encompassing the standard reportage of oracles, visions, and symbolic actions as well as more exceptional dialogues with the deity, all of which are rendered not only in poetry (e.g., the confessions) but also in prose (e.g., the "temple sermon" of Jer 7). Although poetic oracles and other *r*-texts are by no means absent from the book's second half—see in particular the "Oracles against the Nations" (OAN) of Jer 46-51 (MT)—these latter chapters are increasingly dominated by prose *p*-texts that culminate in the saga of Jrm's struggles during and after the fall of Jerusalem (Jer 37-45).[65]

---

[62] Although Isa 7 is surrounded by first-person *r*-texts (6:1-13, 8:1-22) that were once ascribed to a prophetic "memoir" (*Denkschrift*), the Ahaz narrative stands out as a formally distinct *p*-text on the basis of its third-person references to the prophet (7:3, 13) and, more importantly, its proclamatory framework for Isaiah's words (7:1-3) and feedback from the king himself (7:12). For a critique of the *Denkschrift* hypothesis, see Stuart A. Irvine, "The Isaianic *Denkschrift*: Reconsidering an Old Hypothesis," *ZAW* 104 (1992): 216-231; cf. Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 62.

As in the other prophetic books, some Isaianic *r*-texts resemble *p*-texts but lack the requisite explicit description of proclamation. The case of Isa 20 is instructive: despite a historically specific heading (20:1) and a socially deviant symbolic action (20:2), this short *r*-text never identifies the prophet's audience, much less describes its response. Along different lines, the *r*-text in Isa 22:15-25 singles out two royal officials by name ("Shebna" in 20:15; "Eliakim son of Hilkiah" in 20:20), but never depicts or narrates the prophet's delivery of the message to either figure. The historical concreteness of these officials relies instead on their reappearance in the *p*-texts of Isa 36-37; see Lida Panov, "Scribal Experiences of Salvation – Aspects of Formation Processes in the Hezekiah-Isaiah Narratives," *ZAW* 133 (2021): 312-328, here 316-317.

[63] On the bridging and unifying role of Isa 36-39 within the book of Isaiah as a whole, see Seitz, *Zion's Final Destiny: The Development of the Book of Isaiah: A Reassessment of Isaiah 36-39* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), esp. 89-90 on the book's contrasting portrayals of Ahaz and Hezekiah. As for the integration of these *p*-texts into the book, Birdsong ("Narratives," 101) posits that they "developed independently of Isaiah and Kings" into a "block [that was] added to each book"; cf. Panov, "Formation Processes," 323.

[64] Louis Stulman, "Jeremiah as a Messenger of Hope in Crisis," *Int* 7 (2008): 5-20, here 8. For differences between the MT and LXX of Jer, see 4.3 below.

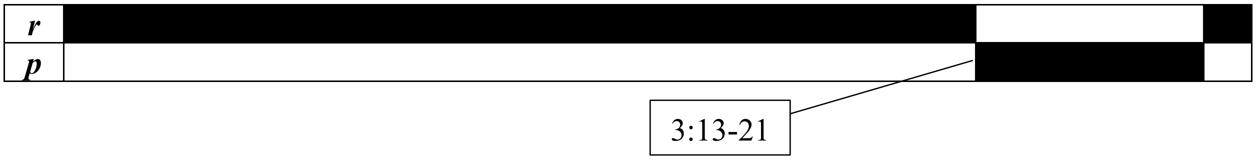
The structural ramifications of these different literary arrangements are far-reaching indeed. Although Isaiah resembles Jer in size and scope, in structure it more closely aligns with the book attributed to Isaiah's eighth-century contemporary, Amos: the system of (First) Isaiah comprises a robust succession of florid *r*-texts punctuated by a much smaller number of comparatively circumscribed *p*-texts, limited to Isa 7 and 36-39 (cf. Amos 7:10-17) and quasi-proclamatory headings like Isa 1:1 and 2:1 (cf. Amos 1:1). On the whole, as in Amos, such an organization yields no more than a nascent series of *p*-texts amid an extensively developed series of *r*-texts. For Isaiah, in fact, the thoroughgoing preponderance of the latter series is made even more prominent by the presence of Isa 40-66, which projects from the older Isaianic material like a cantilever forged of unalloyed revelation and fixed in the contextualizing foundation of Isa 36-39. Although *r*-texts also outnumber *p*-texts in Jer, the quantitative disparity is nowhere near as great as it is in Isaiah (or, for that matter, in any prophetic book except Haggai). More important still are the qualitative differences in the arrangement and interrelationship of these texts within Jer: instead of a continuous stream of revelation interspersed with isolated islands of proclamation, Jer's complex of oracular and other revelatory material is more consistently intertwined with a comparable complex of narratives and other texts depicting acts and aspects of proclamation. As the next section shows, the result of this organization is no static "diptych," but a dynamic and properly differential structure.

---

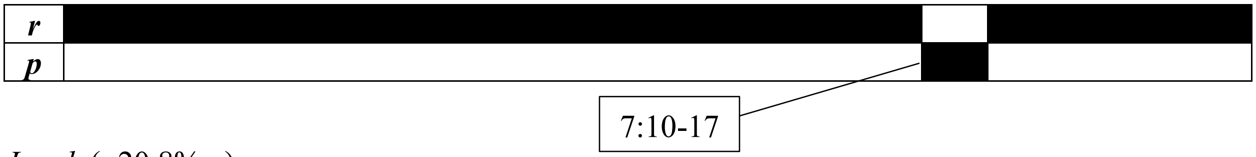
[65] LXX actually accentuates the dissimilarity of the two side of Jer's diptych through its placement of the OAN in the middle of the book instead of at the end. As a result, a greater proportion of *r*-texts becomes concentrated in the first half of the book: see Fig. 4.3 below.

In sum, the distribution of *r*-texts and *p*-texts across the books surveyed in this section may be succinctly shown in the following diagrams:

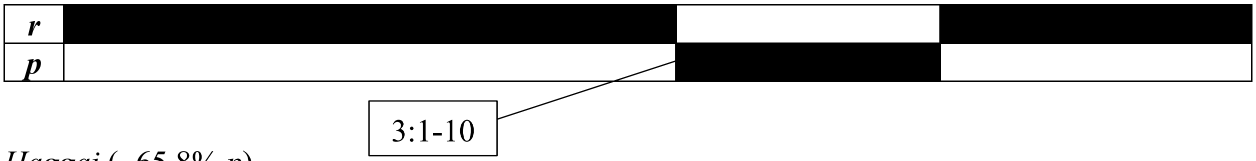
*Malachi* (~16.3% *p*)



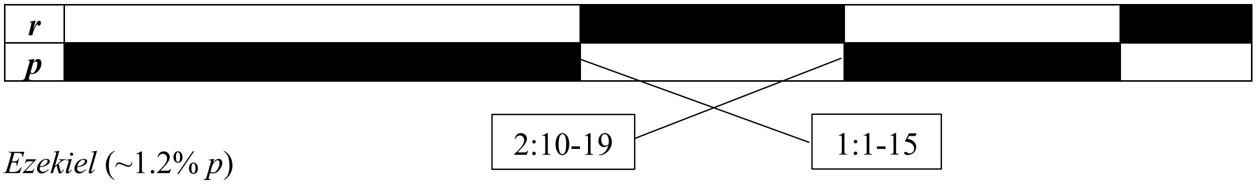
*Amos* (~5.5% *p*)



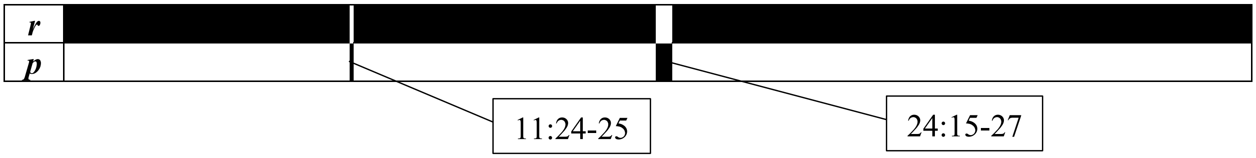
*Jonah* (~20.8% *p*)



*Haggai* (~65.8% *p*)



*Ezekiel* (~1.2% *p*)



*Isaiah* (~8.9% *p*)

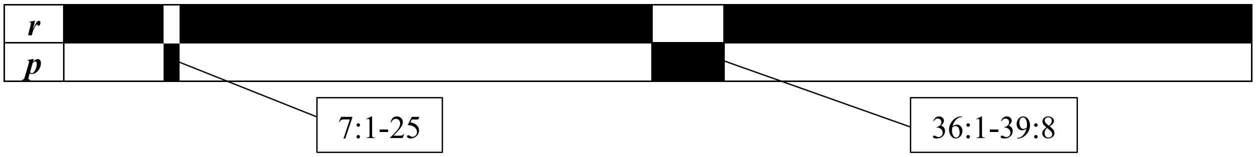


**Figure 4.1. Distribution of *r*-texts and *p*-texts in the Latter Prophets**
(not to scale)

Each diagram depicts the total linear progression of literary material in a given prophetic book, with the first chapter (e.g., Amos 1, Isa 1) at far left and the final chapter (e.g., Amos 9, Isa 66) at far right. The shaded bars indicate which portions of the book should be counted as *r*-texts or *p*-texts; in the interests of clarity and simplicity, only *p*-texts are labelled with chapter and verse numbers. For each book, the proportion of *p*-texts is given as a percentage (rounded to the nearest tenth), determined by dividing the number of verses in *p*-texts by the total number of verses in the book.

There are two notable limitations to this method of visualization. First, for want of technological precision, I have not drawn the bars in the above figure (and in Figures 4.2 and 4.3 below) to scale: for example, while *p*-texts constitute roughly 1% of the book of Ezekiel, the bars that represent those texts manifestly occupy more than 1% of their diagram. The diagrams' heuristic utility nonetheless consists in their relative approximations of the position and duration of *r*-texts and *p*-texts, and in their collocation of these approximations for the sake of easy visual comparison. Second, while I delimit whole blocks of *r*-texts and *p*-texts, I have made no effort to identify discrete textual units within those blocks. In part, this decision is motivated by simple considerations of exegetical economy. Even though the *p*-texts of the Latter Prophets (other than Jer) are fairly circumscribed and self-contained, the same cannot be said for the *r*-texts, and an adequate investigation of their many (possible) divisions would far exceed the bounds of this study. More importantly, however, such questions are ultimately immaterial to my argument. To the extent that these blocks of texts form differential literary series—what I will call, in the system of Jer, literary *complexes*—the search for a set of uniquely definitive or determinative divisions among their parts is not merely futile but misguided. In each case, we are dealing with a dense network of differences, overlapping and operating at multiple levels of granularity, from whole pericopes and chapters down to individual verses, clauses, words and sounds.[66]

What the diagrams do show are the differences that matter most to this study: namely, those that distinguish *r*-texts and *p*-texts themselves. Regrettably, even in this regard, the visualization suffers from an overly tidy, literally black-and-white binary format, which accentuates the distinction between *r*-texts and *p*-texts at the expense of many more nuanced gradations that can be discerned within each group. Consider, for example, the disparate descriptiveness of the vision reports in Amos and Ezekiel (all *r*-texts), or the wealth of narrative detail that separates Isa 36-39 from an austere dialogue like Amos 7:10-17 (both *p*-texts). Even though such specific differences fall out of the diagrams' representational frames, the importance of these differences, much less their existence, must not be overlooked. Jer derives much of its complexity—and Jrm, its efficacy—from a literary system that involves not only an unprecedented combination of *r*-texts and *p*-texts, but also an unrivaled range of both types of texts at all levels of mimetic development.

---

[66] See the discussion in the second half of 1.3.1.

### 4.3. The Literary Structure of Prophecy in the Book of Jeremiah

When Jer (MT) is diagrammed in the same manner as the six books treated above, its uniqueness becomes immediately apparent:

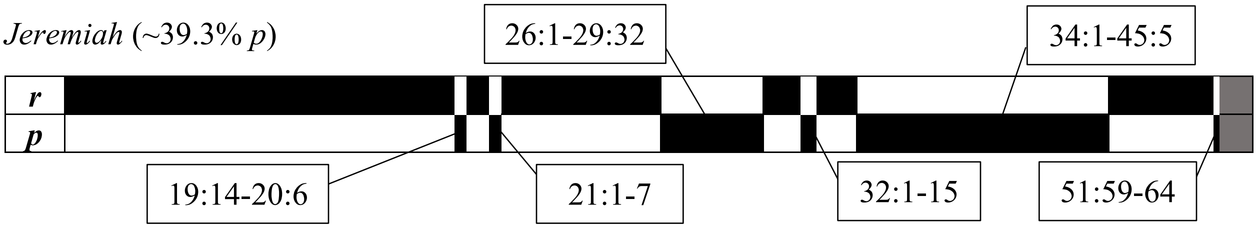


**Figure 4.2. Distribution of *r*-texts and *p*-texts in Jer (MT)**
(not to scale)

Jer differs from the other Latter Prophets not only in the prevalence of its *p*-texts, which do not so much punctuate as predominate over well near half the book, but also in the relationship of those texts to *r*-texts. Instead of momentary pivots to a proclamatory mode of discourse within a comprehensive revelatory framework (as in Malachi, Amos, Jonah Ezekiel, and Isaiah) or vice versa (Haggai), Jer presents us with more balanced collections of *r*-texts and *p*-texts that exhibit a more complex interrelationship. The intricacy of this system is most apparent in two places, where texts of each type alternate in quick succession: the end of the sequence of confessions (Jer 19:14-21:7) and the so-called "little book of consolation" (*Trostbüchlein*) in Jer 30-33.[67] To distinguish the *r*-texts and *p*-texts of Jer from those of the other Latter Prophets, I will refer to them, respectively and collectively, as the *r-complex* and the *p-complex*.

---

[67] A third place where Jer's structural organization departs from the norms of other prophetic books is found at the end of MT: namely, the transition from the *r*-texts of the OAN to a short *p*-text about the scribe Seraiah (51:59-64) to a historical appendix (Jer 52) that belongs to neither complex. On Jer 52, see 4.3.1 below; on 51:59-64, see 4.4.2.

The above diagram reflects the Hebrew (MT) edition of Jer, which diverges substantially from the Greek (LXX) version.[68] As far as the literary structure of the book(s) is concerned, though, the salient features and functions of LXX are fundamentally the same as those of MT. In fact, the main difference between MT and LXX—the position of the OAN—actually augments the cohesion of the *r*-complex in the latter edition. Whereas the main body of the *p*-complex (Jer 34-45) interrupts the *r*-complex in MT, the medial placement of the OAN in LXX (Jer 46-51 MT = 26-31 LXX) brings almost all the book's *r*-texts into alignment, except for those found in the *Trostbüchlein* (Jer 30-33 MT = 37-41 LXX).[69] This global consolidation of the *r*- and *p*-complexes in LXX is evident in the following diagram:

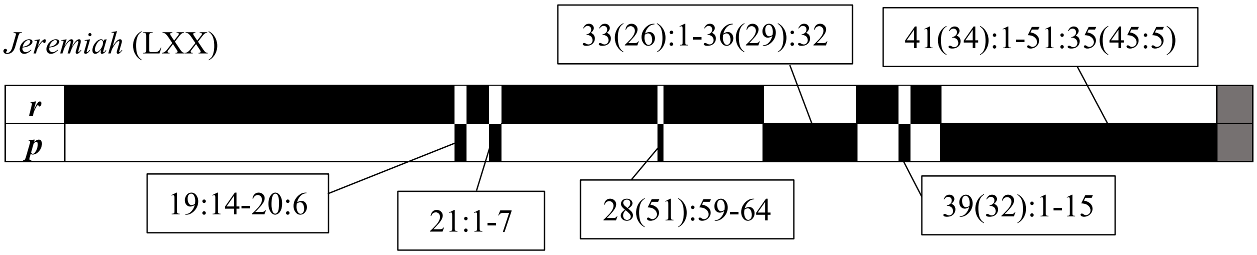


**Figure 4.3. Distribution of *r*-texts and *p*-texts in Jer (LXX)**
(not to scale; parentheses show MT chapters)

---

[68] For differences between the editions, see J. Gerald Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah*, HSM 6 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973); Emanuel Tov, "The Literary History of the Book of Jeremiah in the Light of Its Textual History," in *Empirical Models for Biblical Criticism*, ed. Jeffrey H. Tigay (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 211-237; Hermann-Josef Stipp, *Das masoretische und alexandrinische Sondergut des Jeremiabuches: Textgeschichtlicher Rang, Eigenarten, Triebkräfte*, OBO 136 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1994).

Strong evidence for the antiquity of the LXX *Vorlage* was provided by the discoveries at Qumran, where Hebrew manuscripts agreeing with LXX were found alongside others that more closely reflect proto-MT. The distinctness of these manuscript traditions has more recently been confirmed using paleogenomic techniques, which show that the two LXX-oriented scrolls (4QJer$^{b}$ [4Q71] and 4QJer$^{d}$ [4Q72a]) were both written on parchment made from sheep skin, whereas the proto-MT scrolls (4QJer$^{a}$ [4Q70] and 4QJer$^{e}$ [4Q72b]) not only use parchment derived from a different animal (cow) but also were likely brought to Qumran from outside the community. For this analysis, see Sarit Anava et al., "Illuminating Genetic Mysteries of the Dead Sea Scrolls," *Cell* 181 (2020): 1218-1231, esp. 1220-1226.

[69] For differences in the order and placement of the OAN, see Janzen, *Studies*, 115-116; James W. Watts, "Text and Redaction in Jeremiah's Oracles against the Nations," *CBQ* 54 (1992): 432-447; Stipp, *Sondergut*, 84-87.

Aside from the brief *p*-texts of 19:14-20:6, 21:1-7, and 28:59-64 (= 51:59-64 MT), a (nearly) continuous series of *r*-texts stretches (almost) unbroken across the first two-thirds of LXX. A similarly sustained series of *p*-texts predominates in the last third of the book, before and after the primarily (but, thanks to 32:1-15, not exclusively) revelatory *Trostbüchlein*.

Of course, while the location of the OAN may be the single biggest difference between MT and LXX, it is by no means their only point of divergence. On a more local level, smaller discrepancies do affect some of the factors that identify individual pericopes as *r*-texts or *p*-texts—but never to such an extent that a text belonging to one complex in MT ought thereby to be assigned to another in LXX.[70] The subsequent discussion of Jer will thus focus primarily on the literary structure of MT, with references to LXX only where they are most relevant. In fact, a closer look at some of the specific differences between LXX and MT shows that the "plusses" and other idiosyncrasies of the latter often serve to amplify features or tendencies that are already latent in the former. For example, MT frequently refers to characters by their proper names, such as "Jeremiah" or "Nebuchadrezzar," in places where LXX is content with a more general designation (e.g., "the king of Babylon") or a mere pronoun; when such a name is already present, MT tends to embellish it with a patronymic (e.g., "Johanan son of Kareah" in 40:15-16 MT) or other epithet, such as "the prophet" for Jrm (29:29 MT and *passim*) or "the scribe" for Baruch (36:26, 32 MT).[71] Though the repetitious rhythm of such additions sometimes "renders the [MT] narrative unwieldy and stylistically grotesque,"[72] it also serves to underscore the historical definiteness of the persons denoted by these expanded names. As a result, MT's preference for fuller personal names further develops a process of concretization or *actualization* that characterizes the relationship between the *r*-complex and the *p*-complex in either edition.[73] In conceptualizing the two editions of Jer, it is essential to recall that "Jer," strictly speaking, is a *virtual literary structure* that cannot be equated with or reduced to the particularities of LXX, MT, or any other *actual textual incarnation* of that structure (e.g., the ancient manuscript fragments from Qumran or modern translations like the JPS and NRSV).[74]

---

[70] A notable example is the "temple sermon" of 7:1-8:3. In MT, the sermon's incipit (7:1-2) frames the subsequent statements as directions for a future act of proclamation. In LXX, where most of the incipit is missing, the sermon exhibits "a much simpler discourse structure with Jeremiah as the speaker" of a message from the deity; see Else K. Holt, "Word of Jeremiah—Word of God: Structures of Authority in the Book of Jeremiah," in *Uprooting and Planting: Essays on Jeremiah for Leslie Allen*, ed. John Goldingay, LHBOTS 495 (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 172-189, here 180. In either version, the decontextualized divine speech of the sermon suffices to mark it as an *r*-text, albeit one that is less mimetically developed in LXX than MT.

[71] On this feature of MT, see Tov, "Literary History," 221-223, 227-229; Janzen, *Studies*, 69-75, also 75-86 for a similar phenomenon with the divine names in MT.

### *4.3.1. Elements of the Revelation and Proclamation Complexes*

In order to understand the defining dynamics of Jer, and the peculiar nature of the prophet to which they give rise, it is first necessary to appreciate the sheer literary and mimetic diversity of the *r*- and *p*-complexes that constitute this structure. To an even greater extent than the *r*-texts and *p*-texts outside Jer, these complexes exemplify many different modes of presenting or portraying the process of prophecy. These mechanisms of mimesis must now be assessed more precisely and systematically than the cursory survey of non-Jeremianic *r*-texts and *p*-texts in the previous section (4.2) had allowed. In particular, texts of both types exhibit at least two distinct dimensions of mimetic development, corresponding to the two differential relations that define the *r*- and *p*-series in the structure of epistemic intermediation: namely, *disclosure* of knowledge from source to recipient and *feedback* from recipient to source. Whether revelatory or proclamatory, prophetic texts may focus to a greater or lesser degree on disclosure or feedback, though the nature of these relationships and the beings depicted therein will necessarily differ according to type. For *r*-texts, as in the *r*-series, disclosure proceeds from deity to prophet, while it likewise travels from prophet to audience in *p*-texts; with feedback, these movements are reversed (see 3.3.1).

---

[72] Thus Janzen, *Studies*, 69.

[73] On the actualization of virtual structures generally, see 2.3. On actualization in the structure of epistemic intermediation, see 3.3 and 3.4. On actualization in Jer, see 4.3.2 below.

[74] My Deleuzian conception of the relationship between Jer and its textual actualizations in MT, LXX, etc. comes close to the (not overtly Deleuzian) analysis of Nathan Mastnjak, "Jeremiah as Collection: Scrolls, Sheets, and the Problem of Textual Arrangement," *CBQ* 80 (2018): 25-44. See also 5.4 and 5.5 in the next chapter.

At the same time, texts are not persons, and the relations described in the former cannot be conflated with those that may obtain among the latter. Of the innumerable differences between these domains, a particularly important one is the *separability* of revelation and proclamation once they are committed to writing. For living intermediaries and their audiences, the events defined and determined by the *r*- and *p*-series will naturally string themselves together into a sustained, and to some extent fluid, stream of personal experience; as it passes, any individual event is inevitably connected with and even lost among others within the accumulating totality of an actual life. In the creation of written texts that purport to describe these events, however, the inherently externalizing and objectifying tendencies of textualization allow each event of revelation or proclamation to attain and retain a far greater degree of distinctness, not only from other such events but also among its own parts—even (or especially) if the events themselves are entirely fictive.[75] In order to count as a *p*-text, for example, a prophetic text must explicitly display aspects of both a revelation and its proclamation, but different *p*-texts may incorporate those aspects to different degrees. Some, like Isa 7, lavish extensive attention on the revealed contents of a divine message (7:4-9, 13-25) while only minimally addressing the circumstances of proclamation (7:1-3, 10-12). Others, such as Jonah 3, take great care to depict the circumstances (3:3-4a, 5-10) but devote few words to the message itself (3:1-2, 4b). These disparities extend to the presence and prominence of feedback as an element of *p*-texts. For some texts (Mal 3:13-21, Jonah 3, Amos 7:10-17), the audience's response ranks among the primary themes; in others (Isa 7, Ezek 24:15-27), it is treated merely as an ancillary detail; still others (Hag 2:10-19, Ezek 11:24-25) do not bother to acknowledge feedback at all.

---

[75] Cf. n. 123 in 3.4.1.

Much the same diversity may be discerned in *r*-texts. Although these texts are definitionally precluded from the overt portrayal of interpersonal proclamation as such, they vary markedly in their representations of divine revelation. These depictions are by no means limited to poetic oracles, but also include "disputation speeches" and similar diatribes (see 4.2.2.1 above), reports of visions or symbolic actions, and even call narratives, which engage in a kind of *meta-revelatory* discourse that marks the very inauguration of the *r*-series itself. Moreover, the constitutive relations of disclosure and feedback may be differentially expressed in *r*-texts no less than they are in *p*-texts. Poetic oracles, for their part, may assume or address a response from the prophet or the audience, but they do not normally foreground feedback so as to place it mimetically on a par with the divine message itself.[76] On the other hand, reports of visions and symbolic actions ordinarily involve not only disclosures to the prophet but also some measure of explicit feedback therefrom. Often, this feedback is no more than a dutifully descriptive reply to the stock query מה אתה ראה ("What do you see?" Cf. Amos 7:8, 8:2; Zech 4:2, 5:2, etc.), but it may go as far as outright distress at the images shown (e.g., Amos 7:2, 5) or acts commanded

---

[76] The primacy of the divine-prophetic perspective in oracular *r*-texts is especially evident in their use of stereotypical "quotation formulas" that attribute prophetic speech to the deity, even when the implied speaker is not obviously (or, in some cases, is obviously *not*) supernatural; on these formulas and their use in Jer, see 4.3.3 below.

(e.g., Ezek 4:14).[77] Feedback is arguably more integral as a component of call narratives, since the prophet must respond in order to resist or, inevitably, accept the call.[78] Even for a call narrative, however, human feedback remains strictly secondary to the divine disclosure(s) wherein the text's claim to authority ultimately consists.[79] It is all the more notable, then, that the prophetic canon also contains *r*-texts that seem to emphasize the prophet's response at least as much as the deity's disclosures, as in Habakkuk (esp. 1:2-4, 1:12-2:1, 3:1-19) or Jonah (see 4.2.2.2 above).

The attentive reader may have noticed that I deliberately avoided citations from Jer in the preceding paragraphs. This choice reflects no dearth of diversity in the *r*- and *p*-texts of Jer, but just the opposite: in Jer, texts of both types exhibit all the gradations of disclosure and feedback observed in the other prophetic books, and still more variation besides. To start, consider the Jeremianic *r*-texts. Like most of the other Latter Prophets, Jer contains an array of poetic oracles (e.g., 2:1-3:5) that record divine or prophetic speech without recounting its delivery to an audience, much less the feedback that it elicited therefrom. The same is true of the book's prose "sermons," such as 7:1-8:3 and 17:18-29, which *prescribe* proclamation in the voice of the deity but never *describe* it in the voice of a narrator.[80] Like the other Major Prophets, moreover, Jer grounds its titular prophet's revelations in a call narrative of considerable complexity (1:4-19; cf. Isa 6:1-13, Ezek 1:1-3:21).[81] At the same time, many of Jer's *r*-texts involve an unusual amount of feedback from Jrm himself. While some of these texts limit the prophetic response to momentary indications of resistance (1:6) or, more often, assent (1:11b, 13b; 11:5b; 13:2; 24:3; etc.), others raise Jrm's voice to a representational level that is equal to, if not greater than, that of the deity. Such an emphasis on prophetic feedback appears most famously in the confessions (see Chapter 1), but it may be seen as well in less poignant passages like the prayer of 32:16-25, which prompts a lengthy divine response in 32:26-44.

---

[77] On vision reports as a literary genre, see Burke O. Long, "Reports of Visions among the Prophets," *JBL* 95 (1976): 353-365; Susan Niditch, *The Symbolic Vision in Biblical Tradition*, HSM 30 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983); Elizabeth R. Hayes and Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, eds., *'I Lifted My Eyes and Saw': Reading Dream and Vision Reports in the Hebrew Bible*, LHBOTS 584 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014); Tiemeyer, "The Vision Report Genre between Form-Criticism and Redaction-Criticism: An Investigation of Amos 7-9 and Zechariah 1-6," in Boda et al., *New Form Criticism*, 75-96.

For a brief overview of symbolic action reports with examples and bibliography, see Kelvin G. Friebel, "Sign Acts," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament Prophets*, ed. Mark J. Boda and J. Gordon McConville (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012), 707-713; see also, at greater length, idem, *Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's Sign-Acts: Rhetorical Nonverbal Communication*, JSOTSup 283 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

[78] For the classic form-critical study of prophetic call narratives, see Norman Habel, "The Form and Significance of the Call Narratives," *ZAW* 77 (1965): 297-323; a comparison between biblical call narratives and those of other cultures is undertaken in Martin Buss, "An Anthropological Perspective upon Prophetic Call Narratives," *Semeia* 21 (1981): 9-30.

[79] It is important to distinguish the literary/mimetic question of a text's methods for asserting authority from the social/rhetorical question of the acceptance of that assertion by the text's audience. Buss ("Perspective," 16) cautions that "a first-person account of a call does not in itself accomplish an authentication; the acceptance of a shaman or medium rests primarily on other grounds, such as recognition by an established diviner, appropriate behavior, and, especially, successful prediction or analysis of a problem." Unsurprisingly, these "other grounds" pertain to events of the *p*-series, for which feedback is more determinative than disclosure.

Some of Jer's *r*-texts go so far as to incorporate feedback spoken in other, more ambiguous voices, attributable to such entities as the personified "Lady Zion" or the populace of Judah and Jerusalem.[82] In at least one case, on the periphery of the penultimate confession (18:18-23), the feedback sounds specifically, albeit anonymously, from Jrm's opponents (18:18;

---

[80] On the dynamics of discourse in the sermons, see Mark Biddle, *Polyphony and Symphony in Prophetic Literature: Rereading Jeremiah 7-20*, SOTI 2 (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1996), 64-76. For divergent explanations of the origin and purpose of the sermons, cf. Ernest W. Nicholson, *Preaching to the Exiles: A Study of the Prose Tradition in the Book of Jeremiah* (New York: Schocken Books, 1970) and Helga Weippert, *Die Prosareden des Jeremiabuches*, BZAW 132 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1973).

[81] On the governing function of the call narrative as a "prologue" for Jer, see John I. Lawlor, "Word Event in Jeremiah: A Look at the Composition's 'Introductory Formulas,'" in *Inspired Speech: Prophecy in the Ancient Near East. Essays in Honour of Herbert B. Huffmon*, eds. John Kaltner and Louis Stulman, JSOTSup 378 (London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 231–243.

[82] For these other voices, see Biddle, *Polyphony*, 15-45; cf. n. 94 in 1.4.1. But see also Mark S. Smith, *The Laments of Jeremiah and Their Contexts: A Literary and Redactional Study of Jeremiah 11-20*, SBLMS 42 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 62, who notes that while "[t]he voice of the people is heard during the dialogue between Yahweh and Jeremiah," it is "[m]ediated by the framework of the dialogue" and thus "not immediately present to the audience."

cf. 18:12).[83] Although interpersonal intrusions of this nature may seem to cut against the grain of *r*-texts, which I have characterized as dialogues (if not monologues) that play out primarily between prophet and deity, it is important to remember that the audience is also involved in the *r*-series as an "indirect object": before a divine message can be proclaimed *to* an audience, it must be revealed *for* them. To the extent that the audience appears in the *r*-complex, then, its presence should be attributed to this liminal but integral dimension of the *r*-series.[84] By the same token, such appearances testify to the completeness of Jer's incarnation of the structure of intermediation to which that series belongs.

Nor does completeness pertain to the *r*-complex alone, as much the same diversity and differentiation may be observed in the *p*-complex. It is no exaggeration to say that Jer contains the most comprehensive and well-rounded corpus of *p*-texts in all biblical (or, for that matter, ancient Near Eastern) prophetic literature. The largest and most luminous jewel in Jer's proclamatory crown is surely the extended narrative of Jer 37-44. This unbroken block of *p*-texts, which recounts the reception of Jrm and his words during and after the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem, exceeds even the formally analogous narratives of Isa 36-39 in sheer size and, more significantly, in the scope of its presentation of events of proclamation.[85] There, Isaiah communicates almost exclusively with Hezekiah or his courtiers, largely by way of formal prophetic oracles; here, Jrm interacts with a more expansive list of *dramatis personae* in a more conventionally conversational mode. Moreover, only in Jer do these extended *p*-texts display the full range of potential feedback from a prophetic audience, both positive (38:7-14, 39:11-13) and, more often for Jrm, negative (37:11-16, 38:1-6, 43:1-7, 44:15-19).[86] Elsewhere in Jer, shorter narrative *p*-texts manage to achieve similar combinations of revelation and proclamation, disclosure and feedback, acceptance and pushback: consider the confrontations with Pashhur (19:14-20:6) and Hananiah (28:1-17), the trial in the temple and its aftermath (26:1-24), or the symbolic temptation of the Rechabites (35:1-19). Other Jeremianic *p*-texts focus strictly on the prophet's disclosure of revelation, explicitly indicating proclamation to an audience without acknowledging feedback from the same: for example, the divination solicited by Zedekiah's proxies (21:1-7), the sign of the yoke and its accompanying oracles (27:1-22, esp. 12, 16), the purchase of Hanamel's field (32:1-15), and other oracles directed at Zedekiah and Judah's elites during the Babylonian onslaught (34:1-22, esp. 1-7). To be sure, these texts rank among the most marginal *p*-texts in Jer. They nonetheless manage to function as *p*-texts insofar as they situate the prophet in sociohistorically concrete moments of interpersonal dialogue, even if the other persons involved in the dialogue remain essentially silent.

---

[83] The utter anonymity of the opponents is what ultimately prevents the fourth confession from functioning as a *p*-text: as the implied subject of ויאמרו ("and they said"), the speakers of 18:18 are even less well-defined than the admittedly abstract "God-fearers" (יראי יהוה) of Mal 3:16 (see 4.2.2.1 above). As far as discursive form is concerned, there is nothing to distinguish the statement of the enemies in 18:18 from the words of a seemingly more general audience in 18:12 (following LXX and other manuscripts that read ויאמרו in both verses; MT has ואמרו "and they [will] say" in 18:12). Both quotations provide a general *impetus* for their respective *r*-texts (18:12-17 and 18:18-23), but neither begins to portray a specific *occasion* for those words—at least, not without the help of the book's *p*-texts. For such interactions between the two complexes, see 4.3.2 below.

[84] My understanding of the quoted responses in Jer's *r*-texts aligns with that of Thomas W. Overholt, "Jeremiah 2 and the Problem of 'Audience Reaction'," *CBQ* 41 (1979): 262-273, who observes that most of these quotes "are such that they *could have been said by someone on some occasion*, but the tendency toward stereotyped language and conformity with the prophet's own views raises series doubts about whether they actually were" (273, emphasis added).

[85] On Isa 36-39, see 4.2.2.6 above.

As the foregoing examples demonstrate, most of the *p*-texts in Jer take the form of more or less developed narratives about the prophet Jrm himself. But the *p*-complex also comprises texts that deviate from this paradigm in one way or another—namely, by employing a *non-narrative* form or exhibiting a *non-Jeremianic* (i.e., non-Jrm) focus. Perhaps the most notable example of a non-narrative *p*-text in the whole Hebrew Bible is the letter of Jer 29:1-32, which delivers a divine message to a clearly defined community (the deportees of 597 BCE) in a comparably concrete historical context (cf. 29:1-3).[87] On the other hand, a striking example of a non-Jrm *p*-text is found in Jer 36. Being "shut up" and "unable to enter the house of YHWH" (36:5) during the reign of Jehoiakim, Jrm directs the scribe Baruch to prophesy in his stead, such that the role of intermediary as source in the *p*-series devolves not only on the prophetic *disciple*, but also on the prophetic *book* (ספר) as such.[88] A similar orientation away from the prophet and toward the (scribal) disciple and the book may be discerned in the two "expanded colophons," both *p*-texts, that conclude the Hebrew (51:59-64) and Greek (LXX 51:31-35 = MT 45:1-5) editions of Jer.[89]

---

[86] In contrast, Isaiah's words receive only implicit affirmation (38:2), if not explicit approbation (39:8), in the comparable block of that book.

No less unusually for a prophetic book, Jer also contains a text that originates outside the structure of intermediation and its diverse literary actualizations. The concluding appendix in Jer 52 (shaded in gray on the rightmost side of Figs. 4.2-3) reflects a near-verbatim borrowing from the book of Kings (cf. 2 Kgs 25), in which neither Jrm nor any identifiable prophetic word or deed appears. In a word, this text is more akin to historiography than prophecy, but it resists definitive generic classification by virtue of its artful adaptation and incorporation into the literary context of Jer. As Georg Fischer puts it, Jer 52 is "ein übernommener, fremder Text" that nonetheless exhibits "'jeremianischer' Züge" and was "als bewusst angezielter Schlusspunkt kompositionell eingesetzt."[90] Adapting a concept from Ehud Ben Zvi, this historical appendix is perhaps most accurately treated as a "quasi-prophetic" text that straddles generic categories—a fitting testament to the activity of the scribal "quasi-prophets" who straddled vocational categories in crafting the biblical prophetic literature, including not only this text but the whole book(s) of Jer.[91] Far from an afterthought to be ignored or an aberration to be dismissed, Jer 52 constitutes an integral component of the literary structure of Jer, just as much as the book's *r*-texts and *p*-texts.[92]

---

[87] Non-narrative and specifically epistolary *p*-texts are much more common outside the Hebrew Bible; see 3.4.1. On the letter in Jer 29, see also 4.3.3 and 4.4.2 below.

[88] On this much-discussed narrative, see 4.4.2 below.

[89] For the concept of "expanded colophon" and further discussion of these texts, see 4.4.2 below.

[90] Georg Fischer, "Das Jeremiabuch als Spiegel der Schrift- und Lesekultur in Israel," *ZKT* 132 (2010): 25-46, esp. 26-28, here 28.

### *4.3.2. Constructing the Revelation and Proclamation Complexes*

Given these two complexes and the diverse texts that they contain, how does Jer organize them into a literary structure of prophecy? In other words, which more directly recall those of Deleuze, how do these texts enable Jer to *repeat* the sociohistorical structure of epistemic intermediation *with a difference*? The first level of this structural assembly concerns the individual construction of the *r*- and *p*-complexes themselves, as distinct from each other. Although textualized representations of revelation or proclamation are separable in principle—and often in fact, as the disjointed prophetic corpora of Mari and Assyria attest (see 3.4.1)—the *r*- and *p*-texts of Jer are thoroughly and respectively integrated into the broader contexts of the *r*- and *p*-complexes. Crucially, though, these complexes are not simple and straightforward unities, subordinated alike to a single purpose or principle imposed by an identifiable author.[93] Even if we wish (for the sake of argument) to ascribe most of the book's growth to the historical Jrm and Baruch, it would be naïve to suppose that all and only the *r*-texts derive from the prophet himself, while the *p*-texts stem no less exclusively from his scribe. Both complexes are better understood as heterogeneous textual (and, as the next chapter will contend, *non*-textual) entities, each of which somehow manages to function as a literary whole—not despite but because of the many differences (in compositional origin, redactional arrangement, ideological orientation, etc.) that collectively define its manifold texts.

---

[91] On "quasi-prophets," see Ehud Ben Zvi, "Introduction: Writings, Speeches, and the Prophetic Books—Setting an Agenda," in Ben Zvi and Floyd, *Writings and Speech*, 1-29, here 14; cf. n. 115 in 3.4.1. This concept is more fully discussed in sections 4.3.3 and 4.4.2 below.

[92] In thus problematizing the boundaries of (non-)prophetic literature, Jer 52 anticipates the *rhizomatic* approach to Jer, and the broader (Hebrew) Bible, that I promote in Chapter 5; see esp. 5.5.

[93] On the organizing function of the author in a literary work, see 5.3 in the next chapter.

As such texts are (re)written and (re)read alongside one another within the developing framework of a prophetic book, their matters and meanings become increasingly and interdependently enmeshed. This is the moment of "reciprocal determination," which we have seen already in the more granular series of phonemes and morphemes, for language (2.2), or revelations and proclamations, for intermediation (3.3.1). The differential process of reciprocal determination is distinct from, and prior to, conventional procedures for grouping texts on the basis of formal or historical similarities (i.e., relations of identity or mediated difference). Let us first assess the power of this determination in the *r*-complex. From the standpoint of identity, the *r*-texts of Jer fall into several generically homogenous collections: "oracles" (2:1-3, 4-37; 3:1-5, 6-10, etc.), "sermons" (7:1-8:3, 11:1-13, 17:19-27), "symbolic action reports" (13:1-11, 16:1-5, 18:1-11, 19:1-13, 25:15-26), "vision reports" (1:11-12, 13-19; 24:1-10), "confessions" (11:18-12:6, 15:10-21, 17:14-18, 18:18-23, 20:7-18), etc. Considered as components of the *r*-complex, however, these collections give way to underlying networks of differential relationships that cut across generic (and genetic) lines. Before any collection of *r*-texts may cohere as such, each text is productively distinguished from all the others by its unique position in the complex and its resulting perspective on the revelatory relationship between YHWH and Jrm with respect to

Israel.[94] Even when one *r*-text appears to repeat itself or another verbatim, the repetition invariably encounters a different context, and thus engenders different effects, upon each of its (re)occurrences.[95] At a smaller scale, within and across individual *r*-texts, the placement of explicitly prophetic speech from YHWH or Jrm next to ostensibly non-prophetic statements from the people or their representatives (e.g., Lady Zion) not only broadens the mimetic horizon of the former material, but also transforms the latter into (pieces of) prophecy.

Processes of reciprocal determination play out as well in the *p*-complex, albeit with differing emphases and effects in accordance with their different textual ingredients. Here, discrete blocks of temporally disconnected prose narrative detailing acts of Jrm and his contemporaries are drawn together with other texts (e.g., Jer 29, 45) into an unstable whole that hovers ambiguously among genres, somewhere in the space between prophetic biography and exilic historiography.[96] As in the *r*-complex, the forces of reciprocal determination go even so far as to create *p*-texts out of material that would not otherwise count as proclamatory (27:1-11, 34:8-22) or prophetic at all (40:7-41:18), by virtue of the juxtaposition or interpolation of such material with *p*-texts that thereby facilitate for it a suitably concrete contextualization (27:12-22, for 27:1-11; 34:1-7, for 34:8-22; 37:1-40:6 and 42:1-44:30, for 40:7-41:18).[97] In each complex, the mutual determination of *r*- or *p*-texts as the elements of a literary series may be likened to the physical forces exerted across a vaulted arch, wherein each brick or block at once holds up and is upheld by all the others, as a result of the different positions of each within the whole. This is but one reason that the total organization and operation of the complexes is more important than an exact enumeration of the textual divisions upon which they depend: the differential whole is greater than the sum of (the differences between) its parts.

---

[94] The call narrative of Jer 1 offers a simple example of this procedure: quite apart from whatever significance may accrue to this pericope on the basis of its genre, it derives much of its effect on the *r*-complex from the simple fact that it appears *before* all the other *r*-texts, which are no less affected by appearing *after* it. Cf. Isaiah, wherein the prophet's call (Isa 6) is preceded by five chapters of oracular poetry and thus acquires a decidedly different function in the book; on this text and issues surrounding its interpretation as a "call narrative," see Childs, *Isaiah*, 51-59.

[95] For a comprehensive study of repeated passages and phrases in Jer, see Geoffrey H. Parke-Taylor, *The Formation of the Book of Jeremiah: Doublets and Recurring Phrases*, SBLMS 51 (Atlanta: SBL, 2000). While Parke-Taylor is certainly correct that "[d]oublets occur both in poetic passages and in prose narratives and discourses" (293), I would add that the vast majority of them are found in *r*-texts: of the approximately fifty doublets that Parke-Taylor surveys, only six involve an intra-Jeremianic instance of a *p*-text doubling an *r*-text, or vice versa (excluding four further cases in which a *p*-text from Jer echoes a text from elsewhere in the canon).

The seemingly disproportionate doubling of *r*-texts is actually an expected outcome of the abstract openness of such texts, which are far more amenable to reuse and re-actualization than *p*-texts are; on this property of *r*-texts, see 3.4.1.

[96] The constructive effects of Jer's internal chronological discrepancies are explored in Kathleen M. O'Connor, *Jeremiah: Pain and Promise* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), 131-134; since regnal dates and other temporal markers are most common in *p*-texts, these effects are felt primarily in the *p*-complex (cf. the table on 132, in which nine of the ten chronological references belong to *p*-texts).

Of course, this much may be said of the other biblical prophetic books. For Isaiah or Amos, Ezekiel or Zechariah, variegated assortments of compositionally, ideologically, and mimetically disparate *r*-texts may be integrated into an "*r*-complex" no less rightly or readily than those of Jer. Some books, such as Isaiah or Haggai, would likewise allow for the construction of a *p*-complex, albeit a smaller and simpler one, from their sufficient stocks of *p*-texts. What truly distinguishes Jer from these other books is not merely the presence of its two complexes, nor even their extraordinary levels of literary development, but the nature and number of the interrelationships or "couplings" that link (texts of) one complex to (those of) the other by virtue of their mutual differences.[98] In conjunction with the reciprocal determinations just described, these linkages or couplings between literary series mark the movements of a "complete determination," which maps out a distribution of singular points as so many functional parts or roles in the total system of Jer. In the previous chapter (see 3.3.1), I showed that the singularities of the structure of epistemic intermediation are threefold: the source of revealed knowledge, its recipient, and an indirect object to whom the knowledge pertains. As the next section (4.3.3) will demonstrate, these same roles are manifestly involved in the structure of Jer, occupied respectively by YHWH (*r*) or Jrm (*p*), Jrm (*r*) or Israel/Judah (*p*), and Israel/Judah (*r*) or YHWH (*p*).

---

[97] In each of these cases, determination proceeds somewhat differently. Jer 27:1-11 does not directly show Jrm speaking to an envoy of foreign kings (cf. 27:2-3), but it derives a proclamatory orientation from the subsequent, explicitly interpersonal addresses to Zedekiah (27:12) and the priests and people (27:16); per Robert R. Wilson ("Prose and Poetry in the Book of Jeremiah," in *Ki Baruch Hu: Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Judaic Studies in Honor of Baruch A. Levine*, ed. Robert Chazan, William W. Hallo, and Lawrence H. Schiffman [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999], 413-427, here 425), the fact that this material is "cast in biographical form" suggests that it may have been "consciously blended into the preceding [narrative] material" of Jer 26. In the other direction, the status of Jer 27 is further solidified by the more detailed *p*-texts of Jer 28 and 29: in a further testament to the effects of reciprocal determination, Wilson (ibid.) observes that a similarly "conscious attempt to blend the two chapters" may account for the "specific historical references" found in Jer 29, which help to make this formally unique letter into a *p*-text. In these ways, the widely recognized unit in Jer 27-29 becomes wholly determined as part of the *p*-complex; on the compositional integrity of these chapters, see also Holladay, *Jeremiah 2*, 114.

As for Jer 34:8-11, this passage describes a historical event in narrative form but does not extend that form to the divine word that Jrm is directed to deliver in response (34:12-22); it is rather the overlap between the narrative heading of 34:8-11 and a similarly narrated statement of proclamation in 34:6-7 that manages to make the whole chapter into a *p*-text. In 40:7-41:18, which details the installation and subsequent assassination of the governor Gedaliah, Jrm does not even appear as a character. However, much like Isa 36 vis-à-vis 37-39 (see 4.2.2.6 above), this section is integrated into the broader arc of *p*-texts in Jer 37-44 by resolving or introducing characters and themes that appear alongside Jrm in the rest of the narrative.

Yet, insofar as the structure of Jer differs from that of intermediation, Jer presents us also with a new and different set of singularities. Being primarily literary rather than social in nature, Jer is defined as least as much by the relationships among its texts (and complexes thereof) as it is by the concrete figures or abstract roles represented within them. To understand the new singular points that result from this literary arrangement, the *Trostbüchlein* (Jer 30-33) provides an instructive example. This "little book of consolation" derives its name from the striking divergence of its themes and overall tone from the rest of Jer. Like the eye at the center of a hurricane, the *Trostbüchlein* stands out amid the book's torrent of judgment and doom as a calm patch of comforting prophecies that envision Judah's future restoration.[99] Different as they are in content, though, the texts of this collection resemble those of the rest of the book in form: they comprise a mixture of poetry (Jer 30-31) and prose (Jer 32-33), which encompasses dialogue between YHWH and Jrm (30:1-31:40, 32:16-33:26) as well as a narrative about Jrm's deeds in his community (32:1-15). In structural terms, the vast majority of the *Trostbüchlein* consists of *r*-texts, ranging from the expected oracles and visions to a more exceptional moment of prophetic prayer (32:16-25) and divine response (32:26-44). However, the episode in 32:1-15 must be considered a *p*-text. In this narrative, Jrm (speaking in the first person) recounts his purchase of a field from his cousin Hanamel (32:6-15), a superficially mundane legal transaction invested with symbolic significance as a result of its inopportune, seemingly irrational setting in the midst of the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem.

---

[98] For the concept of "coupling," see DR 117.

[99] Since at least the seminal work of Sigmund Mowinckel (*Zur Komposition des Buches Jeremia*, Videnskapsselskapets Skrifter 2, Hist.-Filos. Klasse 1913, no. 5 [Oslo: Dybwad, 1914], 45-47), the book of consolation has often been restricted to Jer 30-31; Mowinckel treats this unit as a distinct and "ursprünglich anonym" source "D" in his compositional theory (47). On the themes of the *Trostbüchlein*, regardless of its exact extent, see O'Connor, *Pain and Promise*, 103-113. My meteorological metaphor applies only to MT, which places

The features that identify this narrative as a *p*-text are essentially twofold. First, in the description of the sale itself, Jrm explicitly performs the central symbolic action—sealing the "deed of purchase" (ספר מקנה)—before an audience, which includes not only Hanamel himself and the "witnesses who were named in the deed" (העדים הכתבים בספר המקנה), but also "all the Judeans who were sitting (ישבים) in the court of the guard" (32:12). Second, to establish its setting, the narrative opens with an unusually lengthy "superscription" that relates this event to a specific moment in Jrm's life: the "tenth year of Zedekiah" (32:1), when "the army of the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem and Jeremiah the prophet was confined in the court of the guard" (32:2).[100] As if to compensate for the lack of feedback from the audience later in the text,

---

the book of consolation roughly at its center (per the masorah, the midpoint of the book in verses is 28:11). Although these texts are not so central in LXX (37-40), they are no less "explosive" as "a tour de force that sweeps aside the general bleakness of most of the book" (thus O'Connor, *Pain and Promise*, 103).

[100] In addition to labelling 32:1 an "editorial superscription imposed on the narrative that begins in v 6," Holladay (*Jeremiah 2*, 210) also regards 32:2-5 as a "clearly secondary…appendix" intended to assuage the temporal incongruity of this narrative in its present context. Yet, even if 32:1 is rightly understood as a superscription, the narrative form of its "appendix" pushes the whole of 32:1-5 in the direction of an *incipit* that is integrated into the text that it introduces; on the distinction between superscriptions and incipits, see n. 10 above.

this introduction also presents Zedekiah's response to Jrm's prophecies of doom, cited here as the reason for his imprisonment (32:3-5).

All these elements, which are common to LXX and MT, would suffice to mark the "field purchase" (*Ackerkauf*) as a *p*-text, but the MT further amplifies the proclamatory aspects of the narrative in at least one respect. Whereas LXX transitions from the words of Zedekiah (39:3-5 = 32:3-5 MT) to the words of YHWH (39:6-8) using a simple "word-event formula" (*Wortereignisformel*)—"and a word of the Lord came to Jrm" (39:6; cf. 39:1)—MT renders that formula in the first person (היה דבר יהוה אלי; "the word of YHWH was *to me*") and prefaces it with "And Jrm said" (ויאמר ירמיהו). In both editions, this medial heading functions first and foremost as a resumptive repetition (*Wiederaufnahme*) of the initial superscription from 32:1 ("The word which was to Jrm from YHWH"), which refocuses the passage after the contextualizing digression in 32:2-5.[101] In modifying that repetition to fit the first-person perspective of the narrative that follows, however, the reading of MT has the secondary effect of heightening the (inter)action of the entire scene. The dialogical connotations of the *wayyiqtol* form of אמר ("to say") in 32:6a, especially in conjunction with Zedekiah's quoted query in 32:3-5 ("Why are you prophesying…") and Jrm's first-person speech in 32:6-25, seem to evoke a "conversation" between the prophet and the king.[102] On such a reading, the encounter in 32:1-5 becomes something like a rudimentary *frame story* for the events narrated by Jrm in 32:6-25. This framework, in turn, molds the latter narrative into an oblique apologia, with which Jrm justifies his ostensibly treasonous statements in support of the Babylonian invaders: the predictions of Zion's imminent destruction are bound up with the broader premise, and promise, of eventual salvation.

---

[101] Holladay, *Jeremiah 2*, 210; cf. John Bright, *Jeremiah: A New Translation with Introduction and* Commentary, AB 21 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965), 236, who argues that the digression in 32:2-5—and thus, presumably, the resumption in 32:6—"would not have been necessary" if "the passage [had] been transmitted with [Jer 37-39], where it belongs chronologically[.]"

[102] William McKane, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah*, *Volume II: Commentary on Jeremiah XXVI-LII*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 839; cf. Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Jeremia*, KHC 11 (Tübingen/Leipzig: J. C. B. Mohr, 1901), 261. A different analysis of the discursive structure of Jer 32 MT is given by Andrew G. Shead, *The Open Book and the Sealed Book: Jeremiah 32 in its Hebrew and Greek Recensions*, JSOTSup 347 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 53-59, 62-66, who also identifies multiple levels of speech in the chapter but places 32:6a on the same level as 32:1-3a (and 32:26), thus foreclosing the frame story.

However the discursive logic of Jer 32:1-15 should be understood, the text's contributions to the *Trostbüchlein*, and to Jer more broadly, have been thoroughly analyzed by Konrad Schmid.[103] Against the backdrop of the favorable yet highly figurative oracles of this collection—so detached from Judah's empirical reality as to be likened to the revelatory reverie of a dream (31:26)—the *Ackerkauf* stands out as a comparatively concrete and detailed narrative, depicting relatively realistic actions that bolster the oracles' far-flung, and seemingly far-fetched, words of hope. Accordingly, in Schmid's view, one of the foremost functions of the *Ackerkauf* is the establishment of a "correspondence" (*Entsprechung*) between "ankündigendem Wort und erfüllendem Geschehen," whereby the prophet's revelations find support in the events that befall him and his audience.[104] This function is evident already in the narrative structure of 32:6-15, which begins not with a command from YHWH to Jrm, as in the book's other reports of symbolic actions (e.g., 13:1, 19:1), but with a confirmation of the validity of the divine word on the basis of a corroborating event (32:6-8).[105] Insofar as this short scene foregrounds the nature of revelation itself, it reads as a vestigial *r*-text within the *p*-text of 32:1-15, one that supplies (a portion of) the divine command that is enacted in the rest of the narrative. The same is true more generally of the relationship between the *Ackerkauf* as a whole (32:1-15) and the oracular *r*-texts that fill out the bulk of the *Trostbüchlein* (Jer 30-31, 33). In being connected or "coupled" across these complexes, each (block of) text receives a new valuation as a singular point within Jer. The oracles of the *Trostbüchlein* are determined as divine directives or "announcements" (*Ankündigungen*) issued to and through Jrm; in turn, the *Ackerkauf* furnishes these directives with an explicit indication of their enactment or "fulfillment" (*Erfüllung*) by Jrm (and *ipso facto* YHWH) in the public sphere of Judean society. This schema, which Schmid dubs the "announcement-fulfillment arc" (*Ankündigung-Erfüllungs Bogen*), may be extended to a range of other *r*- and *p*-texts across Jer that are similarly interlinked, as a few more examples will show.[106]

---

[103] Schmid, *Buchgestalten des Jeremiabuches: Untersuchungen zur Redaktions- und Rezeptionsgeschichte von Jer 30-33 im Kontext des Buches*, WMANT 72 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1996).

[104] Schmid, *Buchgestalten*, 86.

[105] Schmid, *Buchgestalten*, 86-87, 90. Cf. 3.3.2 on this motif in Jer 32:6-8.

Perhaps the most famous correspondence between structurally divergent Jeremianic texts is that which relates the "temple sermon" (*Tempelrede*), dictated to the prophet by the deity in the *r*-text(s) of 7:1-8:3 (esp. 7:1-15), to the account of its delivery and aftermath in Jer 26, a quintessential *p*-text.[107] The latter pericope begins with what appears to be an abridged quotation of the former (26:2-6), which nonetheless differs from the revealed transcript of the sermon in wording, setting, and (in all likelihood) purpose.[108] Yet these differences do nothing to attenuate the structural bond between the two texts, but rather augment it. They allow and even encourage the *p*-text to be read as the performance or publication of (some version of) the corresponding *r*-text, such that the sermon and the narrative are determined as two distinct but mutually compatible representations of one and the same prophetic event: respectively, the transpersonal reception of a revealed message ("The word which was to Jeremiah from YHWH"; 7:1, cf. 26:1) and its interpersonal dissemination (26:7-24, esp. 7-16).[109] Importantly, this dualistic mimetic relationship does not assume any particular compositional relationship between the two texts. While it is perhaps most easily explained by the authorial activity of Baruch or another "biographer," who might have chronicled just such an event in the life of the historical Jrm, the coupling would also find support in a more protracted process of redactional reorientation or midrashic expansion, which could have drawn out a narrative from the sermon via inner-biblical exegesis.[110] Indeed, the process of complete determination would persist here even if the literary dependence of Jer 26 on Jer 7 has been entirely misconstrued and overestimated, as some commentators contend.[111] All that ultimately matters, from a structural standpoint, is that the two pericopes are related by differences: they present two dissimilar versions of their shared prophetic message, embedded in disparate literary contexts.

---

[106] For this term, see Schmid, *Buchgestalten*, 92-93; cf. 217-219.

[107] On Jer 7 and 26, see Robert P. Carroll, *From Chaos to Covenant: Prophecy in the Book of Jeremiah* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 85-95, who limits the sermon to 7:1-15; while Carroll here introduces Jer 26 as "a parallel account…which sets out the sermon and its aftermath" (85), he ultimately concludes that the chapter is "a very complex piece of tradition building" toward different ends than those of Jer 7; cf. n. 111 below for the evolution of this insight in Carroll's later work on Jer. On the *Tempelrede*'s status as an *r*-text, see the discussion at nn. 113-115 in 1.4.2.

[108] For differences in the presentation of the sermon, see O'Connor, "'Do Not Trim a Word': The Contributions of Chapter 26 to the Book of Jeremiah," *CBQ* 51 (1989): 617-630, here 619-620. For the divergent intentions that may lie behind the Deuteronomistic shaping of Jer 7 and 26 as respectively "parenetic" and "didactic," see Holt, "Jeremiah's Temple Sermon and the Deuteronomists: An Investigation of the Redactional Relationship between Jeremiah 7 and 26," *JSOT* 36 (1986): 73-87, here 85.

---

[109] Even as hard-nosed a critic as McKane (*Jeremiah 26-52*, 681) seems to share "the conviction that both chapters [7 and 26] are related to the same utterance of the prophet Jeremiah and to the same set of events in Jerusalem in the late preexilic period." O'Connor ("Do Not Trim," 618-619) regards 7:1-16 as the "original narrative," with 7:17-23 and 7:24 as "additional units," raising the (largely immaterial) question of whether this chapter should be treated as one or more *p*-texts.

[110] A representative adherent of the older biographical approach is Bright, *Jeremiah*, 171, for whom it is "entirely likely" that the biographer was Baruch; cf. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 21B (New York: Yale University Press, 2004), 284. For a non-Baruchian biographical reading, see Herbert Gordon May, "Jeremiah's Biographer," *JBR* 10 (1942): 195-201. A "midrashic" approach is pursued by O'Connor ("Do Not Trim," 618), while redactional explanations are offered by Holt ("Deuteronomists"; n. 108 above), Carroll (cf. nn. 107 above and 111 below), and Carolyn J. Sharp, *Prophecy and Ideology in Jeremiah: Struggles for Authority in the Deutero-Jeremianic Prose*, OTS (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 54-62.

[111] For example, from a biographical perspective, Charles C. Torrey ("The Background of Jeremiah 1–10," *JBL* 56 [1937]: 193-216) posits that Jer 7 and 26 describe two distinct events, in which the prophet simply "repeated himself" (195) before different audiences. A redactional case is made by Carroll, *Jeremiah: A Commentary*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 514-515, who sharpens his prior view (see n. 107 above) to reject the reading of Jer 26 as "another version of 7:1-15 giving occasion and response," much less "a real event," in favor of "a complex of different strands of redaction which has developed an original story about a public procedure for establishing Jeremiah's authenticity in a number of different ways" (515).

For the *Tempelrede*, as for the *Ackerkauf*, connections between an *r*-text and a *p*-text establish the former as a divine directive awaiting the latter as its human enactment. In fact, a closer look at the *Templerede* shows it to contain another example of such coupling. While the first half of the sermon's *r*-text (7:1-15) clearly corresponds to Jer 26 (cf. the Shiloh motif in 7:14 and 26:6), the same cannot be said for the latter portion (esp. 7:30-34), which shifts focus from Jerusalem to the infamous cultic site called "Topheth" (התפת), in "the valley of Ben-Hinnom" (7:31). Instead of Jer 26, this part of the sermon finds a more fitting match in 19:1-20:6.[112] There, in language highly reminiscent of the *Tempelrede* (19:4-6; cf. 7:30-32), Jeremiah is instructed to perform a symbolic action at Topheth (19:1-13)—the breaking of an earthenware jug—before receiving decidedly negative feedback to a summary of that message uttered upon his return to Jerusalem (19:14-20:6). Like the other symbolic actions reported in the first half of Jer, the account of Jrm's deeds at Topheth must be assigned to the *r*-complex. Although the deity commands Jrm to prophesy before an audience comprising "elders of the people" and "senior priests" (19:1; cf. 19:10), those figures play no further role in the passage, as "there is no declaration of the performance of these commands."[113]

On the other hand, the episode that concludes this pericope is an unmistakable *p*-text, differentiated from the *r*-text in 19:1-13 by the overt shift in setting from Topheth to Jerusalem (19:14). Indeed, this short but significant narrative about Jrm and the priest Pashhur, examined already in Chapter 1 (see 1.4), stands out as the first *p*-text in the whole book of Jer. If the call narrative of 1:4-19 marks the commencement of the *r*-complex, displaying all its constitutive relations of divine disclosure and prophetic feedback at the very outset of the book, the "confrontation narrative" of 19:14-20:6 likewise inaugurates the *p*-complex with a comprehensive demonstration of its distinctive features: Jrm's disclosure of a message to an audience followed by feedback from that audience, most often in the form of rejection of the message and persecution of the prophet himself. In thus enacting a divine directive from the *r*-complex, this narrative also endows the revealed message with a measure of interpersonal concreteness, much like Jer 26 does for the rest of the *Tempelrede*. In this case, the encounter with Pashhur relates not only 7:30-34 but also 19:1-13 to a particular moment in the prophet's life, one that is realistically portrayed with a clearly named antagonist (20:1a) in a relatively detailed setting (20:2b).

---

[112] See Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 536-538; cf. idem, *Jeremiah 2*, 101. Holladay attributes the connection to Baruch's authorship of both passages, an assumption that goes beyond the needs of my argument.

[113] Thus Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 538, who goes on to assert that such a declaration is "unnecessary," because "20:1-6 narrates the consequence" (ibid.), thus implying that the action has been performed. This is yet another effect of complete determination between the complexes; see below.

To be sure, this episode is less expansive and descriptive than the account of the tribunal in Jer 26, but what it lacks internally in narrative development, it makes up for externally in structural entanglement. It marks the start of a *confluence* between the two complexes, where they momentarily intertwine as their texts are successively juxtaposed with one another.[114] Whereas Jer 26 stands at the head of other *p*-texts (Jer 27-29), the brief narrative of 19:14-20:6 leads at once into an *r*-text: namely, the fifth and final confession (20:7-18).[115] Like the other confessions, but unlike most other *r*-texts in Jer, this text focuses on the revelatory relationship from the prophet's perspective, rather than that of the deity. Jrm here laments the miseries that attend his calling (20:7-10, 14-18), even as he affirms its inherent validity (20:11-13). The alliterative catchword “terror all around” (מגור מסביב; 20:3, 10) constitutes the most concrete link between the confession and 19:14-20:6, but the two texts also share a more general thematic affinity in their attention to the difficulties of Jrm’s prophetic career.[116]

---

[114] See Figures 4.2 and 4.3 above. The *Trostbüchlein* (discussed above) would also count as such a "confluence," because its *r*-texts are bracketed in both editions by blocks of *p*-texts.

[115] The fifth confession is, in turn, followed by a *p*-text in 21:1-7; see the discussion at n. 120 below.

However these texts came to be connected, their interserial coupling yields a somewhat different structural relationship than that of the announcement-fulfillment pairs described above. By virtue of its position alongside the *p*-text about Pashhur, the *r*-text of the fifth confession presents itself as the prophet’s own (meta)feedback to the negative feedback described in the *p*-text. Even if the proclamatory context suggests that his reaction is less private and more performative than some scholars have supposed, it is still significant that the text seems to offer the reader a glimpse into Jrm’s personal emotional turmoil just as the public consequences of his work are portrayed for the first time in narrative form.[117] In contrast to conventional *r*-texts focusing on divine disclosures, this apparently (but anachronistically) “inward” representation of the prophet’s own attitudes or personality pertains primarily to “inverted” *r*-texts, such as the confessions and most of Jonah (see 4.2.2.3 above), that foreground feedback from the prophet to the deity.[118] At the same time, not only 20:7-18 but all the confessions are ultimately incorporated into the announcement-fulfillment arc by other couplings further afield. Specifically, within the total span of the book, the confessions may be read as intimations or predictions of the hardships that await Jrm later in his career, so as to be fulfilled by the events recounted in *p*-texts such as Jer 26, 36, and 37-44—not to mention the Pashhur pericope itself, which retrospectively corroborates the first four confessions even as it prospectively motivates the fifth.[119]

---

[116] For connections between the fifth confession and its context, see O’Connor, *The Confessions of Jeremiah: Their Interpretation and Role in Chapters 1-25*, SBLDS 94 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 110-111. As with Jer 26 vis-à-vis Jer 7 (cf. n. 110 above), O’Connor (*Confessions*, 111) suggests that 20:1-6 is a “midrash developed around” the catchword in 20:10.

[117] Ellen Davis Lewin, “Arguing for Authority: A Rhetorical Study of Jeremiah 1:4-19 and 20:7-18,” *JSOT* 32 (1985): 105-119, here 117, contends that Jrm’s “outcry” in Jer 20 is no mere diaristic reflection but “a part of the proclamation of the prophet…in the context of public controversy which attended and informed his ministry.” An extreme version of this thesis was advanced by Henning Graf Reventlow, *Liturgie und Prophetisches Ich* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1963), who divested the confessions of biographical significance by treating them as the strictly liturgical speech of a cultic prophet on behalf of his community. In contrast, O’Connor (*Confessions*, 95-96) locates the confessions’ *Sitz im Leben* among Jrm’s disciplines, “who might have been accustomed to hearing such poems recited by the prophet” (96); but see idem, *Pain and Promise*, 81-91 and “Figurations in Jeremiah’s Confessions with Questions for Isaiah’s Servant,” in *Jeremiah Invented: Constructions and Deconstructions of Jeremiah*, ed. Else K. Holt and Carolyn J. Sharp, LHBOTS 595 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 63-73 for readings that stress the paradigmatic over the personal.

In its immediate literary context, the fifth confession is followed by a *p*-text in 21:1-7, further entwining the two complexes in these chapters. This text, a short "divinatory chronicle" in which Zedekiah dispatches a delegation to ask Jrm to solicit a message from YHWH, is distinguished from the *r*-text(s) in 21:8-14 by a double change in addressee.[120] In 21:1-7, the immediate audience is the royal delegates (21:1-2), who are told to relay YHWH's words to the king as the ultimate addressee (21:3). In 21:8-10, however, the deity's attention pivots from the king to the citizens of Jerusalem more broadly, as evinced by the emphatic initial placement of ואל העם הזה ("and to this people," 21:8a); moreover, this message for the people is given not to Zedekiah's envoys but to Jrm himself, as indicated by a switch from the second-person masculine plural verb תאמרן in 21:3 ("you all shall say") to the singular form תאמר in 21:8 ("you shall say").[121] Unlike the statement to the royal delegation in 21:1-3, the demotic revelation of 21:8-10 receives no notice of delivery, but instead initiates a chain of generically and thematically diverse *r*-texts that continues without interruption until Jer 26.[122]

---

[118] On the inherent anachronism of overly psychological or (auto)biographical readings of the confessions, and of Jer more generally, see Mary Chilton Callaway, "Peering Inside Jeremiah: How Early Modern English Culture Still Influences Our Reading of the Prophet," in *Jeremiah (Dis)Placed: New Directions in Writing/Reading Jeremiah*, ed. A. R. Pete Diamond and Louis Stulman, LHBOTS 529 (London: T&T Clark International, 2011), 279-289; idem, "Seduced by Method: History and Jeremiah 20," in Holt and Sharp, *Jeremiah Invented*, 16-33.

[119] It is important to remember that there is no evidence for a relationship between the fifth confession and the Pashhur narrative apart from the redactional, and thus potentially artificial, arrangement of these texts in Jer; see Callaway, "Seduced by Method," 32, and the discussion at nn. 65-66 in 1.3.3.

[120] On the "divinatory chronicle" as a genre, see David L. Petersen, "Rethinking the Nature of Prophetic Literature," in in *Prophecy and Prophets: The Diversity of Contemporary Issues in Scholarship*, ed. Yehoshua Gitay, SemeiaSt (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 23-40, here 25-26; Petersen cites Jer 38:14-28 as an example of the genre, but many of its defining features are also present, albeit less prominent, in Jer 21. On the connection between this genre and *p*-texts, see 3.4.1.

As a result of its unusual position in the midst of the two complexes, 21:1-7 exhibits numerous interrelationships with a range of passages in Jer—*r*-texts as well as *p*-texts, both proximate and distant. Within the *p*-complex, 21:1-7 relates most directly to the book's other accounts of Zedekiah soliciting divination from Jrm, either personally (38:14-28) or by proxy (37:3-10). In particular, the similar form and content of 21:1-7 and 37:3-10 have led some commentators to posit relations of genetic or mimetic dependence between these two pericopes: supposing, in other words, that one was written after the model of the other, or that both refer independently to one and the same historical event.[123] But in view of certain intractable discrepancies, such as the inconsistent identities of the royal envoys, it is more probable and profitable to regard these texts as distinct narratives about altogether different situations.[124] In place of any presumed continuities in composition or representation, the narratives' overarching correlation may be attributed to their reciprocal determination as elements of the *p*-complex. In this process, the texts relate as well to less analogous *p*-texts detailing Jrm's ambivalent interactions with Zedekiah (e.g., Jer 27, 34), and even to *p*-texts about other royal figures, such as Jehoiakim, whose attitude toward Jrm is far more antagonistic (cf. Jer 26:20-24; 36). Whatever story may be told of the prophet's involvement with Judah's ill-fated final king(s), it emerges only and entirely from these discrete, diffuse vignettes like a regression line threading its way through a scatterplot.

---

[121] See Holladay, *Jeremiah* 1, 569; cf. H. Van Dyke Parunak, "Some Discourse Functions of Prophetic Quotation Formulas in Jeremiah," in *Biblical Hebrew and Discourse Linguistics*, ed. Robert D. Bergen (Dallas, TX: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1994), 489-519, here 496. John Brian Job (*Jeremiah's Kings: A Study of the Monarchy in Jeremiah*, SOTSMS [Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006], 22) likewise sees a break before 21:8-10 and identifies a tendency toward "Demotisierung" in these verses (for this concept, see n. 122 below).

[122] These *r*-texts include oracles to various kings in 22:11-23:8, oracles about other prophets in 23:9-40, the vision of the figs in 24:1-10, the sermon of 25:1-14, and the vision or symbolic action of the cup in 25:15-38. These last two passages come closest to *p*-texts but both fall short for various reasons. In 25:1-14, the only clear reference to proclamation before an audience comes in a relative clause that concludes the sermon's incipit (25:1-2). Beyond the inherent limitations of such paratexts for creating *p*-texts (see 4.2.1 above), the particular audience mentioned here, "all the people of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem (25:2), is so broad as to require some explanation of *where and how* Jrm could have communicated to them all: for instance, are we to imagine the whole populace gathered in Jerusalem on a fast day (as in 36:6-10), or is this merely a cumulative summary of different audiences across Jrm's career? As for 25:15-38, see 4.4.1 below.

[123] For examples of these approaches, see Holladay, *Jeremiah* 1, 569.

[124] Holladay (*Jeremiah 1*, 570) notes that while the priest "Zephaniah ben Maaseiah" appears in both passages, the other emissary is variously identified as "Pashhur ben Malchiah" (21:1; *not* Pashhur ben Immer, as in 20:1) or

As for the complete determination that plays out between complexes, 21:1-7 interacts most directly with the *r*-texts that immediately follow it: namely, the royal oracles in 21:11-23:8. The juxtaposition of the prose narrative and the poetic oracles implicitly draws the latter into the proclamatory sphere, allowing the reader to imagine similar circumstances in which Jrm might have transmitted those oracles to their respective recipients. (This effect is further facilitated by other couplings between 22:18-23 and the aforementioned *p*-texts about Jehoiakim, the only king besides Zedekiah to appear in such texts in Jer.[125]) At the same time, the brutal bluntness of the prophecy in 21:3-7, which starkly and specifically describes the coming incursion of the Babylonian army into Jerusalem, serves to clarify and concretize the comparatively abstract and figurative language of the oracles that follow.[126] These poetic oracles thus appear as a series of

---

"Jehucal ben Shelemiah" (37:3). Other differences include the focus on Egypt in Jer 37, which is completely absent from Jer 21. On the relationship between these narratives, see also Job, *Jeremiah's Kings*, 19-21.

[125] On the *p*-texts involving Jehoiakim and Zedekiah, see Job, *Jeremiah's Kings*, 68-74 and 100-119, respectively. Interestingly, as noted by Carroll (*Jeremiah*, 514), Jrm "never confronts [Jehoiakim] nor addresses him directly" (cf. Jer 26, 36), in sharp contrast to Jrm's extensive interactions with Zedekiah; Job (*Jeremiah's Kings*, 68) suggests that "verse passages addressed to Jehoiakim may well represent the *ipsissima verba* of the prophet," but even if so, the total absence of any account of the delivery or receipt of the messages is striking.

[126] In this section, similarly specific historical references are found only in 22:24-27, at the beginning of an oracle about Jehoiachin ("Coniah") that nonetheless reads as an *r*-text with no description of delivery.

divine announcements to Jrm about Judah's last kings, enacted within the book by depictions of Jrm delivering such messages to one (or, less directly, two) of those very rulers.

The foregoing examples have highlighted an array of couplings between Jer's two complexes, but they also demonstrate the practical limitations of such a survey. To the extent that a structure establishes virtual connections among a multitude of different elements at multiple levels of granularity, these connections begin to exhibit an almost fractal-like distribution: they continually recur at every level of structural organization, always differing in accordance with the disparate domains or dimensions that they occupy within that organization. In the case of Jer, as a result of the book's tremendous size and internal complexity, this problem is even more pronounced than it is in many literary structures, or at least in those of comparable antiquity. Any given text in Jer is inevitably connected to many more, both within its own complex (in relations of reciprocal determination) and in the other (through couplings of complete determination). Among the texts already discussed, for instance, the *p*-text of Jer 26 is clearly coupled to Jer 7, in the *r*-complex, but its meaning is also shaped by its intraserial connection to Jer 36, another *p*-text: by virtue of their cooccurrence in the *p*-complex, these two narratives can be read as contrasting portraits of Judean kings (namely, Hezekiah and Jehoiakim) responding to prophets who criticized them (respectively, Micah and Jrm).[127] Elsewhere, the *p*-text of Jer 32:1-15 is coupled not only with the restorative *r*-texts of the *Trostbüchlein* in a relation of announcement and fulfillment, but also with the symbolic destruction of the linen loincloth recounted in Jer 13, a formally similar but thematically opposed *r*-text whose central omen of judgment is implicitly reversed by the *Ackerkauf*.[128] To name just one further example that goes beyond those treated above, a similarly dense network of intra- and interserial relationships binds together an assortment of *r*- and *p*-texts relating to Jrm's putative role as a "prophet to the nations" (1:5): encompassing, on the one hand, *r*-texts such as Jer 1, 24-25, and the OAN (minus 51:59-64) and, on the other, *p*-texts such as Jer 27, 29, 35, 42-44, and 51:59-64.[129]

---

[127] See Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 513-514 on the "parallel and paradigmatic" (514) relationship between Jer 26 and 36. Cf. Wilson, "Poetry and Prose," 422-423 for a complementary example of reciprocal determination involving Jer 7:1-8:3 and the *r*-texts that precede it: the themes of the poetic oracles are "amplified, modified, or reversed" (422) by the prose sermon, but in its single-minded insistence on Deuteronomistic orthodoxy, the sermon also draws attention to the "dialogic style" (ibid.) and other open-ended aspects of the oracles. See also Wilson, "Poetry and Prose," 423-424 on a similar relationship among the *r*-texts of the *Trostbüchlein*, namely the poetic oracles of Jer 30-31 and the prose dialogue of 32:16-44.

Rather than straining the logical and logistical limits of the present study with more examinations of individual couplings, I should turn to the broader question of how such relations together yield a structure that undergoes *actualization*, or the progressive unfolding of the actual from the virtual . Only then can we begin to understand the emergence of Jrm from Jer: both entities are controlled alike by the paradoxical circulation of a "divine datum" or "Word = *x*," inherited from the very structure of epistemic intermediation that begat them.

### *4.3.3. Prophetic Quotation Formulas and Other Markers of the Divine Datum in Jer*

As I showed in my initial exposition of Deleuze's structuralism (Chapter 2), all structures derive their differential nature from an elusively enigmatic "object = *x*." The relations between series and among their respective elements arise alike from the ever-present displacement of those components relative to this "zero element" that is essentially and no less perpetually displaced with respect to itself. Among the many effects of such an object is the establishment of asymmetrical relations of "subordination" between the series of a structure, such that one is set up as "subordinating" or "signifying" for the other, which in turn becomes "subordinated" or "signified." Serial subordination reflects two distinct aspects of the paradoxical object: namely, its simultaneous abundance and absence. In the subordinating series, the object circulates redundantly and excessively as a "supernumerary pawn" or "occupant without a place," whereas it appears in the subordinated series in the privative guise of an "empty square" or "place without an occupant."[130] In conjunction with the relations of "reciprocal" and "complete" determination that virtually define the components of a structure and its constitutive series, subordination entails a third movement of "progressive determination," or actualization, which accounts for the structure's present, perceptible, and always provisional products in a given domain. As Deleuze puts it, the subordinated series furnishes certain "dimensions of actualization" (HRS 189) for the series that subordinates it. In other words, a subordinating series sees its stock of virtual potentialities (its multiple and even mutually exclusive identities, functions, meanings, etc.) progressively narrowed down by conditions that depend on the elements and relations of the series that it subordinates (see 2.4).

---

[128] Schmid (*Buchgestalten*, 93) notes several lexical and structural parallels between the texts, such as the phrase "[and] buy for yourself" in 13:1 (וקנית לך) and 32:7 (קנה לך). From a broader perspective, Schmid (219) likens the overall sequence of Jer 30-31, 32 to that of the judgment oracles (Jer 4-6, 8-10) and sign acts (Jer 13, 16, 19) in the first half of the book, but these "strukturell ähnlich" relationships must be attributed to different dimensions of the *virtual* literary structure that is Jer: reciprocal determination within the *r*-complex for Jer 4-19, complete determination across the two complexes for Jer 30-32. On Jer 13, see also 4.4.1 below.

[129] On the motif of Jrm as a "prophet to the nations," see Sharp, *Ideology*, 81-101; cf. idem, "The Call of Jeremiah and Diaspora Politics," *JBL* 119 (2000): 421-438. On Jer 51:59-64, see also 4.4.2 below.

I have shown already that, in the structure of prophecy or epistemic intermediation, the zero role is filled by a "divine datum"—or, playing on Deleuze's own quasi-mathematical terminology, a "Word = *x*"—which marks the authority of revealed knowledge, even as it knows and reveals nothing itself (see 3.3.2). I have likewise argued that the *r*-series of this structure must be reckoned as subordinating, since the divine datum is strictly superfluous amidst the manifestly supernatural and transpersonal events of revelation. The subordinated status of the *p*-

---

[130] For these terms and concepts, see 2.4.

series, on the other hand, follows from the relative dearth of divinity in earthly encounters of proclamation, when the prophet is left to speak for a deity who remains necessarily out of reach. In practical terms, subordination entails that the events and elements of the *p*-series help to determine the meaning and overall character of those in the *r*-series. In supplying not only feedback but a concrete set of sociohistorical circumstances for the dissemination of divine knowledge, proclamations select for certain aspects of the revelatory experience at the expense of many others no less implicated in that virtual totality. For example, given a prophecy of imminent military victory, only the results of its proclamation, including the eventual outcome of the relevant battle or campaign, can determine whether the prophecy constitutes a prescient appraisal of supernatural or strategic advantage, an unfortunate failure of foresight or imagination, or a base(less) act of sycophancy or sabotage.

The question now is whether these same determinations hold true of Jer, in which the social realities of ancient Near Eastern epistemic intermediation have been supplanted by literary arrangements that purport, however disparately and incompletely, to represent them. To be clear, the answer is “yes,” but as always, the differences between these structures are more important than their similarities. Whereas the divine datum appears in multiple guises throughout the structure of intermediation, ranging from verbal formulas to physical acts, the literary nature of Jer necessarily curtails the datum’s variability—all its occurrences must be textual in a structure constructed principally of texts. Because of their linguistic origins, the verbal manifestations of the datum are more amenable to this textualization than the datum’s non-verbal forms, which language may only ever describe or depict from a certain unbridgeable distance. A phrase like כה אמר יהוה (“Thus says YHWH”) may be transferred from speech to writing without fundamentally changing its nature: even as tone, body language, and other pragmatic cues are lost or transformed in the exchange of dynamic audible phonemes for static visual symbols, both the spoken and the written nonetheless traffic in the same general medium of human language. In contrast, to read that Jrm "stood in the court of the temple of YHWH" (19:14) is not at all akin to witnessing the prophet hold forth in that long-lost sacred space; the operative distinction in this case is not between spoken and written language, but between language itself and all that which lies outside its admittedly broad purview. Indeed, the characteristically reticent style of most biblical literature only broadens the gulf between any given event, whether real or imagined, and the few words that must suffice to represent it in the text.[131]

Yet, as Auerbach no less than Deleuze would contend, mimetic distance must not be conceived as mere privation.[132] In several cases, Jer's representations of Jrm's prophetic activity not only express but even emphasize some of the paradoxes that define the Word = *x* (on which, see 3.3.2). For example, the divine datum is often encountered through "acts of power," such as the symbolic yoke-wearing and subsequent confrontation with Hananiah recounted in Jer 27-28.[133] In the literary depiction of this particular event, the detail that is arguably the most central in validating Jrm's prophetic status—the fulfillment of his prediction of Hananiah's imminent demise (28:15-16)—is in fact relegated to the textual periphery, as a brief narratorial note at the very end of the pericope (28:17). A different tension may be felt in the tribunal scene of Jer 26. Here, the substance of Jrm's defense—"YHWH has sent me…" (26:12-15)—refers to fundamentally private interactions with the deity that are fully manifest only in the events of the

---

[131] On "reticence" as a hallmark of biblical style, particularly in the presentation of characters (e.g., Jrm), see Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, rev. ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 143-162.

[132] On Auerbach, see the Introduction and n. 3 in 1.1; for a Deleuzian reconceptualization of mimesis, see the next chapter (5.4).

[133] On such acts, see nn. 14, 64 in Chapter 3.

*r*-complex (esp. Jer 1). At the same time, insofar as these details are firmly embedded within and stabilized by their respective narrative units, they can only do so much to bear out the datum's constitutive paradoxes. Whereas the ever-mobile Word = *x* normally exhibits a certain emptiness, being itself devoid of any content beyond a general claim to authoritative knowledge, in Jer this object is often overwhelmed and overdetermined by the scriptural tradition that subsumes it. Commenting on Jer 26, Carolyn Sharp notes that "[t]here is never a moment of suspense" in this text "as to whether Jeremiah is indeed a true prophet of [YHWH]," an observation that can be extended to a host of similar narratives across the book (e.g., Jer 28).[134] Truly, there is no *suspense* in these stories because the divine datum is no longer *suspended* between the *r*-series and *p*-series and their respective terms, as it would have been in the contentious unfolding of the historical Jrm's actual career. Instead, the literary fixation of the tradition begets a literal fixity in the datum, which comes to settle in both *r*-texts and *p*-texts on the side of YHWH and Jrm, the "uncontested hero" of the book that bears his name.[135]

The strictly verbal or linguistic forms of the divine datum, on the other hand, maintain a fuller measure of their differential character even in the fixed and final text of Jer. Indeed, the organization and operation of these statements in Jer endows them with a new systematic significance, which they do not possess in epistemic intermediation. In the latter structure, the datum's verbal forms arise sporadically, adventitiously, and on a par with all the others; in Jer, however, these forms recur constantly across both complexes, so as to fill the role of a paradoxical object almost entirely alone and in their own right. While Jer contains a striking number of "recurring phrases" ("terror all around"; "sword, famine, pestilence"; etc.), each of which bears witness to some aspect(s) of the circulation of the Word = *x* in this structure, the peculiar presence of that object is most palpable in the book's many *prophetic quotation formulas*.[136] These phrases, which introduce and otherwise embellish divine speech throughout the biblical prophetic literature, can be grouped into five general categories:

---

[134] Thus Sharp, *Ideology*, 55.

[135] Sharp, *Ideology*, 111.

1. The "messenger formula" (*Botenformel*), כה אמר יהוה ("Thus says YHWH…");
2. the "word-event formula" (*Wortereignisformel*), which pairs דבר יהוה ("the word of YHWH") with the verb היה ("to be");
3. the "utterance formula" נאם יהוה ("utterance of YHWH");
4. the command to "Hear the word of YHWH!" (שמע דבר יהוה and variations);
5. and the claim that "YHWH said to me…" (ויאמר יהוה אלי).[137]

As they are used in Jer, the quotation formulas exhibit at least two functions, both of which are differential in nature. First, they distinguish separate (or at least separable) components of prophetic communication: for example, the revealed content of an oracle as opposed to its editorial framework, or the break between one (section of an) oracle and another.[138] In addition, the formulas fill emphatic and quasi-adverbial roles in drawing attention to important statements within an oracle, or to the divine origins of the material as a whole, "as though it were printed in italics or boldface type."[139] In conjunction with the formulas' (macro)syntactic differentiation of discursive units, their suasive effects as "sentence-level adverbs" can be understood as a second but no less significant dimension of differentiation in the realm of semantics or pragmatics.[140] The effective force of these latter differences, whereby certain claims are elevated over others in the hermeneutical landscape of the text, can be captured with an incomplete imperative: "Know this—!"

---

[136] For the recurring phrases in Jer, see Parke-Taylor, *Formation*, 243-292; on the quotation formulas, see Parunak, "Discourse Functions," 489 and *passim*.

[137] More so than the other formulas, the word-event formula encompasses multiple variations of this basic pairing; for the forms that appear in Jer, see Lawlor, "Word Event," 232-233. Parunak ("Discourse Functions," 499-501, 503-505) treats three of these variants as separate quotation formulas, for a total of seven classes in his schema.

[138] See Parunak, "Discourse Functions," 513-514; cf. Smith, *Laments*, 34-38 on the structuring role of such formulas in Jer 11-21 specifically. For similar differential-structural operations of quotation formulas in a different prophetic book, see Tyler D. Mayfield, "A Re-Examination of Ezekiel's Prophetic Word Formulas," *HS* 57 (2016): 139-155. Parunak, for his part, seeks to domesticate structural differences under the hierarchy of a "disjunctive cline" (ibid.). Such an arrangement may well appear in the *actual text* of Jer in the MT (or LXX, which Parunak omits), but it cannot adequately account for the more basic differences that *virtually* define Jer as a structure. For a "rhizomatic" critique of hierarchal organization, see the next chapter. As for the "separability" of written prophecy, see 4.3.1 above.

As suggested by the dangling em-dash, the formulas themselves are essentially devoid of concrete epistemic content, despite their distinct power to amplify and affirm claims to prophetic knowledge (see 3.3.2). In Jer, an apt illustration of this inherent emptiness can be seen in the usage of quotation formulas in Jrm's confrontation with Hananiah (Jer 28). While the LXX denounces the latter intermediary *a priori* as a "pseudoprophet" (ψευδοπροφήτης; LXX 35:1 = MT 28:1), his prophetic credentials cannot be dismissed quite so quickly in MT. At multiple levels, the Masoretic Hananiah is terminologically on a par with Jrm. Not only is this Hananiah repeatedly labelled a "prophet" (נביא; 28:1, 5, 10, etc.), but he wields the quotation formulas, specifically the messenger formula (28:2, 11) and the utterance formula (28:4), just as fluently and forcefully in the service of (what will turn out to be) a false oracle as Jrm does for (ditto) a true one.[141] Although Hananiah's illegitimacy is ultimately established in both versions by his (un)timely death, as predicted by Jrm (28:15-17) and emphasized in MT, the formulas themselves remain utterly *indifferent* to that actuality, as befits their structural (virtual) role.[142] More generally, the Word = *x* shows its indifference through the multiple, multivalent messages that it attends across Jer. Although the quotation formulas purport to present speech from a single supernatural source, namely YHWH, there is little evidence of such empyrean unity in the many words that these formulas actually convey. Rather, those words bear the unmistakably terrestrial imprints of socially, historically, ideologically diverse—in a word, human—voices vying in vain for primacy. On questions both specific and general, ranging from the status of the Babylonian *golah* to the timeline of events surrounding the fall of Judah, Jer offers no stable viewpoint but rather a pervasive "uncertainty, deeply embedded in the book."[143] Begotten most proximately by the collective trauma of cultural upheaval in the early Jewish communities by and for whom Jer was written, this uncertainty more profoundly aligns with the epistemological openness of the divine datum that moves at the very heart of the process of prophecy, even in its literary representations.

---

[139] Parunak, "Discourse Functions," 511; cf. 515.

[140] Parunak, "Discourse Functions," 506; cf. 515.

[141] See Roy Wells, "Dislocations in Time and Ideology in the Reconception of Jeremiah's Words: The Encounter with Hananiah in the Septuagint *Vorlage* and the Masoretic Text," in Goldingay, *Uprooting and Planting*, 322-350, here 337-338, who judges some of these features to be already present in the LXX *Vorlage*.

Furthermore, the prophetic quotation formulas fill the role of paradoxical object in Jer by serving as a "principle of the emission of singularities" for their structure.[144] Alongside the complete determination of "announcements" and "fulfillments" described in the previous section (4.3.2 above), the formulas generate specifically literary incarnations of the three singular points that Jer inherits from epistemic intermediation: namely, the functional roles of source, recipient, and object. As defined in the previous chapter (see 3.3.2), each of these roles corresponds to certain *actions* (speaking or hearing, knowing or making-known, etc.) implicated in the human transmission of divine speech. Although such actions find expression in a range of linguistic constructions throughout Jer, they are reduced to their barest differential essentials in the mimetically minimalistic context of the quotation formulas, where each role appears as little more than a pronoun or proper name, perhaps adorned with a descriptive epithet, bound to the others by lexemes of trans- and interpersonal communication: דבר (word/speak), אמר (say), נאם ("utterance"), שמע (hear), etc.[145] If the *r*- and *p*-texts that bear the quotation formulas embody the relative displacements of participants in the Jeremianic discourse, chiefly through the representation of disclosure and feedback, then the formulas themselves express the *absolute* displacement of these participants in terms of their distance from the divine datum: the deity (YHWH) as the datum's ultimate source, the audience (Israel/Judah, or some subset thereof) as its ultimate recipient, and the prophet (Jrm) as that which bridges the gap between these others.[146]

---

[142] Specifically, MT embellishes the fulfillment of Jrm's prediction by adding "in that (very) year" (בשנה ההיא) in 28:17.

[143] Thus O'Connor, *Pain and Promise*, 131.

[144] Cf. 2.5 and 3.2.2 in the previous chapters.

In this way, the formulas initiate inchoate processes of *characterization*, driven by fundamental forces of structural differentiation that precede and produce the higher orders of narratological organization more commonly considered in the construction of literary characters (plot, dialogue, point of view, etc.).[147] The deity YHWH, who never fills the role of recipient, is presented here primarily as one who says/speaks/utters something to or through the intermediary, Jrm, about the object, Israel: in every formula, YHWH functions grammatically as the principal agent of revelation, either as the subject of the verb אמר ("to say"), or as a subjective genitive in construct with דבר ("word") or נאם ("utterance"). On the other hand, Israel *qua* audience, which never functions as source, is portrayed by the formulas as one who receives the word of YHWH from the intermediary, Jrm. This portrayal is consistently implied by Israel's status as the intended addressee of the utterance and messenger formulas, but it becomes more overt in the *vocatives* that modify the imperative "hear!" (שמע[ו/נה]) in every occurrence of "Hear the word of YHWH," thereby calling Israel to account as a whole (e.g., 2:4, 10:1, 17:20) or in part (e.g., 7:2, 9:19, 21:11).[148] At the same time, Israel's dual role as recipient in the *p*-complex and object in the *r*-complex is concisely captured in the appellation "God of Israel" (אלהי ישראל) that frequently accompanies the messenger formula (7:3, 9:14, 19:15, etc.), recalling to and for whom YHWH would care to say such things.[149]

---

[145] The only lexeme listed here that presents any difficulty for translation is נאם, a word of "unclear" etymology with "no Hebrew cognates other than an apparently derivative verb in Jer 23:31"; see Parunak, "Discourse Functions," 508. In general, the Semitic system of triconsonantal roots lends empirical linguistic credence to Deleuze's thesis that actions (becomings) are prior to substantives (beings). On this thesis, see Sean Bowden, *The Priority of Events: Deleuze's* Logic of Sense (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011); on its affinities with the language of (Biblical) Hebrew, see 5.5 in the next chapter.

[146] Cf. HRS 185-186: "If the series that the object = *x* traverses necessarily present relative displacements in relation to each other, this is so because the *relative* places of terms in the structure depend first on the *absolute* place of each, at each moment, in relation to the object = *x* that is always circulating, always displaced in relation to itself" (emphasis original).

[147] For higher-order approaches to biblical characterization, see Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*, BLS (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1983), 23-42; Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading*, ISBL (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985), 321-

As for the intermediary Jrm, discussed more thoroughly in the next section (4.4 below), his portrayal in the formulas, like his relationship to the divine datum itself, varies in accordance with the bifurcation of his role across the two series of epistemic intermediation: the intermediary alone functions as both source (in the *p*-series) and recipient (in the *r*-series). In keeping with this divergent role, the formulas simultaneously represent Jrm as one to whom

---

341; Alter, *Narrative*, 143-162. For such an approach to character in Jer, see Mark Roncace, *Jeremiah, Zedekiah, and the Fall of Jerusalem*, LHBOTS 423 (New York: T&T Clark, 2005).

[148] Parunak ("Discourse Functions," 507) notes that the formula "Hear the word of YHWH" is "always associated with a designation of the addressee in the vocative" throughout Jer. In one case (31:10), the stated addressee is the "nations" (גוים) rather than Israel specifically, but this apparent aberration in fact allows the formulas to capture some part of Jrm's alleged status as a "prophet to the nations"; see n. 129 above.

[149] Janzen (*Studies*, 75-76) observes that this and other divine epithets (e.g., צבאות "of hosts") are less common in LXX than MT, in keeping with the latter's "expansionist" tendencies for human names.

YHWH speaks about others *and* one who speaks to others about YHWH. The former, objective function is arguably the most explicit, being succinctly and syntactically expressed by the prepositional phrases of "to" (אל) that position Jrm as the proximate recipient of YHWH's speech in several quotation formulas. As for the subjective role of source, it is indicated primarily, albeit less directly, by Jrm's status as the implied or intended speaker of (most of) the formulas and their associated oracles.[150] In fact, the one quotation formula that would seem to preclude Jrm as its speaker—namely, the third-person version of the word-event formula ("And the word of YHWH was *to Jeremiah*, saying…")—turns out in this case to be the exception that proves the rule. Although each complex employs the word-event formula in both the first and third persons, the third-person variants are more prevalent in the *p*-complex, where they read like the affirmations of a third party recounting the prophet's words and deeds from the external and interpersonal perspective of a witness to their proclamation or performance. The first-person variants of this same formula, which are relatively common in the *r*-complex but almost unattested in the *p*-complex, would thus come to represent the prophet's personal recognition or recollection of revelations received—no matter how factual or fictive those representations may actually be.[151]

---

[150] In the terminology of Parunak ("Discourse Functions," 493-499, 513), Jrm is the implied speaker of formulas found in the "body" or "dispatch" of a prophetic message, but not necessarily those of the "incipit" that introduces and contextualizes it. On the whole, Parunak holds a much higher view of the "historical" Jrm than I do (see 4.4 below), but his analysis applies *mutatis mutandis* to the *literary* Jrm strictly as he appears in Jer.

[151] Following the count of Lawlor ("Word Event," 232), third-person variants of this formula occur 13 times in the *r*-complex and 19 times in the *p*-complex, while first-person variants occur 10 times in the *r*-complex and just once in the *p*-complex (in 32:6; see the discussion at nn. 100-102 above). To be clear, I see no straightforward genetic or compositional significance in the grammatical person of the quotation formulas or the texts of Jer more broadly. The notion that first-person speech is a guide to the prophet's *ipsissima verba* is a well-worn, and therefore well-refuted, assumption of scholarship on Jer, attested as early as the commentary of Friedrich Giesebrecht (*Das Buch Jeremia*, HKAT [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1894], xiv-xv) and already jettisoned a few decades later (cf. May, "Biographer," 195-196).

As with the zero element in any structure, moreover, the textualized divine datum distributes itself *unevenly* throughout Jer. It exists excessively in the *r*-complex while displaying a marked deficiency in the *p*-complex, thereby marking "the convergence point of the divergent series as such" (HRS 184). Although these relations of "excess" and "deficiency" cannot be reduced to simplistic numerical comparisons, a cursory accounting of just a few forms of the Word = *x* in Jer reveals significant disparities between the two complexes. The following table shows the distribution of the three most common quotation formulas in the book: the messenger formula (MF), the utterance formula (UF), and the word-event formula (WEF).[152]

| | ***r*-complex**<br>(1:4-19:13; 20:7-18; 21:8-25:38; 30-31; 32:16-33:26; 46:1-51:58) | ***p*-complex**<br>(19:14-20:6; 26-29; 32:1-15; 34-45; 51:59-64) |
|---|---|---|
| Total # of verses | 952 | 378 |
| MF | 100 | 55 |
| UF | 151 | 24 |
| WEF | 23 | 20 |

**Figure 4.4. Prophetic Quotation Formulas in Jer (MT)**

The MF and especially the UF are most present in the *r*-complex: respectively, these phrases are roughly two and *six* times more frequent there than they are in the *p*-complex. Given that the *r*-complex itself is about two-and-a-half times larger than the *p*-complex by number of verses, a two-to-one ratio for the MF is hardly unexpected. In fact, the use of this formula remains remarkably consistent across the complexes, much like the WEF (see below).[153]

---

[152] Occurrences of the WEF are based on the survey of Lawlor, "Word Event," 232. The MF and UF were counted manually, with reference to the tallies given in Parunak, "Discourse Functions," 499, 505, 518.

[153] Interestingly, the MF reaches its highest concentration in the *p*-text(s) of Jer 29, where it occurs nine times (29:4, 8, 10, 16, 17, 21, 25, 31, 32). The formula's prevalence in this epistolary *p*-text is perhaps attributable to the mundane origins of the MF in such written communication; on the relationship between the speech of the prophets

The same cannot be said for the highly asymmetrical attestation of the UF, which reflects more than the mere size of the *r*-complex or the general abundance of divine discourse therein. Rather, by its very nature, the UF expresses the excessive aspects of the Word = *x* in direct proportion to this formula’s prevalence in prophetic texts. In contrast to the MF, which is syntactically obligated by the particle כה (“thus”) to fill an introductory role at or near the head of a message, the UF may stand either at the end of such a unit, as a concluding counterpart to the MF, or in the middle, where it separates poetic cola or prose clauses almost like a verbal punctuation mark (1:15; 2:9; 3:12, 14; 4:1; 13:14, 23:29, etc.).[154] Though Biblical Hebrew is not punctuated apart from the patently postbiblical cantillation marks of the Masoretes, it does possess other, simpler means of demarcating clauses: chiefly, the conjunctive *waw* and the verb forms built around it (*wayyiqtol* and *we-qatal*). Other genres, for their part, require no analogue to prophecy’s comma-like construct chain.[155] Just as the UF is syntactically superfluous,

---

and that of ancient “messengers” more generally, see Rolf Rendtorff, “Botenformel und Botenspruch,” *ZAW* 74 (1962): 165–177.

[154] On the use of the UF in Jer, see Rendtorff, “Zum Gebrauch der Formel *$n^{e}$’um jahwe* im Jeremiabuch,” *ZAW* 66 (1954): 27-37, who notes that the UF also occurs “in Verbindung mit anderen formelhaften Wendungen [e.g., הנה ימים באים (“Look, days are coming”), בעת ההיא (“At that time”), חי אני (“As I live”)] in der Einleitung des Jahwewortes” (28). For a reexamination and extension of Rendtorff’s analysis to other prophetic books, see Friedrich Baumgärtel, “Die Formel *$n^{e}$’um jahwe*,” *ZAW* 73 (1961): 277–290. Cf. Walter Theophilus Woldemar Cloete, *Versification and Syntax in Jeremiah 2-25: Syntactical Constraints in Hebrew Colometry*, SBLDS 117 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 100-101, who regards the UF as “extrinsic” to the poetic lines that comprise most of Jer’s *r*-texts.

[155] The closest parallel is the enigmatic and essentially untranslatable word *selah* (סלה), found throughout the Psalter and in Hab 3, which divides sections or strophes, and occasionally individual verses (Ps 55:20, 57:4; Hab 3:3, 9), not unlike the UF. However, with just 74 total occurrences, *selah* is significantly less pervasive in the psalms as a whole than the UF is in the *r*-complex alone. It is also interesting that, of the four medial occurrences of *selah*, two are found in Habakkuk, where the overarching genre of the prophetic book may have influenced the usage, drawing it closer to the UF. On the distribution and function(s) of *selah*, see Charles A. Briggs, “An Inductive Study of Selah,” *JBL* 18 (1899): 132-143; Norman H. Snaith, “Selah,” *VT* 2 (1952): 43-56; Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, WBC 19 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 76-77. The most recent and comprehensive study is Ashley E. Lyon, *Reassessing Selah* (Athens, GA: College & Clayton Press, 2021), who includes Qumran and other extrabiblical literature and emphasizes the term’s thematic affinities (e.g., with salvation and divine kingship) over its traditional musical, structural, and liturgical interpretations.

haunting the edges and interstices of *r*-texts like a supernumerary pawn, so too is it semantically redundant. An "utterance of YHWH" can be recognized as such without literally bearing that label, on the basis of diction, deixis, or the proximate presence of a different quotation formula or similarly stereotypical phrase.[156] That the UF nonetheless occurs alongside these other formulas, and with such frequency, underscores the essentially excessive posture of the divine datum in the *r*-complex.

If the UF best expresses a sense of abundance in the Word = *x*, this object's deficient aspects become most apparent through the use of the WEF, which only ever occurs at the beginnings of oracles and other textual units.[157] Unlike the other two formulas, the WEF is distributed almost evenly between the two complexes, albeit in no fewer than eleven different formulations: six of these variations occur a total of 23 times in the *r*-complex, while the *p*-complex employs seven forms (four uniquely) a total of 20 times.[158] In this case, however, superficial balance belies a deeper asymmetry. In the *r*-complex, every occurrence of the WEF introduces its own divine message, however brief (e.g., 18:1-2), but this formula stands at the head of a wider range of material in the *p*-complex. In particular, two *p*-texts deploy the WEF at their outset, only to see it recur several verses later in a *Wiederaufnahme* that marks off a lengthy contextual heading from the prophetic message itself (cf. 32:1, 6; 34:8, 12). Deficiency consists here in the *distance* that these resumptive repetitions produce between the message and the *first* appearance of the WEF, which no longer introduces a “word event” so much as the putative historical background of such an event.

---

[156] For examples of such phrases, see n. 154 above.

[157] Parunak, "Discourse Functions," 499. Of all the quotation formulas, the WEF is the most "paratextual"; for this concept, see n. 9 above. Christoph Levin argues that the "word of YHWH" motif, and the WEF in particular, may have unified an early version of the book of Jer; see Levin, "Das Wort Jahwes an Jeremia: Zur ältesten Redaktion der jeremianischen Sammlung," *ZTK* 101 (2004): 257-280; idem, "The 'Word of Yahweh': A Theological Concept in the Book of Jeremiah," trans. Margaret Kohl, in "Literary Prophecy and Oracle Collection: A Comparison between Judah and Greece in Persian Times," in *Prophets, Prophecy, and Prophetic Texts in Second Temple Judaism*, ed. Michael H. Floyd and Robert D. Haak, LHBOTS 427 (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 42-62.

[158] Cf. Lawlor, "Word Event," 232.

This tendency toward lack reaches its zenith in the historiographical narratives near the end of the book that recount the aftermath of Judah’s defeat. Consider Jer 40, where the WEF inexplicably opens a narrative that contains no discernible divine speech (40:1).[159] Indeed, just a few verses into this passage, Jrm himself fades from view as the narrator’s attention pivots from the fall of Jerusalem to the assassination of Gedaliah (40:7-41:18), thereby depriving the text of *prophetic* speech altogether. The prophet reenters the narrative in Jer 42, a lengthy divinatory chronicle that sees the WEF again spotlight deficiency in the Word = $x$. Because the narrative at this point is more focused on the recalcitrant response of the audience to YHWH’s message (42:1-6, 19-22; 43:1-7) than on the message itself (42:8-18), much less its initial disclosure to the prophet, the description of that revelatory event is reduced to the WEF alone. The result is less a representation of revelation *with* the WEF than the replacement of revelation *by* the WEF: “At the end of ten days, the word of YHWH was to Jrm” (42:7). In each of these cases, the WEF stands like an empty pedestal for the divine word, awaiting a message that arrives only belatedly, if it appears at all.

Even in *p*-texts where the revealed words of the deity are both present and proximate, reminders of an underlying absence persist. An especially clear example is found in Jer 26, which seems to quote the sermon communicated to the prophet in Jer 7 (see 4.3.2 above). In adapting the sermon for its new narrative context, this *p*-text not only abridges divine speech, from over a dozen verses (7:2-15) down to a mere five (26:2-6), but also alters it, including the addition of a command to "not trim (גרע) a word" (26:2) from what YHWH has said. The ironic insistence on such complete fidelity in a manifestly incomplete text reveals "that the sermon is not the point of interest here," but only "what is important to [the narrator] in the new circumstances of his community" as they receive the prophetic message.[160] In other words, the total semiotic possibilities of the sermon have been narrowed down and stabilized for a particular purpose by the social forces surrounding its subsequent promulgation. What overflows in the transpersonal *r*-text has been dammed up and diverted along specific channels by the interpersonal constraints of the corresponding *p*-text.

---

[159] On the oddity of this heading and the proposed solutions it has received, see Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 698; Lundbom, *Jeremiah 37-52: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 21C (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 99-100.

Of course, this process of selective narrowing is nothing other than the movement of actualization or "progressive determination," which assumes both a "subordinating" series and another that is "subordinated" to it: in being subordinated, the terms of the latter series come to serve as dimensions of the actualization of terms in the former series (see 2.4). To this end, the foregoing discussion of excesses and deficiencies of the Word = *x* has shown that the *r*-complex and *p*-complex ought to be reckoned respectively as subordinating and subordinated in Jer, like the *r*-series and *p*-series in the structure of epistemic intermediation. How does this subordination help to elucidate the specific dynamics of Jer's actualization? Since Jer is a fundamentally literary structure, the analogy with intermediation—a social structure that merely lays claim to certain literary products, including Jer itself, among its actual outcomes—can only bring us so far toward an answer to this question. A more promising route leads back to the Jeremianic texts, and to the nature of textuality itself, in order to discern in them the "internal temporality" or "rhythm" whereby actualization proceeds in this particular domain.[161]

---

[160] Thus O'Connor, "Do Not Trim," 620.

In the structure of epistemic intermediation, for its part, actualization moves at what might be called the *speed of life.* If the products of prophetic or divinatory actualization are to be understood as concrete, contextually determinate meanings of divine revelations for specific human audiences, then the progressive unfolding of such meaning(s) advances at precisely the speed of all the bodies, human and otherwise, involved in that process. Even the most spontaneous and epiphanic revelation sees its speed constrained by synapses and other neural infrastructure, which conveys it to and through the brain of the recipient. Likewise, even the most urgent proclamation can move no faster than the mouth of the prophet who speaks it—or, perhaps, the feet of the donkey transporting that mouth, as the biblical story of Balaam (Num 22:22-35) so memorably demonstrates.[162] Introducing the technology of writing to these proceedings does not fundamentally alter their internal rhythm, on the crucial condition that writing remains merely *instrumental* to the passage of prophecy from one party to another.[163] In the ancient Near East, the clearest examples of this instrumental textuality are found in the Mari letters and the Assyrian *uʾiltu* tablets (see 3.4.1): although these texts were inadvertently preserved unto modernity, their original function was simply to capture a prophetic message for as long as was necessary for its intended audience to receive and respond to it. In the Hebrew Bible, echoes of instrumental textuality may be glimpsed in texts like Jer 29, where Jrm sends a letter to impart divine guidance at a distance, and Jer 36, in which a scroll, aided by a whole series of human hands, brings Jrm's words into spaces where the prophet himself is forbidden to tread.[164]

---

[161] On the rhythms of actualization, see HRS 179-180 and the discussion at nn. 37-38 in 2.3.

[162] On this part of the Balaam story, see n. 109 in the previous chapter (3.4.1).

[163] The instrumental use of writing as an aid to prophetic transmission falls under Armin Lange's concept of "written," as opposed to "literary," prophecy; see Lange, "Literary Prophecy and Oracle Collection: A Comparison between Judah and Greece in Persian Times," in Floyd and Haak, *Second Temple Judaism*, 248-275, here 250; cf. n. 113 in the previous chapter (3.4.1).

Yet both these Jeremianic texts also remind us, in their own ways, that textuality does effect significant changes in the dynamics of actualization once prophetic writing outgrows this instrumental role. Whether or not Jer 29 was initially composed for the first Judean deportees to Babylonia, the preservation of this text in Jer, and ultimately in Jewish and Christian scripture, extends its audience to encompass countless other communities, the vast majority of which can be identified with the original addressees only in the most figurative or allegorical sense. The ascendant longevity of prophetic texts is more directly acknowledged in Jer 36. After Jehoiakim incinerates the first copy of Jrm's scroll, God directs the prophet and Baruch to write another, "to which many similar words were still added" (ועוד נוסף עליהם דברים רבים כהמה; 36:32). As much as some reconstructions of the "historical" Jrm and Baruch may hasten to supply their names as the implied subjects of this (re)writing, there are other ways to interpret the passive voice (נוסף) here: in particular, it can be understood as the collective signature of all the anonymous hands that helped to shape Jer as we have it, for the sake of readers and hearers well beyond the obstinate Jehoiakim and his courtiers.[165] This shift from the immediate concerns of a prophet's contemporaries to the broader interests of subsequent generations can also be seen, albeit on a smaller scale and to a lesser extent, in the Assyrian *ṭuppu* tablets, which anthologized prophetic oracles for future consultation and (re)interpretation (see 3.4.1).

---

[164] On Jer 29 and 36, see 4.4.2 below.

[165] Cf. Mark Leuchter, "The Pen of Scribes: Writing, Textuality, and the Book of Jeremiah," in *The Book of Jeremiah: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation*, ed. Jack R. Lundbom, Craig A. Evans, and Bradford A. Anderson, VTSup 178 (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 3-25, here 13: "The hermeneutical construct of Jeremiah committing 'all' his oracles to a single and lengthy scroll may itself be a reference to the scribes in exile who sought to do the same. Jeremiah becomes somewhat of a cipher for the Deuteronomistic scribes in exile, since they too were concerned with collecting and re-textualizing traditions associated with the prophet[.]" See also the invocation of Jer 36:32 as a witness to textual "supplementation" in Saul M. Olyan and Jacob L. Wright, "Introduction," in *Supplementation and the Study of the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Olyan and Wright, BJS 361 (Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 2018), xi-xviii, here xi.

As the purview of prophetic texts shifts, so too do the principles that guide their production. Already in letters and other instrumental compositions, written for the immediate communication of prophecies at a distance, transcription often introduces changes, both intentional and inadvertent, into the original message. Ancient Near Eastern prophets did not normally write their own letters, relying instead on scribes who acted also as editors; the fact that only some letters claim to record "the very words of [the prophet's] mouth" suggests that such accuracy was not always expected.[166] If a search for the prophet's *ipsissima verba* is inadvisable even in these ephemera, it is downright quixotic in properly "literary" prophetic texts that are consciously composed for posterity.[167] Those who crafted this literature enjoyed a greater, though by no means unlimited degree of freedom in their work, especially once the ostensible objects of their literary representations had perished. Bound as they inevitably were by established traditions and communal norms, these quasi-prophetic writers could reconfigure their texts for reasons that strayed far from anachronistic ideals of historical accuracy, ranging from the programmatic reorientation of large bodies of tradition to the exegetical elaboration of isolated cruxes.[168] While it is true that both types of prophetic text require a context of "diluted communication" to be produced in the first place, the nature of the dilution differs in each case.[169] For merely or mainly instrumental compositions, the primary motivation is geographical separation, which nonetheless presupposes a certain sociohistorical proximity among the correspondents thus separated. However, the communication of quasi-prophets with their audience(s) is more profoundly affected by an essentially open-ended sense of "chronological distance," fraught with all the untold differences that the future may bring.[170]

---

[166] See Karel van der Toorn, "From the Oral to the Written: The Case of Old Babylonian Prophecy," in Ben Zvi and Floyd, *Writings and Speech*, 219-234, here 230; cf. idem, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 110-115. See also Jonathan Stökl, *Prophecy in the Ancient Near East: A Philological and Sociological Comparison* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 70-74, 130-131.

Sasson (*From the Mari Archives: An Anthology of Old Babylonian Letters* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015], 280-281) presents a particularly interesting illustration of indifference toward *ipsissima verba* in the form of a "bogus prophecy" that was "created out of versions of two separate divine messages" by the (non-prophetic) writer himself (here 280, n. 127).

[167] Cf. Nissinen, *Ancient Prophecy: Near Eastern, Biblical, and Greek Perspectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 146: "[T]he written prophecies and reports of prophetic activities are never firsthand information but always transmitted through a scribal filter. Therefore, the 'original' words of the prophets, the *ipsissima verba*, cannot be retrieved." For "literary prophecy," see n. 163 above. On the development of literary prophecy in Israel, see also Lange, *Vom prophetischen Wort zur prophetischen Tradition: Studien zur Traditions- und Redaktionsgeschichte innerprophetischer Konflikte in der Hebräischen Bibel*, FAT 34 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002).

For a large and highly developed literary structure like Jer, whose intricate texts exhibit all the hallmarks of quasi-prophetic craftsmanship, such loosening of mimetic strictures produces a prodigious *distortion* in the temporality of actualization, the effects of which are twofold.[171] On the one hand, because written texts can outlive both (quasi-)prophets and their audiences, the virtual capabilities of a sufficiently durable prophetic text are not exhausted on the relatively meager timescale of individual human lifetimes; indeed, the longer such a text remains in the world, the more its capacity to generate new meanings, and other actual outcomes, grows.[172] On the other hand, due to the selective and synthetic nature of textual representation, readers can use texts to access and assess a putative prophetic oeuvre much faster than any actual intermediary could have constructed it through his or her own interactions with deity and society. Per the superscription to his book, Jrm prophesied for forty years, but a reader could finish Jer in forty hours![173] Relative to the "speed of life" that measures the actualization of epistemic intermediation, Jer thus presents us with disparate movements at two distinct levels: a *global deceleration* in the growth of the literary system as a whole, encompassing all its innumerable readers and writers and contexts, and a *local acceleration* in the experience of each reading community down to the individual reader, who digests in minutes or hours what has developed over decades and centuries.

---

[168] See Joachim Schaper, "The Death of the Prophet: The Transition from the Spoken to the Written Word of God in the Book of Ezekiel," in Floyd and Haak, *Second Temple Judaism*, 63-79, here 65-66 on the "autonomous discourse" that resulted from "text-producing prophet[s]." Cf. Nissinen, *Ancient Prophecy*, 352: "Only the scribes were in the position of transforming the [prophetic] tradition at the same time as they kept it up…."

For Jer, theories of systematic redaction(s) abound: notable examples include Schmid's *Buchgestalten* (see n. 103 above) and Winfried Thiel, *Die deuteronomistische Redaktion von Jeremia 1-25*, WMANT 41 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1973); idem, *Die deuteronomistische Redaktion von Jeremia 26-45: mit einer Gesamtbeurteilung der deuteronomistischen Redaktion*, WMANT 52 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1981). For a view that favors smaller and more haphazard "expansion[s] through commentary or exegesis," see McKane, "Relations Between Prose and Poetry in the Book of Jeremiah with Special Reference to Jeremiah iii 6-11 and xii 14-17," in *A Prophet to the Nations: Essays in Jeremiah Studies*, ed. Leo G. Purdue and Brian W. Kovacs (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1984), 269-284; cf. Holladay, "Prototype and Copies: A New Approach to the Poetry-Prose Problem in the Book of Jeremiah," *JBL* 79 (1960): 351-367.

[169] Lange, "Literary Prophecy," 252, who takes the phrase "diluted communication" (*zerdehnte Sprechsituation*) from Beate Pongratz-Leisten, *Herrschaftswissen in Mesopotamien: Formen der Kommunikation zwischen Gott und König im 2. Und 1. Jahrtausend v.Chr.*, SAAS 10 (Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1999), 267-268.

[170] See Lange, "Literary Prophecy," 257.

[171] On the (extant forms of the) book of Jer as the work(s) of quasi-prophetic "literati" in the Persian period, see Ben Zvi, "Would Ancient Readers of the Books of Hosea or Micah be 'Competent' to Read the Book of Jeremiah?," in Diamond and Stulman, *Jeremiah (Dis)Placed*, 80-98.

In terms more familiar to biblical scholars, these two rhythms can be correlated, respectively, with *diachronic* and *synchronic* dimensions of the biblical text. The accelerated actualization at the level of the individual reader pertains primarily to the "final form(s)" of the text, which any given reader most directly encounters. In contrast, the slower actualization of the literary whole involves a much larger stream of material factors and sociohistorical forces, stretching from the earliest genesis of the relevant cultural traditions to at least the canonical closure of the resulting texts, if not through the present day and beyond.[174] For this reason, however, an adequate account of the development of Jer lies largely outside the scope of the present study. This diachronic actualization, which encompasses composition and reception alike, pertains in truth to a multidimensional "rhizome" or "assemblage" that resists by its very nature the holistic theories of origin and organization that are so often pursued in biblical scholarship (see Chapter 5).

---

[172] Cf. Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 668.

[173] For issues with the superscription's chronology for Jrm's career, see esp. Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 91-92.

[174] Although most of these developments would traditionally fall under the ancillary study of "reception history," a strong (and, for that matter, Deleuzian) case can be made for the methodological and ontological priority of reception over production, transmission, and other favored foci of biblical studies: see Brennan W. Breed, *Nomadic*

As for Jer's synchronic actualization, its internal logic lies closer at hand: namely, in the "announcement-fulfillment arc" adapted from Konrad Schmid in the previous section (4.3.2 above). While that section treated only isolated links between divine directives and their earthly enactments in individual *r*- and *p*-texts, much the same arc describes the canonical shape(s) of Jer in its entirety. Because the *r*-complex is concentrated in the first half of the text (Jer 1-25, esp. 1:4-19:13) and the *p*-complex in the second (Jer 26-52, esp. 26-29, 37-44), the whole book presents itself as the literary depiction of one grand act of epistemic intermediation, wherein the major revelatory foci of the *r*-complex—namely, the dual threats against Judah and Jrm—are eventually enacted by events recounted in the *p*-complex.[175] The *r*-complex's overarching message of imminent doom for the Judean kingdom is couched chiefly in the "non-specific" (yet thoroughly "this-worldly") language of an anonymous "foe" from the "north."[176] These abstract announcements are then decisively clarified and concretized over the course of the *p*-complex, from the first naming of Babylon as the agent of Judah's destruction (20:4) to the decidedly specific, almost historiographical descriptions of the kingdom's eventual downfall (Jer 37-39; cf.

---

*Text: A Theory of Biblical Reception History*, ISBL (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2014) and the discussion in the next chapter (esp. 5.5).

[175] This is all the more true of LXX, wherein the OAN stand alongside the rest of the *r*-complex; see Figure 4.3 above.

[176] David J. Reimer, "The 'Foe' and the 'North' in Jeremiah," *ZAW* 101 (1989): 223-232, here 223.

52). A similar relationship obtains among the various texts recounting Jrm's personal persecution across the book, as the anonymous enemies of the *r*-complex are actualized by a litany of named antagonists in the *p*-complex: Pashhur (20:1-6), Jehoiakim (26:20-24; 36:20-26), Hananiah (28:1-17), Shemaiah (29:24-32), Irijah (37:11-16), etc.[177] More generally, as Jutta Krispenz has observed, proper names of all sorts function quite differently in each complex. Her claims about the use of names in two ten-chapter selections (Jer 1-10 and 26-35) may be generalized across the entire *r*- and *p*-complexes, of which these sections are respectively representative: "Das Bild, das die beiden Textbereiche…bietet, zeigt auf der einen Seite wenige, aber mit Konnotationen stark aufgeladene Namen in Jer 1-10 auf der anderen Seite in Jer 26-35 zahlreiche und vielfältige Namen, besonders Personennamen, die den Eindruck einer deutlichen Verbindung zu historischen Geschehnissen erwecken."[178] From a Deleuzian perspective, this distinction between abstractly symbolic and historically concrete names shows itself to be but one facet of the more profound difference between the virtual and the actual. To move from the former to the latter while reading Jer is to move from *some* meaning(s) of the book to *the* meaning(s) of the book, from *an* enemy of Judah to *the* enemy of Judah, and from *a* prophet named "Jeremiah" to "*the* prophet, Jeremiah."

## 4.4. This is (Not) a Prophet: Jeremiah as Simulacrum

The question of the titular prophet's actualization is a fitting place to end this discussion of Jer, as it was with that very question that the present study began. Although the question had not yet been posed in terms of Deleuze's structuralism, it was latent throughout my analysis of character in the confessions (Chapter 1). In retrospect, the "mimetic watershed" established by the interaction of the fifth confession, an *r*-text (20:7-18), with the book's first *p*-text (19:14-20:6) can be seen as a microcosm of the whole structure of Jer, which emerges from these and other differential relationships that entirely entangle the *r*-complex and the *p*-complex. Having now surveyed the structure more closely, we are in better a position to appreciate the unique role of Jrm within it.

---

[177] Cf. Smith, *Laments*, 40, as well as the discussion at n. 58 in 1.3.2.

[178] Thus Krispenz, "Namen im Jeremiabuch: Ein Vergleich zwischen Jer 1-10 und Jer 26-35," in *Sprachen, Bilder, Klänge: Dimensionen der Theologie im Alten Testament und in seinem Umfeld: Festschrift für Rüdiger Bartelmus zu seinem 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Christiane Karrer-Grube et al., AOAT 359 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2009), 139-153, here 148.

In the first place, as outlined in the previous section, Jrm fills the bivalent role of intermediary that stands at the heart of epistemic intermediation in all its forms. Within the literary system of Jer, Jrm presents a suitable receptacle for the supernatural knowledge revealed in the *r*-complex, precisely because he is also able to give voice to (a part or version of) that knowledge in the *p*-complex. From a strictly historical perspective, Jrm's fitness for his prophetic occupation most likely consisted in a felicitous blend of geopolitical insight, ideological conviction, and rhetorical skill, all bolstered by an upper-class upbringing.[179] According to the biblical text, however, his only credential is a call from YHWH, who "put [his] words in [Jrm's] mouth" (1:9) and "made [Jrm] a prophet to the nations" while he was still in the womb (1:5). It is ultimately impossible to determine whether the call narrative of 1:4-10 reflects authentic experiences of the historical Jrm, or any other psychological dimensions of his "self-understanding."[180] Yet, even if this narrative is largely or entirely a literary fiction, the singular emphasis that it receives as the book's opening vignette, and the only one to depict an early (i.e., pre- or proto-prophetic) event in Jrm's life, signifies a fundamental and far-reaching difference between the two (or more) "Jeremiahs" of literature and history.[181]

---

[179] On Jeremiah's social status, see Max Weber, *Ancient Judaism*, ed. and trans. Hans H. Gerth and Don Martindale (New York: Free Press, 1952), 277-278; cf. 24: "Jeremiah was no peasant." Weber's view of the prophet is affirmed by William R. Domeris, "The Land Claim of Jeremiah—Was Max Weber Right?" in Diamond and Stulman, *Jeremiah (Dis)Placed*, 136-149.

[180] Contrast Holladay, "The Background of Jeremiah's Self-Understanding: Moses, Samuel, and Psalm 22," *JBL* 83 (1964): 153-164, who connects Jrm's call to those of Moses and Samuel and assumes that "the young Jeremiah" had access to proto-biblical texts about these prophets (158). In keeping with Holladay's high view of the historical Jrm, he is content to treat the call narrative as authentically autobiographical on the basis of its perceived literary artistry,

Like so many other features of Jer, the call narrative reminds us that the literary Jrm *differs radically in being* from his putative historical precursor. To be sure, some amount of difference is captured by the very distinction between these two figures, which has already been articulated in the a- or anti-biographical work of scholars like Robert Carroll and Timothy Polk. Polk, in particular, helpfully conceptualizes the prophet of the book as a "persona," meant to denote a "literary-theological construct" distinct from (and not necessarily indicative or representative of) the person of flesh and blood that may once have lived as the "historical" Jrm.[182] And yet, to formulate this difference in terms of a historical *person* versus a literary *persona* is to understate its extremity. As much as such a persona may renounce its direct dependence on or correspondence to any particular ancient person, the very concept of the "persona" nonetheless retains a manifest resemblance, in both etymology and essence, to that of the "person"; the former is at once modeled on and molded by the latter, like a mimetic *imago Dei*. Only once the persona is freed from the constraints of a real or imagined personhood does the true measure of its strangeness becomes fully apparent. Though both may rightly be called

---

which "give[s] all the marks of the master" (ibid.), as if there were no masters among the scribes of later eras! The derivation of authorial identity from anonymous artistry was effectively refuted centuries ago in the poetry of Thomas Gray: "Full many a gem of purest ray serene, / The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear: / Full many a flow'r is born to blush unseen, / And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

[181] Although the general logic of the call narrative assumes that Jrm has yet to begin prophesying, no clear sense of his age can be derived from its specific language (esp. 1:6): see Brent A. Strawn, "Jeremiah's In/Effective Plea: Another Look at נער in Jeremiah I 6," *VT* 55 (2005): 366-377. On the bifurcation of Jrm between history and literature, see Timothy Polk, *The Prophetic Persona: Jeremiah and the Language of the Self*, JSOTSup 32 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984), 8-9, 128, 165.

[182] See Polk, *Persona*, 10 and *passim*.

"Jeremiah," the historical and literary prophets of this name could hardly be more different: one was a human being in the Levant at the turn of the 6th century BCE, while the other is a creatively contrived subset of words in (one or more editions of) a book of the Hebrew Bible.[183]

Even if we assume that the textual "body" of the literary prophet was crafted, as far as reasonably possible, by his human precursor—perhaps, following a classic thesis, we assign to Jrm all the first-person speech in Jer—this condition does surprisingly little to ensure a realistic resemblance between the two figures.[184] A closer look at the words constituting the literary Jrm reveals just how much their portrayal of the prophet departs, not only from the probable experience of a supposed historical Jrm, but from the possible existence of any human being whatsoever. The historical prophet, for his part, surely lived for the sake of countless creaturely ends apart from the lofty mission of his spiritual calling. He must have enjoyed the scent of an almond blossom that did not figure in a mantic vision (1:11-12), or visited the temple without the threat of execution on charges of treason (26:8-11), or tasted bread that was not apportioned to him as prisoner's rations (37:21). As he exists in the book, however, Jrm is and does nothing outside of his structural role as intermediary: he "constitutes himself, becomes who he truly is, precisely as he performs the [prophetic] office, however unbearable the tension."[185] At the outset, Jrm is not born as a person but called as a prophet (1:4-10); his birth merits mention only as it bears on his calling, whether as consecration (1:5) or execration (20:15-18). It was perhaps inevitable that some readers would go so far as to conflate the two entirely, seeing a plausible date for Jrm's birth in the first year that "the word of YHWH came to him" (1:2).[186] At the other end of the book, Jrm does not die, but his "words" do—or at least, they expire, extending only "thus far" (עד הנה) and no further (51:64). Between those two extremes, Jrm hardly acts unless commanded by YHWH, just as he hardly speaks except to dispense a divine oracle, or to react to (the reaction to) an oracle previously dispensed. If there is a historical personage at the root of this literary entity, his most humanlike features have been irretrievably winnowed away by the transformative pressures of mimetic selection. What remains is not a human *being* so much as an amalgamation of prophetic *saying* and *doing*.

---

[183] Cf. Diamond, "Interlocutions: The Poetics of Voice in the Figuration of YHWH and His Oracular Agent, Jeremiah," *Int* 62 (2008): 48-65, here 49: "I read [YHWH and Jrm] as artistically invented, textually embodied literary characters. I do not read them this way *as if* this is what they are but *because* this is what they are. To do otherwise is to read reductionistically for other purposes (no doubt for complex reasons). Whatever we may think or theorize these two might have been or are on historical, sociological-cultural, and metaphysical planes, the figures we encounter in the scroll of Jeremiah have long been transferred into the plane of poetics and transfigured into complex literary symbols, representations and projections of aesthetic and ideological desires" (emphasis original).

[184] For this thesis in the late nineteenth-century commentary of Giesebrecht, see n. 151 above.

[185] Polk, *Persona*, 97.

If Jrm sacrificed his humanity for the sake of textualization, however, he did not leave the altar of mimesis empty-handed. As the prophet drifts away from the person(s) he may once have resembled, he draws nearer to the divine datum at the center of the structure that increasingly subsumes him, even to the point of *merging* to no small extent with that paradoxical object.[187] We have just seen a blurring of these beings in the boundaries that Jer sets for Jrm's life: in place of a birth-event or a death-event, Jrm has only *word-events*, such that his very existence becomes coextensive with the datum's circuits. Yet, as the previous section has shown, the Word = *x* presents itself quite differently in the two complexes of Jer—excessively in the *r*-complex, and deficiently in the *p*-complex (see 4.3.3 above). Insofar as Jrm fuses with the datum, he undergoes a comparable bifurcation. In the *r*-complex, he says and does more than would be expected of a prophet in his position; in the *p*-complex, he acts and appears less. All the while, Jrm adopts the defining paradox of the divine datum in becoming displaced in relation to himself.

---

[186] Thus Holladay, "Self-Understanding," 160-161; *Jeremiah 2*, 25-26.

[187] Cf. Holt, "Word of Jeremiah," 174-175, who conceives of the merger as a "metaphorization of God" in the prophet via the divine word.

### *4.4.1. Jeremiah in the Revelation Complex*

In many of the book's *r*-texts, where the Word = *x* is most amply and abundantly manifest, it is difficult to delineate exactly where the prophecy stops and the prophet begins. Even so seemingly intimate a detail as Jrm's celibacy (16:1-4) has more to do with the rhetorical exigencies of the surrounding divine diatribe than with a presumed "private life" of the prophet *qua* person.[188] As a result of this blending of the message and the one who bears it, Jrm's perspective comes to predominate over all others in the *r*-complex, save perhaps for that of YHWH—but since the words of the deity are often framed in *r*-texts by the viewpoint of the prophet (through the first-person WEF and similar devices), they too become part of Jrm's expansive "persona." Although Jrm is positioned structurally as the receiving intermediary in these texts, his closeness to YHWH causes him to differ with respect to himself, being drawn toward the deity-source even as he, the human-recipient, remains tethered by nature to earth. On the other hand, in the few *r*-texts where Jrm does speak for himself rather than for YHWH, his voice continues to exceed its expected boundaries. This is true above all of the confessions, where Jrm inveighs against his enemies, his calling, and his God in emotionally charged language that is largely unparalleled in prophetic literature.[189]

---

[188] See Rossi, "Private Lives," 303-306.

[189] On the emotional content of the confessions, see Polk, *Persona*, 127-162, also 58-126 on the prophet's use of first-person language elsewhere. While it is true that Jrm "utters his own disintegration as subject in the laments" (thus Sharp, "Jeremiah in the Land of Aporia: Reconfiguring Redaction Criticism as Witness to Foreignness," in Diamond and Stulman, *Jeremiah (Dis)Placed*, 35-46, here 39), he paradoxically does so by speaking out, *qua* subject, in his own (represented) voice. This deconstruction of the prophetic subject through excessive personal expression may be helpfully contrasted with the presentation of Ezekiel, whose subjectivity is instead problematized by a thoroughgoing *suppression* of his personal voice and identity (see 4.2.2.5 above).

Arguably the most compelling examples of Jrm's intersection with the datum of the *r*-complex are found in a pair of texts where the prophet exhibits an extraordinary *hypermobility.* These are Jer 13:1-11, which recounts Jrm's burial of a linen loincloth, and Jer 25:15-29, where he is directed to serve "this wrathful cup of wine" (כוס היין החמה הזאת; 25:15) to a litany of neighboring nations. In contrast to some of the book's other reports of symbolic actions, such as the *Ackerkauf* (Jer 32) or the testing of the Rechabites (Jer 35), these pericopes are both *r*-texts, in which "everything plays out between God and the prophet."[190] What makes these *r*-texts remarkable is not only the nature of the actions that they describe, but also the manner in which they describe them. In Jer 13, YHWH commands Jrm to go "to the Euphrates" (פרתה) not once but twice: first to hide his loincloth in a "crack of the rock" (13:3) and again, "at the end of many days," to retrieve it (13:5). In Jer 25, the prophet's movements are even more extensive, encompassing no fewer than fifteen different localities from Elam in the east to Egypt in the west (25:18-26). In the sparing autobiographical style of both texts, Jrm nonchalantly narrates his enactment of YHWH's directives as if they could not be more routine (13:5, 7; 25:17). However, each journey stretches or outright exceeds the limits of physical possibility. Even a single round trip from Anathoth or Jerusalem to the Euphrates would require a long and arduous trek across hundreds of miles of desert; covering such a distance many times over, the "world tour" envisioned by Jer 25 is more implausible still. Readers who wish to maintain the historicity of these narratives have found some measure of relief in Jer 13: the homonymic ambiguity of the Hebrew for "to the Euphrates" and "to Parah" (both פרתה) suggests that Jrm could have used the latter locale, a village just a few miles northeast of Jerusalem, as a symbolic substitute for the great river of Babylon.[191] But even this reading must contend with the contrary witness of LXX, which unambiguously refers to the Euphrates (see esp. 13:7, which adds ποταμὸν "river"), and in any case, no such recourse is so readily available for Jer 25.[192]

---

[190] Thus Pamela Scalise, "Vision beyond the Visions in Jeremiah," in Hayes and Tiemeyer, *I Lifted My Eyes*, 47-58, here 53.

In light of these difficulties, a more profitable line of interpretation treats both 13:1-11 and 25:15-29 as descriptions of dreams or visions.[193] This thesis accounts at once for the implausibility of the prophet's actions, the immediacy with which he undertakes them, and the total lack of any audience involvement in either narrative. A visionary context would also explain why these reports of symbolic actions are presented as *r*-texts. While these actions may normally be recounted in *r*-texts (as in Jer 19) or *p*-texts (as in Jer 27-28, 32, 35), the *vision* of such an action will more naturally take the form of an *r*-text, because visionary experiences are fundamentally private encounters between prophet and deity.[194] The main reason to resist the classification of these *r*-texts as vision reports is that neither one uses the characteristic structure or vocabulary of the genre (e.g., the root ראה "see").[195] Indeed, neither text betrays any awareness that its depicted deeds are at all extraordinary, leaving the visionary interpretation to rely entirely on an implicit "impossibility factor."[196]

---

[191] This solution is favored by Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 396; Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 668-669; Friebel, *Sign Acts*, 105-107. A less restrictive option is offered by Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 297, who argues that Jrm could have "perform[ed] his strange drama" almost anywhere by simply "marking out the ground to represent the mighty Euphrates."

[192] Regarding Jer 25, Carroll (*Jeremiah*, 501) posits that Jrm may have staged "a dramatic performance with various individuals playing the parts of the kings of the nations," but judges this explanation "unlikely" based on the redactional development of the passage in question, in which the list of nations appears to be a secondary addition. Cf. Friebel, *Sign Acts*, 18, n. 16, who judges 25:15-29 to be "verbally created imagery rather than an actually performed action."

[193] See Scalise, "Vision," 55-56. For Jer 13, such an interpretation has roots in the precritical readings of Maimonides, Calvin, and others (McKane, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah. Volume I: Introduction and Commentary on Jeremiah I-XXV*, ICC [London: Bloomsbury, 2014], 287 *apud* Scalise, "Vision," 56). Despite their adherence to a historical reading of 13:1-11, both Holladay (*Jeremiah 1*, 673) and Lundbom (*Jeremiah 21-36*, 256-257) are content to treat 25:15-29 as the report of a vision or dream. Along similar but less psychological lines, a metaphorical reading is advanced in Holt, "King Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon, My Servant, and the Cup of Wrath: Jeremiah's Fantasies and the Hope of Violence," in Diamond and Stulman, *Jeremiah (Dis)Placed*, 209-218, here 213-216.

[194] In order to count as a *p*-text, a vision report would need to include some account of the prophet's subsequent description of the vision to an audience represented within the text. Jer does contain one such text in 38:21-23, where Jrm recounts the content of a vision in one of his conversations with Zedekiah; on this text, see Scalise, "Vision," 52-53. Outside Jer, a notable example of a visionary *p*-text is the Micaiah ben Imlah pericope in 1 Kgs 22:13-23, on which see Long, "Reports," 362, 365.

Such unmarked visions contrast markedly with those reported elsewhere in the biblical prophetic corpus (e.g., Isa 6, Ezek 1-3, Amos 7-8, Zech 1-6), including the rest of Jer (cf. 1:11-14, 4:23-28, 24:1-3, 38:21-22).[197] Precisely because the unmarked visions do not conclusively confine themselves to Jrm's psyche, however, they retain an intractable willingness to be read as accounts of actual, albeit fanciful acts that he materially, if not miraculously, performed. By enduing Jrm with an excessive degree of (meta)physical mobility, these texts also grant him a measure of self-displacement. Without the contextual clarity that would be provided by a verb of seeing, much less a more robust visionary framework, each pericope establishes an insoluble tension between two superimposed and simultaneously visible prophets, which nonetheless stand at a considerable distance from each other. One sits and sees, or perhaps performs at Parah, in accordance with the canons of historical probability; another traverses impossibly vast geographical distances at YHWH's command, in accordance with the plain sense of the canonical text.[198]

---

[195] See Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 665; Scalise, "Vision," 55-56.

[196] For this concept, see Scalise, "Vision," 53.

[197] On these other visions, see Scalise, "Vision," 47-48, 51-55; Long, "Reports," 355-364; Elizabeth R. Hayes, "Of Branches, Pots and Figs: Jeremiah's Visions from a Cognitive Perspective," in *Prophecy in the Book of Jeremiah*, ed. Hans M. Barstad and Reinhard G. Kratz, BZAW 388 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), 89-102.

[198] In both these texts, it is important to remember that the "plain sense" most likely results from a long period of growth and redaction that cannot be attributed to the overarching vision (no pun intended) of any individual author. This is especially true of 25:15-29, where the impossibility factor is most acute; as Carroll (*Jeremiah*, 501) cautions, this pericope "may give the appearance of a sustained action (magical or symbolic), but that is the effect of reading the different elements as a coherent whole."

### *4.4.2. Jeremiah in the Proclamation Complex*

Both hypermobility and the broader orientation toward excess that it reflects are altogether absent from Jrm's presentation in the *p*-complex. While the prophet's self-displacement persists in this complex, it derives here not from his abundance but from an opposing tendency toward deficiency or lack. As with Jer's *r*-texts, different *p*-texts display this tendency in different ways. First, in contrast to the hypermobile prophet of the *r*-complex, the *p*-complex consistently restricts Jrm's movements. This theme emerges already in the initial *p*-text, when Pashhur punishes Jrm by shutting him in the "stocks" (מהפכת; 20:2, 3), but it reaches its climax in the much longer narrative(s) of Jer 37-38.[199] In the latter pericope, part of the large block of *p*-texts in Jer 34-45, Jrm is imprisoned twice over: first in an ersatz prison fashioned from the "house of the secretary Jonathan" (37:15), and then in the "court of the guard" (37:21). Notably, this same courtyard serves as the site of the symbolic action reported in Jer 32:1-15, where Jrm's lack of movement is implicitly and contrastively highlighted by the apparent freedom of his cousin Hanamel to enter Jerusalem even in the midst of the Babylonian siege (cf. 32:2, 8).[200] In Jer 37-38, the emphasis on immobility is both more explicit and more extensive. The beginning of the narrative "ostensibly speaks of freedom" for Jrm, but undermines that very statement through a proleptic "use [of] the language of confinement": the prophet could freely "come and go amidst the people," but only because "he had not [yet] been put in prison" (37:4).[201] While imprisoned, he is cast into an empty cistern (38:6) and thus doubly, even triply confined—since the city itself is under siege at the time, Jrm finds himself at the center of three "concentric circles of prisons."[202] The restriction of prophetic movement is nothing short of a leitmotif in these narratives, where "[e]very scene is punctuated by the narrator's voice emphasizing [Jrm's] confinement" (37:16, 21; 38:13, 28).[203] Ironically, the theme continues even after Jrm is released. Refusing Nebuzaradan's offer to relocate to Babylon, the prophet decides instead to "stay" (ישב) with the people of Judah (40:5-6), just as he "remained" (ישב) in prison (cf. 37:16, etc.).[204] In the end, some of those same people take Jrm to Egypt against his will (43:1-7), such that even this transnational mobility is predicated on an underlying immobility.

---

[199] Instead of "stocks," LXX has καταρράκτης, meaning "sluice" (thus NETS) or perhaps "dungeon" (thus Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 390). Even on the former reading, a punitive and carceral connotation is established by the use of πατάσσω (= הכה "to beat, strike") in 20:2 and the fact that Jrm does not leave of his own volition but has to be released by Pashhur (20:3). On the productive disunity that characterizes Jer 37-38, see Callaway, "Black Fire on White Fire: Historical Context and Literary Subtext in Jeremiah 37-38," in *Troubling Jeremiah*, ed. A. R. Pete Diamond, Kathleen M. O'Connor, and Louis Stulman, JSOTSup 260 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 171-178.

[200] The contextual incongruity of Hanamel's entrance is one of several reasons to doubt the historicity of the narrative in Jer 32: see Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 620-623, and the evaluation of Carroll's reading in Domeris, "Land Claim," 139.

Jrm's persistent lack of movement in these texts is symptomatic of a more profound deficiency that pervades his character as it appears in the *p*-complex. In shifting focus from the prophet's revelatory relationship with YHWH to his proclamatory encounters with the Judean people and their leaders, the *p*-texts repeatedly diminish Jrm's perspective and overall presence in their narratives. At some level, a certain deprivileging of the prophet himself is to be expected from *p*-texts, as a natural consequence of their increased attention to the prophet's audience. As surely as Jrm's voice may prevail at the end of such texts, it must yield along the way to the mimetic exigencies of depicting *other* voices over whom it *could* prevail: the competing parties in the temple tribunal (26:7-11, 16-23), the mendacious Hananiah (28:1-4, 10-11), the steadfast Rechabites (35:6-11), the wayward Zedekiah (37:3, 17; 38:5, 10, 14, 16, 19, 24-26), and so on.[205] Whereas an *r*-text ordinarily aligns and even identifies the voice of the deity with the voice of the prophet who transmits it, such that representing more of the former results *ipso facto* in more of the latter, the same cannot be said of the audience in a *p*-text; belonging to different persons, these voices are thoroughly distinct from that of the prophet and, especially in Jer, often opposed to it. Against the backdrop of Jrm's abundant portrayal in the *r*-complex, the *p*-complex consistently gives us less of this prophet than we would expect.

---

[201] Callaway, "Telling the Truth and Telling Stories: An Analysis of Jeremiah 37-38," *USQR* 44 (1991): 253-265, here 258.

[202] Callaway, "Telling Stories," 259.

[203] Callaway, "Telling Stories," 258. The theme of immobility stands at the intersection of two others that Callaway ("Black Fire," 176-177) has elsewhere identified: "confrontation between king and prophet" (176) and "the physical persecution of the prophet" (177).

[204] On the repeated references to Jrm's location as a hermeneutical "code" in these narratives, see Holt, "The Potent Word of God: Remarks on the Composition of Jeremiah 37-44," in Diamond et al., *Troubling Jeremiah*, 161-170, here 164-165. Although Jrm's lack of movement in Jer 40 is no longer involuntary, it is still an instance of immobility all the same.

Particularly instructive in this regard are certain *p*-texts in which Jrm recedes to such an extent that other agents and instruments of intermediation are able to come to the fore. The first such text to appear in the book is the letter of Jer 29, addressed to the first group of Judean deportees to Babylon. Although this letter resembles many of Jrm's other prophetic pronouncements in its strikingly pro-Babylonian tone and overall theological outlook, it differs noticeably in the manner of its delivery: instead of being spoken directly by the prophet to the intended audience, the letter is carried "by the hand of Elasah son of Shaphan and Gemariah son of Hilkiah," Zedekiah's envoys to Babylon (29:3). The epistolary framework established by this paratextual detail, together with others in the letter's relatively lengthy heading (29:1-3), forestalls the referential ambiguity observed above in Jer 13. Whereas the latter superimposes two divergent depictions of the prophet Jrm, one going "to Parah" and the other "to the Euphrates," the letter posits two entirely disparate entities: a prophet and a *text*, which can convey the divine will to Babylon even as the prophet himself remains in Judah. Whether the letter is regarded as an authentic historical document or an imaginative accretion to a burgeoning Jeremianic tradition, its inclusion in Jer bears witness to an *obsolescence of the prophet* that was initiated by prophecy's transformation from a social process to a literary practice.[206] A community that can read the words of YHWH written by Jrm no longer needs to hear those words spoken by Jrm. In this way, the present letter supplants and displaces its absent author, leaving the former to circulate as an essentially empty square—a place without an occupant, a prophecy without a prophet.

---

[205] In Jer 37-38, Callaway ("Telling Stories," 260) observes that Zedekiah actually speaks more often (8 times) than Jrm does (7 times)!

Across the whole Hebrew Bible, there is arguably no better testament to this displacement of the prophet by the prophetic text than the transmission and destruction of the Jeremianic scroll recounted in Jer 36. The general contours of this narrative and the specific role of textuality therein have already been discussed above (see 4.3.3). As an element of the *p*-complex, however, Jer 36 also develops the theme of Jrm's deficiency in two related ways. First, the narrative marks yet another moment of prophetic immobility: in language that foreshadows his eventual imprisonment (cf. 39:15, 33:1), Jrm is "restrained" (עצור) from entering the temple (36:5). Jrm thus dispatches the scribe Baruch to go there "on a fast day" and "proclaim YHWH's words, on the scroll which you wrote at my dictation, to the people" (36:6). Over the convoluted course of three subsequent readings, the scroll seems to take on a life of its own.[207] Baruch's initial proclamation to the people gathered in the temple (36:10) compels the royal officials to solicit a private reading for themselves in a separate chamber (36:11-20); one of those officials then takes the scroll from Baruch and reads it to Jehoiakim, who incinerates it column by column in the fireplace at his winter residence (36:21-26), only for it to be rewritten by Jeremiah and Baruch at YHWH's command (36:27-32).

---

[206] Cf. Schaper, "Death of the Prophet," 77-79; although Schaper focuses on Ezekiel as a testament to this obsolescence, which is nicely encapsulated in his titular Barthesian concept, traces of the same development toward "textualization" (79) may be found in texts like Jer 29 and 36 (on the latter, see below). See also the discussion in 4.3.3 above.

[207] For a detailed analysis of the scroll's movements, see Mark Brummit and Yvonne Sherwood, "The Fear of Loss Inherent in Writing: Jeremiah 36 as the Story of a Self-Conscious Scroll," in Diamond and Stulman, *Jeremiah (Dis)Placed*, 47-66, here 60-63, who opine that Jer 36 "seems to do with space what twisted narrative timelines (such as those of *The Good Soldier* or *Pulp Fiction*) do with time" (60).

Far from a direct record of historical events, this pericope is better understood as a tendentious and presumably Deuteronomistic attempt to contrast Jehoiakim's recalcitrance with the pious response of Josiah, his predecessor, to a similar scroll discovered in the temple (cf. 2 Kgs 22).[208] For that very reason, the deliberate shaping of the narrative to exclude Jrm is significant: it is no exaggeration to say that "[t]he written word has *replaced* Jeremiah" in Jer 36.[209] The prophet is "only present for the preparation of the scroll…and in the aftermath of its burning," the two sections of this *p*-text that most directly pertain to events of the *r*-series (namely, the receipt of revelations).[210] As for the event of proclamation itself, Jrm is only "present in his absence"—although an "awareness of him shapes the responses to the scroll," the name "Jeremiah" does not occur for large stretches of the narrative, not even in Baruch's explanation of the scroll's provenance to the officials (36:18; cf. 36:11-17, 20-25).[211] Like the letter of Jer 29, the scroll of Jer 36 offers a prophecy detached from a prophet displaced, his proclamatory role overtaken by the expanding capabilities of an emerging textual tradition. In this case, however, the agent of that displacement is explicitly embodied in the quasi-prophetic figure of "Baruch ben Neriah, the scribe" (36:32), who has become responsible for both the immediate promulgation of this Jeremianic message and the further perpetuation of a literary corpus to which all such messages now belong.

---

[208] See, *inter alia*, Charles D. Isbell, "2 Kings 22:3-23:24 and Jeremiah 36: A Stylistic Comparison," *JSOT* 8 (1978): 33-45; Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 663-666; Van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, 186-187.

[209] Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 662 (emphasis original); cf. 664-665, where Carroll attributes Jrm's absence to the narrative's dependence on 2 Kgs: "By absenting Jeremiah from the temple, a role is created for Baruch the scribe and the parallel maintained to II Kings 22" (665).

[210] Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 662.

[211] Ibid. Surprisingly, LXX adds "Jeremiah" in 36:18; cf. Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 660.

If the theme of prophetic textualization reaches its singular climax in Jer 36, it receives a double denouement in the *p*-texts of Jer 45:1-5 and 51:59-64, which Jack Lundbom has analyzed under the rubric of "expanded colophons."[212] A colophon is a scribal addendum containing topical and bibliographical details about a manuscript; it is comparable in form and function to a superscription but different in position, being located at the end of a composition instead of the beginning. While an "expanded" colophon similarly deals with scribes and their activities in preparing a text, it exceeds the standard scope of the genre because it has been "modified in order to report a prophetic message."[213] Both 45:1-5 and 51:59-64 satisfy these criteria—amply in their location, and adequately in their subject matter.[214] Each passage occupies a terminal position in the book: minus the manifestly secondary (and non-colophonic) appendix in Jer 52, the conclusion of MT is 51:59-64, while LXX ends with 45:1-5 (as 51:31-35). Each also discusses a figure associated somehow with the preservation and publication of Jeremianic texts. In 45:1-5, that figure is the stalwart scribe Baruch, to whom Jrm offers an oracle of reassurance "when [Baruch] was writing these words in a scroll, at Jeremiah's dictation, in the fourth year of king Jehoiakim" (45:1; cf. 36:1). A scribal orientation is less obvious but still sufficiently close at hand in 51:59-64, which is addressed to "Seraiah ben Neriah," a "quartermaster" (שר מנוחה) who happens to share Baruch's patronym (51:59). Here, Jrm himself is credited with writing "in a scroll all the calamity which was to come upon Babylon" (51:60), but Seraiah is then commanded to take the scroll to Babylon, read it aloud, and submerge it in the Euphrates (51:61-64).

---

[212] See Lundbom, "Baruch, Seraiah, and Expanded Colophons in the Book of Jeremiah," in idem, *Writing up Jeremiah: The Prophet and the Book* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013), 50-74.

[213] Lundbom, "Colophons," 61.

[214] Lundbom ("Colophons," 59-61, 68-71) also identifies 32:6-15 and 36:1-8 as expanded colophons, on the basis of their scribal themes and their hypothesized roles in earlier stages of the Jer traditions. However, since I have already treated these texts above and neither one functions as a colophon in the final form(s) of the book, I have omitted them from the discussion here.

Lundbom approaches these texts with an exceptionally generous view of the historicity of Jer, including its portrayals of Jrm and his associates, which I have no desire to adopt here. Assuming that "the scribes mentioned in [the colophons] must be the writers of those passages," and that these same scribes must "have also written or copied the texts to which the colophons are affixed," Lundbom argues that "Baruch and Seraiah each had a hand in the final stage" of Jer's composition, with Baruch editing the LXX *Vorlage* in Egypt while Seraiah shaped proto-MT in Babylonia.[215] My resistance to this line of reasoning is motivated less by plausibility than parsimony. While it is certainly possible that the two extant editions of Jer resulted from the work of two siblings, each of whom left his authorial signature in the form of a postscript that hardly mentions the writing process itself, the expanded colophons can be more easily and modestly explained as traces of *some* scribes rather than *these* scribes. If the Jeremianic texts and traditions were shaped by later generations of scribal quasi-prophets who did not personally know the historical Jrm, these writers may have sought to ground their compositional activities in the stories and identities of predecessors who did. Even if an Egyptian origin cannot be maintained for the LXX *Vorlage* of Jer, the scribes responsible for that edition may have gravitated toward the figure of Baruch simply because of his relative prominence in Jer 36 and, to a lesser extent, Jer 32.[216] On the other hand, Seraiah's connection to Babylonia would have made him a more fitting figurehead for the tradents of proto-MT, whose edition betrays a marked interest in the fate of Babylon and its *golah*.[217] In either case, Jrm's concluding words to Baruch and Seraiah may reflect no more than a general passing of the torch from prophet to quasi-prophet, via the literary representation of relevant exemplars from the past.

---

[215] Lundbom, "Colophons," 71-74, here 71 and 73; cf. idem, *Jeremiah: A Study in Ancient Hebrew Rhetoric*, 2nd ed. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 38-41, 145, 152-154.

In thus passing the prophetic torch, the expanded colophons consummate the themes of deficiency and displacement discerned above in *p*-texts like Jer 29 and 36. Carroll begins to sense such a difference in Jrm's presentation when he remarks on an "irony" in Jer 45, which applies *mutatis mutandis* to 51:59-64: "The effect of 45 [or 51] as a conclusion to the book (before the addition of the epilogue in 52) is to make Baruch [or Seraiah] the last figure in the tradition…rather than Jeremiah."[218] With the exception of Jer 36 and 45, Baruch resides squarely on the periphery of the Jeremianic tradition; apart from his brief appearance in Jer 51, Seraiah remains outside it entirely. For all their marginality, however, these characters ascend to positions of quasi-prophetic prominence in their respective colophons. Excluding the paratextual material in the superscription (1:1-3) and appendix (52), the prophetic core of Jer begins with "the word of YHWH to" Jrm (1:4), but it concludes with the *word of Jrm* to Baruch (LXX) or Seraiah (MT).

---

[216] Cf. Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 746, who connects Jer 45 to "the editorial development of the figure of Baruch in the [Jeremianic] tradition." On the supposed Egyptian provenance of the edition represented in LXX, see Janzen, *Studies*, 128-135; this thesis is broadly disputed by Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 2nd rev. ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress; Assen: Royal Van Gorcum, 1992), 185-187.

[217] On the Babylonian focus of (proto-)MT, see Stulman, *The Prose Sermons of the Book of Jeremiah: A Redescription of the Correspondences with the Deuteronomistic Literature in the Light of Recent Text-Critical Research*, SBLDS 83 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 141-146. Cf. the Babylon-centric additions adduced in Tov, "Literary History," 221-222, 229-230, 234, 236.

[218] Thus Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 746.

Importantly, these words are framed not as messages that Jrm would dispense to an ordinary audience, but as oracles or directives that YHWH would reveal to Jrm himself. The divergent framing depends in both cases on the Word = *x*, that "differenciating element of difference itself" (HRS 186), by way of minor but meaningful modifications to the WEF.[219] The heading in 45:1 resembles certain forms of the WEF that are built around the relative pronoun אשר, especially those that also use the verb "speak" (דבר) in the relative clause (cf. 46:13, 50:1). The verb in 51:59 is "command" (צוה), but the syntax of this verse is otherwise substantially similar to that of 45:1; both verses even include a temporal clause, fronted by identically inflected infinitive constructs (בכתבו in 45:1 and בלכתו in 51:59), to contextualize the material that follows. Yet, the verbs themselves are less significant than their subjects and objects, where the distance from more conventional forms of the WEF is greatest. In place of the supernatural subject (YHWH) and prophetic object (Jrm) found elsewhere in the book, the WEFs of the expanded colophons present *Jrm* as the subject of the communicative act and *Baruch or Seraiah* as its object.[220]

| | |
|---|---|
| **45:1** | הדבר אשר דבר **ירמיהו הנביא** אל-ברוך בן-נריה בכתבו את-הדברים האלה על-ספר מפי ירמיהו בשנה הרבעית ליהויקים בן-יאשיהו מלך יהודה לאמר |
| | The word which **Jrm the prophet** spoke to Baruch son of Neriah, when he wrote these words in a book at Jrm's dictation in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah: |
| **51:59 (MT)** | הדבר אשר-צוה **ירמיהו הנביא** את-שריה בן-נריה בן-מחסיה בלכתו את-צדקיהו מלך-יהודה בבל בשנת הרבעית למלכו ושריה שר מנוחה |
| | The word which **Jrm the prophet** commanded Seraiah son of Neriah son of Mahseiah, when he went with Zedekiah, king of Judah, to Babylon in the fourth year of his reign, as Seraiah was quartermaster: |

---

[219] For the terminology of "differenciation," see 2.3.

[220] In LXX, 51:59 includes κύριος (= יהוה "the Lord") as the grammatical subject of the verb, bringing the verse into greater alignment with the standard WEF by turning both Jrm and Seraiah into (indirect) objects (of different verbs).

**Figure 4.5. Modified Word-Event Formulas in the Expanded Colophons**

Meanwhile, YHWH drops completely out of view—but for a few theophoric names, both 45:1 and 51:59 (MT) make no mention of the deity.

Thus (re)framed, the text of 51:59 "represents Jeremiah as playing Yahweh to Seraiah," just as he does for Baruch in (both editions of) 45:1.[221] The consequences of this displacement are considerable. Even without the headings, both expanded colophons would count as *p*-texts on the basis of their direct address to specific individuals at concrete moments, as defined by the temporal clauses in 45:1 and 51:59 and reciprocally determined by other *p*-texts in Jer (respectively, 36:1-4 and 29:1-3).[222] However, the prophet-like position of the addressees allows the colophons to function also as *quasi-prophetic r-texts:* they leverage the serial arrangement of the *p*-series (human source–human recipient–supernatural object) to anchor a new iteration of the *r*-series, in which the asymmetrical relations of disclosure and feedback elevate a *human* source of privileged knowledge.[223] To the extent that these *r*-texts are derived from higher orders of structural organization in the *r*- and *p*-series, they may be called *r'-texts* ("*r* prime" texts), following Lagrange's notation for mathematical derivatives.

---

[221] Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 856, cf. 746.

[222] For the relationship between Jer 29 and 51, see Lundbom, *Jeremiah 37-52*, 506, who distinguishes and thereby constructs the envoy implied in the latter from that which is described in the former. Notwithstanding Lundbom's suppositions, the structural function of this coupling does not depend on the historical foundation of either passage.

[223] The structural ambiguity of these texts may account both for the divergent reading of 51:59 in LXX (see n. 220 above) and for the unexpected intrusion of "Thus shall you [Jrm] say to him [Baruch]" in 45:4 MT (on which see Lundbom, *Jeremiah 37-52*, 175-176, who considers the phrase "difficult"). Each of these elements, which foregrounds the speech of the deity to Jrm, has the effect of drawing the expanded colophons closer to the mimetic norms of the *r*-complex.

From the perspective of the quasi-prophets, implicitly present in the figures of Baruch and Seraiah, the *r′*-texts provide an oblique justification for textualized revelation. Like a devolved call narrative in which Jrm officiates as YHWH's proxy, each colophon confirms that Jrm has empowered others to prophesy on his (and by extension, YHWH's) behalf.[224] For Jrm himself, at first glance, the *r′*-texts would seem to further raise his profile by drawing it even closer to the deity, whom the prophet has now in some sense supplanted as the primary agent of revelation. If Jrm ascends to any god-like role in these texts, however, his apotheosis is also counterbalanced by absence; in rising structurally to the role of source in the WEF, Jrm recedes mimetically to the background of the word-events that he initiates. The central figure of 45:1-5 is not Jrm but Baruch, while 51:59-64 reproduces the deficient dynamics of Jer 36, in which a surrogate must bring a written message to a place which the prophet, deprived of the hypermobility he enjoys in *r*-texts like Jer 13, cannot reach.

### *4.4.3. Conclusion*

In this section, I have sought to show that as Jrm moves through Jer, he becomes bound up with the Word = *x* to such an extent that he begins to exhibit its defining characteristics—excess in the signifying *r*-complex, absence in the signified *p*-complex, and displacement all the while in relation to himself and others. I would do well to conclude by clarifying the implications of this merger: Jrm's intimate affinity with the divine datum positions him as the "nomad subject" or "structuralist hero" of the structure that is Jer.[225] Consistently yet differentially distributed across the book's two complexes, Jrm's represented subjectivity produces the structural whole as it follows the datum throughout the text, bringing disparate events of revelation and proclamation into contact with one another. Yet, as a fundamentally literary entity, Jrm himself is also a product of Jer and its datum, like a phantasmal shepherd at once driving and deriving from his paradoxical charge. When Deleuze enumerates the virtues of this hero at the end of his essay on structuralism (HRS 191), the list begins with predicates that are auspiciously instantiated in Jrm. This textualized prophet is "neither God nor man," but a hybrid creature from the ontologically murky waters around these two, one that manages to be both less and more than either. Jrm is likewise "neither personal nor universal," but lies somewhere in between: "he" comprises mere pieces of a personality that have nonetheless proved to possess unusually persistent appeal.

---

[224] This is especially true of 51:59-64, where Seraiah is specifically directed to perform a prophetic sign act (on which see Friebel, *Sign Acts*, 154-169). On quasi-prophetic authorization effected by the record of this act, cf. Leuchter, "Pen," 21-22: "The expanded version of the original colophon…provides additional clarification as to which scribal group or tradition is empowered by this turn of events…. Deuteronomistic scribes have been entrusted with Jeremiah's prophetic legacy."

As for Jer 45, Baruch's quasi-prophetic role is more subtly indicated: not only in the temporal clause (45:1) that recalls his delegated authority in Jer 36, but also in the expression of lament (45:3) and promise of survival amidst destruction (45:4-5). Both statements parallel aspects of Jrm's prophetic discourse: respectively, the confessions and other laments (esp. 8:18, 20:18) and the call narrative (esp. 1:8, 10, 14-19). On the Jeremianic allusions in Baruch's lament, see O'Connor, *Confessions*, 96.

If we cannot affirm that this prophet is "without an identity" (ibid.), it is only because his structure coaxes us so effortlessly to outfit him with one. Both the prevalence of the *p*-complex and the nature of its couplings with the *r*-complex encourage the construction of a "persona" that seems to grow more concrete as the book progresses. Even more so than those of the other biblical prophetic books, Jer's *r*-texts present the multifaceted and multivalent picture of a general prophetic mentality, developed through intricate messages received from YHWH and intimate sentiments aroused thereby. From this well-defined yet relatively abstract whole, the unparalleled *p*-complex would seem to extract a remarkably determinate individual, who bore those messages and those sentiments in concrete interactions with particular persons at specific times and places. Before the currents of actualization push us to mold Jrm's literary image into the shape of a historical person posited as its model, though, we must confront the full measure of ontological difference that separates these entities. Perhaps it would be better to replace the persona and its representational pretensions with a more Deleuzian concept: the prophetic *simulacrum*. As we have seen, the persona is simply a humanoid copy, understood as "an image endowed with resemblance" to a person, but "the simulacrum is an image without resemblance," thereby attaining "a positive power which negates *both original and copy, both model and reproduction*."[226]

---

[225] For these concepts, see the discussion in 3.4.2.

After all, what original remains for Jrm to resemble? A body of Jeremianic flesh would have suffered from all the shortcomings inherent to human finitude, but in the furnace of collective memory and textual representation, that body was gradually alchemized or transmuted into a purer, though by no means perfect, *corpus* of Jeremianic words.[227] Although some parts of the body subsist in the corpus—a mouth (1:9: 36:4, 6, etc.), a heart (4:19; 11:20; 20:12), a neck (28:10, 12), an armpit (38:12)—the corporeal whole cannot be reconstituted on their basis, as they are no longer the organs of an integrated body but the fragments of an imagined embodiment, embedded in a disembodied (or rather, differently bodied) system.[228] As he exists within this system, Jrm is truly "made of non-personal individuations and pre-individual singularities" (HRS 191), with an anonymous singularity lurking in every triconsonantal root and an inchoate individuation leaping from every verbal conjugation: read a few verses, preferably aloud, and you are already "becoming-Jeremiah."[229] Even if we manage to impose some skeletal coherence upon the fragments and flesh them out into a satisfactory human-like whole, we would inevitably fail to capture the historical prophet as he once (and only once) existed. More profoundly, we would fail to understand the nature and purpose of mimesis itself. From this angle, the ever-evolving "quest of the historical Jeremiah" reveals a certain intrinsic absurdity.[230] It seems almost akin to crafting an elaborate Goldbergian contraption to smoke tobacco through the frame and canvas of Rene Magritte's *The Treachery of Images*, in ironic defiance of the painting's singular insistence that "this is not a pipe"![231]

---

[226] Deleuze, "Plato and the Simulacrum," trans. Rosalind Krauss, *October* 27 (1983): 45-56, here 48 and 53 (emphasis original). Cf. Stephen D. Moore, *The Bible after Deleuze: Affects, Assemblages, Bodies without Organs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2023), 111-145, esp. 123-127 on the simulacrum and its opposition to resemblance. In general, my understanding of Jrm and Jer has much in common with Moore's analysis of the bodies of the Synoptic Gospels; cf. 5.4 and 5.5 in the next chapter.

[227] For example of this process at work in an particular pericope, see Diamond, "Portraying Prophecy: Of Doublets, Variants, and Analogies in the Narrative Representation of Jeremiah's Oracles—Reconstructing the Hermeneutics of Prophecy," *JSOT* 57 (1993): 99-119, who traces the refinement of Jeremiah's character through two successive redactions of Jer 37-38. The purification of the prophet becomes especially pronounced in the apocryphal and postbiblical literature that developed around Jrm: see Ronnie Goldstein, "Jeremiah between Destruction and Exile: From Biblical to Post-Biblical Traditions," *DSD* 20 (2013): 433-451, here 438-440, on the postbiblical "endeavor to exalt the biblical figures and present them as perfect heroic protagonists," which "can also be traced back to the book of Jeremiah itself" (438).

But just as Goldstein (ibid.) acknowledges "the biblical evidence to the contrary," we must not overlook the many morally repugnant aspects of Jrm's canonical portrayal, from his virulent misogyny (3:1-5, etc.) to his callous thirst for the suffering of his compatriots (8:1-3, etc.); on this matter, see Sharp, review of *Jeremiah: Preacher of Grace, Poet of Truth*, by Carol Dempsey, *RBL* 10 (2008): 203-206, here 205-206.

---

[228] Of these organ-fragments, Polk (*Persona*, 25-57) unsurprisingly focuses on the heart, which is uniquely well suited to building a "self" for the persona. On "embodiment," see Holt, "And the Word Became Words: The Inscription of the Divine Word on Jeremiah the Prophet in Jeremiah the Book," in *Partners with God: Theological and Critical Readings of the Bible in Honor of Marvin A. Sweeney*, ed. Shelley L. Birdsong and Serge Frolov (Claremont, CA: Claremont Press, 2017), 189-200, who notes the "metamorphosis" that occurs when "[w]hat was heard or seen or experienced by the prophet from the beginning turns into [a movable] object" (198). For Holt, the literary embodiment of the prophet is *ipso facto* that of the divine word: "after becoming flesh in the shape of the prophet the word continues its journey of embodiment and becomes a book" (ibid.). However, Holt conceives of this journey mainly in metaphorical terms (190-195), which threaten to understate or obscure the essentially differential nature of this metamorphosis.

[229] On becoming, and the multifaceted phenomenon of "becoming-*x*," see ATP 233-309; see also 5.4 in the next chapter.

[230] For this phrase, see Carroll, *Chaos*, 25 as well as David Jobling, "The Quest of the Historical Jeremiah: Hermeneutical Implications of Recent Literature," in Purdue and Kovacs, *Prophet to the Nations*, 285-297, esp. 291: "Have the modern biographers of Jeremiah, in attempting to present a coherent individual out of all parts of the book, been engaged in a task which is in principle impossible?" The reference, in both cases, is to Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of Its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede* (New York: Macmillan, 1968).

[231] On the mimetic provocations of this painting and others in Magritte's oeuvre, see Michel Foucault, *This Is Not a Pipe*, ed. and trans. James Harkness (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983).

In fact, as Deleuze finishes describing his structuralist hero, a literary simulacrum like Jrm looks increasingly unsuitable, or at least insufficient, for the task. Deleuze lays special emphasis on "the resistant and creative force of this hero, on its agility in following and safeguarding the displacements, on its power to cause relations to vary and to redistribute singularities, always casting another throw of the dice" (HRS 191). In a word, the structuralist hero ought to define a "praxis," because structuralism itself is "not only inseparable from the works that it creates, but also from a practice in relation to the products that it interprets" (ibid.). Although I have shown in this chapter that Jer should count, in some meaningful sense, as a structuralist work, I must concede that neither the book nor its prophet can secure such a praxis alone. Even in the domain of religion or theology, Jer and Jrm themselves are no more than textual artifacts of the historical Israel and its nascent Judaism; for them to be anything else requires something else to be added to them. Creativity, agility, variability, practice—these are the qualities of *life*, and they can only be exercised by the living *readers* who make use of a book, biblical or otherwise, for any number of reasons. To learn how Jer has been and may still be used, we will need to look beyond this one prophetic book to the broader Hebrew Bible, and to everything else that is involved in it.

# 5. THE TREE AND THE RHIZOME: THREE ONTOLOGIES OF A (BIBLICAL) BOOK

Never fear. We may let the scaffolds fall
Confident that we have built our wall.
-Seamus Heaney, “Scaffolding” (1998)

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.
-Joyce Kilmer, “Trees” (1913)

## 5.1. Introduction

The history of philosophy contains few rhetorical gambits as audacious as the closing lines of Ludwig Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. This dense book purports to “draw a limit to thought” so as to clarify traditional philosophical problems that will persist, in Wittgenstein’s telling, as long as “the logic of our language is misunderstood.”[1] Starting from a deceptively simple first premise—“The world is all that is the case”—the text proceeds as a meticulously structured series of nested propositions and explanations, subordinated to one another by the expansion and contraction of decimal numbers.[2] Over the course of his argument, Wittgenstein leverages the whole apparatus of formal logic to offer what seem to be durable solutions to intractable issues of language and its relationship to the world. Befitting the rigorous symbolism of logical systems, his statements are often as complex as they are concise. For example, the penultimate primary proposition (numbered “6”) states: “The general form of a truth-function is $[\bar{p}, \bar{\xi}, N(\bar{\xi})]$. This is the general form of a proposition”—for my purposes, it doesn't really matter what these symbols mean.[3] The diligent reader who follows this argument through to its conclusion will find on the last page a surprising, if not altogether unexpected, assertion.[4] Before the seventh and final proposition—"What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence"—Wittgenstein makes the following remark:

---

[1] Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness (London: Routledge, 1974), 3.

[2] For example, “1.11” denotes a proposition derived from “1.1,” itself a derivation from the primary premise “1”; “1.2” represents yet another derivation from the same primary premise, logically on a par with 1.1; for Wittgenstein’s own exposition of this system, see the footnote in *Tractatus*, 5.

> My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical, when he has used them—as steps—to climb up beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it.) He must transcend these propositions, and then he will see the world aright.[5]

In this stunning repudiation of his own project, the "early" Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus* looks already ahead to the "later" Wittgenstein of the *Philosophical Investigations*, for whom the rules governing language are not those of logic but of games, just as the relations among things are better described by "family resemblances" than set-theoretical postulates.[6] And yet, the process of Wittgenstein's early work cannot be cleanly detached from his later productions: only by actually ascending the ladder can we grasp the truth to which it leads.

To be sure, Deleuze was no Wittgenstein, whose followers he denounced in a late interview as "assassins de la philosophie."[7] Nor does his career submit to such a starkly binary periodization. Wittgenstein's *Investigations* were published posthumously in 1956, more than three decades after the first version of the *Tractatus* (1921), whereas Deleuze's major works appeared in comparatively quick succession over a similar span of time in the latter half of the century, each no more than a few years apart from another.[8] As my philosophically charged study of prophecy and its literary representations draws to a close, however, the example of Wittgenstein's "ladder" commends itself, however ironically. While I do not consider my engagement with Deleuze to be "nonsensical," I must admit that it is inevitably incomplete and even inaccurate, insofar as it remains enclosed within the (admittedly commodious) confines of "structuralism." On the one hand, such limited employment of so difficult a philosopher is perhaps defensible. Deleuze's theory of structuralism offers a relatively straightforward approach to other concepts, such as the virtual and the actual or "different/ciation," that are more integral to his thought but also, by that very fact, more obscure to the uninitiated.[9] Since a dissertation must eventually come to an end (or so one hopes, at least), the interests of rhetorical economy and explanatory parsimony are well served by an itinerary that opts for the path of least conceptual resistance.

---

[3] See Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, 70, where he elaborates: "What this says is just that every proposition is a result of successive applications to elementary propositions of the operation $N(\bar{\xi})$" (6.001).

[4] Wittgenstein (*Tractatus*, 4) gestures obliquely toward the conclusion at the end of his preface: "I therefore believe myself to have found, on all essential points, the final solution of the problems. And if I am not mistaken in this belief, then the second thing in which the value of this work consists [the first is that "thoughts are expressed in it"] is that *it shows how little is achieved* when these problems are solved" (emphasis added).

[5] Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, 89; this statement is numbered 6.54.

[6] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984).

[7] Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze* (Paris: Editions Montparnasse-Regards, 2004); this video interview is organized like an "alphabet book," in which "W is for 'Wittgenstein.'" On the content and context of this interview, see Jean-Jacques Lecercle, *Deleuze and Language*, Language, Discourse, Society (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 62-64, who notes that because Deleuze stipulated "that the [interview]

---

should be shown only after his death," he enjoys "a total freedom of expression: the privilege not only of old age but of death allows him to be as rude as he pleases" (63). His caustic candor toward Wittgenstein and others can thus be heard as "the revenge of the teacher, after a lifetime of pedagogic responsibility, and consequent frustration" (ibid.).

[8] In his translator's preface to DR (xi-xiii), Paul Patton distinguishes two broad phases of Deleuze's career, "one side facing the earlier texts of an unorthodox historian of philosophy, the other facing his subsequent work, alone and with Guattari" (xi). However, Patton (ibid.) places both DR and LS (as well as Deleuze's roughly contemporary study of Spinoza, *Expressionism in Philosophy*) at the boundary between these phases, thereby recalling the many clusters of smaller differences on which all such dichotomies depend. Further complicating attempts at periodization, many of the English translations of Deleuze's texts postdate the French originals by decades (e.g., 1968 vs 1994 for DR, 1969 vs 1990 for LS).

[9] It is worth remembering that Deleuze's essay on structuralism was originally published as part of "an eight-volume history of philosophy, written for students," so its accessibility is not merely purposeful but pedagogical; see Lecercle, *Deleuze and Language*, 106.

On the other hand, an overly narrow fixation on Deleuze's structuralism fails to account for the full range of this thinker's multifaceted work; it is akin to interpreting the *Tractatus* as if the *Investigations* did not exist. In my reading of Deleuze, I have been content for the most part to dabble parenthetically in "(post)structuralism," but others have long since moved on to *post*-poststructuralism![10] Among the most important ramifications of Deleuze's later thought are those that challenge the primacy of the human subject, and human beings more generally, in philosophy and a host of other domains—a shift that may be broadly described as a "nonhuman turn" in theory.[11] Following my remarks at the end of the previous chapter about the person(a) of the prophet Jeremiah (see 4.4), the value of these nonhuman, deanthropocentrizing extensions of the Deleuzian project can hardly be overstated. To overlook them would be to stop short of a comprehensive critique of the construction of Jeremiah, at the risk of simply rebuilding the same old prophet on the new territory of structuralism.

The conclusion of the *Tractatus* thus offers a salutary heuristic: having scaled the edifice of Deleuze's thought on the scaffold of structuralism, we can now transcend these theses in order to see the world aright—or at least, in a new light. Mercifully, however, we may stop short of throwing our ladder away, as Wittgenstein would have us do with his. I maintain that there is indeed a social structure of epistemic intermediation (see Chapter 3) and a literary structure of Jer that grows out of it (Chapter 4). But just as the "persona" of Jeremiah is vitiated by its undue resemblance to and concomitant reliance on a "person" who could have borne that name, Jer suffers from a seemingly representational reproduction of intermediation, with the two "series"

---

[10] For this development in biblical studies, see esp. Stephen D. Moore, *Gospel Jesuses and Other Nonhumans: Biblical Criticism Post-Poststructuralism*, SemeiaSt 89 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2017); also idem, *The Bible after Deleuze: Affects, Assemblages, Bodies without Organs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2023).

[11] On this turn, see Moore, *Jesuses*, 5-7. See also n. 96 in 1.4.1.

of the latter mirrored in the two "complexes" of the former. As much as I may try to emphasize the deep and diverse differences between these structures, my efforts run aground upon the essential and inescapable similarity that binds them. A change of perspective is required: both the structures and their various products must be understood as mere dimensions and segments of a much larger *rhizome* or *assemblage* consisting of manifold factors and actors: ancient and modern, human and nonhuman, virtual and actual, material and semiotic. Although such a system necessarily exceeds the limits of any single study, I intend at least to outline its distinctive features and identify some of its many possible uses, with implications for the rhizomatic dynamics of the Hebrew Bible as a whole.

In what follows, I track Deleuze's delineation of three bio-metaphysical concepts, the "root," the "radicle," and the "rhizome," and three types of books that they define. Correlating these books with major shifts in the conception of the (Hebrew) Bible throughout history, I argue that while the Bible has traditionally been read as a "root-book" and more recently as a "radicle-book," it responds even more readily to treatment as a "rhizome-book." The same is true of the book of Jeremiah within the biblical corpus. Under certain conditions, a reader of Jeremiah can carve this rhizome into a stately prophetic subject of the same name, such as one finds in the would-be biographies of generations past. So many have done so, and not without success, but I hope to show that the book *qua* assemblage is capable of doing *more.* Beyond Jeremiah the historical person, and even Jeremiah the literary character, there lies a Jeremiah unbound by the scriptures or strictures of ancient Near Eastern history and Judeo-Christian theology, an ancient machine with postmodern power.

## 5.2. Regimes of Signs and the Root-Book

In the introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus* (ATP 3-25), Deleuze and Guattari (hereafter, "D&G") define the concept of the "rhizome," a botanical image that recurs throughout this long book as a radical refrain.[12] As a non-hierarchical root structure, branching adventitiously in all directions, the rhizome marks the constitution of an assemblage in a biological domain. When they first present this concept in their introduction, D&G use it to reflect on the nature of books, including the one that they themselves are writing. In so doing, they succinctly yet suggestively formulate what might be described as three ontologies of the book: the "root-book," the "radicle-book" (or "fascicular root-book"), and the "rhizome-book."[13] Of course, each counts as an "ontology" only in the most open and potentially transgressive sense: namely, an account of what something may be or might become. Nicholas Thoburn explains that "[t]hese are tendencies or organizing patterns in the field of the book, not mutually exclusive categories; in any particular book one would expect their co-presence and interaction, albeit with varying degrees of prominence."[14] Nevertheless, all three may help us to understand the complex and contested nature of the biblical text known variously as the "Hebrew Bible," the "Tanakh," and the "Old Testament," among other names. Although D&G themselves posit an intimate connection between religious scripture and the first of these ontologies, for which the Judeo-Christian Bible represents the paradigmatic “root-book,” a closer look at the evolving understanding of the Bible over time shows this assessment to be shortsighted.

---

[12] On the difficult decisions that surround the question of authorship in Deleuze's collaborations with Guattari, see Lecercle, *Deleuze and Language*, 31-36. For reasons that will become clearer as this chapter progresses, neither Deleuze nor Guattari should be considered an "author" in the traditional (i.e., Romantic or modern) sense of an inspired individual uniquely responsible for a work of thought or art. Since D&G themselves seem largely unconcerned with this question (ATP 3: "Why have we kept our own names? Out of habit, purely out of habit…"), it seems more appropriate to efface an equal part of each of their names than to follow the common practice of retaining "Deleuze" and erasing "Guattari."

[13] See Miguel de Beistegui, "'A Book? What Book?' Or Deleuze and Guattari on the Rhizome," in A Thousand Plateaus *and Philosophy*, ed. Henry Somers-Hall, Jeffrey A. Bell, and James Williams (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 9-27, esp. 13, 22 on the ill fit of "ontology" in D&G's project.

[14] Thoburn, "The Strangest Cult: Material Forms of the Physical Book through Deleuze and Guattari," *Deleuze Studies* 7 (2013): 53-82, here 55.

Where, then, do D&G start in theorizing the book? As noted above, their first ontology is that of the “root-book,” but since all three formulations (root, radicle/fascicle, rhizome) draw their terminology from the same botanical domain of roots and root-structures, this designation requires further clarification. The figure most appropriate to the root-book is the singular and self-contained *taproot* as “noble, signifying, and subjective organic interiority” (ATP 5). Even the very materiality of (traditional physical) books appears to affirm this centralized arrangement: the bound codex and its modern successors present us always with a “pivotal spine and surrounding leaves” (ibid.).[15] But just as a taproot may sprout smaller subterranean branches—not to mention the plant that grows above the surface—the (tap)root-book is inseparable from a certain logic of division and duplication. “The book,” conceived thus, “imitates the world, as art imitates nature: by procedures specific to it that accomplish what nature cannot or can no longer do” (ibid.). Although D&G do not use the term here, we may readily recognize these “procedures” as the methods of mimesis, whereby a book or other aesthetic object comes to represent (something in) the world.[16] While mimesis can hardly be reduced to “imitation” if the latter means mere mimicry or apery, it is difficult to deny that a certain inherently duplicative notion of “correspondence between mimetic works, activities, or performances and their putative real-world equivalents” lies at the very heart, or root, of this concept.[17] Upon finding a suitably unified and dignified object in the world or the imagination, the inspired author (or other artist) undertakes a depiction of the object in the medium of language (or another as befits her chosen craft). The resulting and representing likeness should be no less complete and coherent than the represented original, "so as to enable the work to produce its own proper pleasure with all the organic unity of a living creature" (Aristotle, *Poetics* 23.1459a20 [Bywater]).

---

[15] Of course, the taproot is less fitting for both very ancient books (tablets, scrolls, etc.) and very modern ones, such as e-books and audiobooks.

[16] Cf. Beistegui, “What Book,” 15.

In their introductory presentation of the root-book, D&G mostly refrain from concrete examples or elaborations: they make passing references to Mao, Chomsky, and Freud, but otherwise do little more than identify this image of the book with the "classical book" *par excellence* (ATP 5). Cryptic as it may be in that context, their cursory declaration can be clarified by remarks from a later plateau, "On Several Regimes of Signs" (ATP 111-148), which stands out as well, for this study, by virtue of its extensive use of examples drawn from the Hebrew Bible and Jewish history: each plateau is dated, and this one bears the ominous designation "587 B.C. – A.D. 70."[18] In general, a "regime of signs" is "any specific formalization of expression" that constitutes a "semiotic system" (ATP 111); it is a pragmatic account of the formation and functioning of signs in a given milieu.[19] Across the long and non-linear arcs of human history, no fewer than four such regimes are found: *presignifying*, *signifying*, *countersignifying*, and *postsignifying*.[20]

---

[17] Stephen Halliwell, *The Aesthetics of Mimesis: Ancient Texts and Modern Problems* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 15; cf. 13-14 on the inadequacy of "imitation," at least in its modern and frequently pejorative sense, for translating and understanding mimesis.

[18] As the title suggests, *A Thousand Plateaus* is organized not as a linear sequence of chapters but as a more multidimensional arrangement of "plateaus," each of which "can be read starting anywhere and can be related to any other plateau" (22). Of the dates, Brian Massumi ("Translator's Foreword," xiv) gives the following explanation: "Each section is dated, because each tries to reconstitute a dynamism that has existed in other mediums at other times. The date corresponds to the point at which that particular dynamism found its purest incarnation in matter…." On the biblical dynamisms thus reconstituted in the plateau under consideration here, see Roland Boer, "Between the Goat's Arse and the Face of God: Deleuze and Guattari and Marx and the Bible," *JSOT* 37 (2013): 295-318.

[19] See also Audrey Wasser, "587 BC – AD 70: On Several Regimes of Signs," in Somers-Hall et al., ATP *and Philosophy*, 83-98, here 84-86.

D&G are quick to clarify that these regimes are as readily distinguishable in abstract analysis as they are rarely distinct in actual practice. When it comes to the latter, we are always dealing with a concrete mixture of multiple semiotic systems, such that "we can say no more than that a given people, language, or period assures the *relative dominance* of a certain regime" (ATP 119, emphasis added). Of these combinations, it is in the "signifying" and "postsignifying" regimes, or rather in the movement from the former to the latter, that the "classical" root-book makes its entrance. The signifying regime is characterized by the supremacy of the signifier, understood first and foremost as the *face* of a despot or a god, on whom this regime necessarily depends (ATP 115, cf. 85-86).[21] Under the power or gaze of the despot, signs may only ever refer to other signs, each of which submits to successive and ever-expanding centers or circles of interpretative authority (priests, scribes, seers, etc.) in order to have its meaning fixed within the rigidly ramified, hierarchical networks of this totalistic system.[22] The book and other repositories of the written word may well play a role in the signifying regime, but only on the condition that they maintain writing's originally oral nature as a mouthpiece for "[t]he voice [that] emanates from the face" at the center of the semiotic system (ATP 115). A book under this regime is compelled to amplify the all-signifying voice of the despot and thus to magnify the all-seeing face that speaks it.

---

[20] On the pre- and countersignifying regimes, see ATP 117-118 and Boer, "Arse," 298-308. For the signifying and postsignifying regimes, see respectively nn. 22 and 23 below. See also Lecercle, *Deleuze and Language*, 81-82 on the "dramatic irony" of this typology, whose prefixes connote the centrality of the signifying regime even as they denote alternatives to it.

[21] On the centrality of the face in the signifying regime, see Wasser, "Signs," 88-90. D&G devote a whole plateau to "faciality," dated "Year Zero" (ATP 167-191), where they more extensively critique the construction of the face and its surprisingly far-reaching semiotic role.

[22] On the signifying regime, see ATP 111-117; Thoburn, "Strangest Cult," 56; Wasser, "Signs," 86-90.

In contrast to these operations that govern the signifying regime of signs, which D&G call "signifiance," there is a *post*signifying regime defined by an entirely different procedure, "subjectification" (ATP 119).[23] As the terminological shift suggests, the postsignifying regime elevates the *subject* to the position of primacy once occupied by the signifier. The ascendency of the subject is enabled by a fracturing of the holistic semiotics of the signifying regime: the god or despot turns away and hides his face, releasing the subject to pursue her own passions or fixations, to follow the trail of a favorite "sign or packet of signs" as it "detaches from the irradiating circular network" of the signifying totality (ATP 121). Accordingly, the signifying regime's radiating circles of collective interpretation are now transected and transgressed by radial lines along which individual subjects or groups thereof flee, each in the direction of its own self-identification. Each of these lines, in turn, departs from a discrete "point of subjectification" that drives the construction of subjectivity as it shapes behavior and desire. These diverse and highly variable points constitute a chaotic constellation of quasi-Cartesian "cogitos on everything," from the "idea of the infinite" for a "so-called modern, or Christian" philosopher (such as Descartes, in the original cogito) to a "faciality trait for someone in love," and even "[a] dress, an article of underwear, [or] a shoe…for a fetishist" (ATP 128-129)—to say nothing of *capital*, which so often functions as just such a point for those living within the pervasive socioeconomic system that it names.[24]

---

[23] On the postsignifying regime, see ATP 119-126; Thoburn, "Strangest Cult," 57; Wasser, "Signs," 92-95.

[24] For further examples and explanation of these points, see Wasser, "Signs," 93-94. On capital as "a point of subjectification par excellence," see ATP 130.

In the signifying regime, any sign that finds release from its orbit around the despot is doomed to receive a negative and quite literally repulsive valuation as the price of its escape. Deleuze gives the example of the biblical scapegoat (Lev 17:6-10, 20-22), chosen as a sign only to be sent away at once into the wilderness, so that the system to which it belongs might be preserved by its expiatory expulsion (ATP 116).[25] The postsignifying regime recodes these same flights as *positive* acts that lay the foundations for subjectivity beyond the despotic bounds of signifiance. To say that flight from the center has become positive, however, does not mean that it is also painless. Recall the dates of this plateau, 587 BCE and 70 CE, when first the Babylonians and then the Romans destroyed the temple in Jerusalem: it is no coincidence that the proceedings of subjectification would be bookended by such catastrophes, "after each of which there were just enough survivors to start a new proceeding" (ATP 128). Resuming their running thread of Jewish history in its biblical depiction, D&G emphasize the inherently personal and *passional* nature of subjectification:

> An entirely negative line of flight occupied by the animal or scapegoat laden with all the dangers threatening the signifier has become an impossibility. Let misfortune befall us: this formula punctuates Jewish history. It is we who must follow the most deterritorialized line, the line of the scapegoat, but we will change its sign, we will turn it into the positive line of our subjectivity, our Passion, our proceeding or grievance. We will be our own scapegoat. (ATP 122)

Following from the poststructuralist arguments of the previous two chapters, it is no surprise that D&G point to the *prophet* as "the main figure" of the exemplary construction of Jewish identity under the postsignifying regime (ATP 123). In transmitting the words of a god essentially hidden behind the veil of revelation, the prophet "interprets nothing" (ATP 124), quite unlike the signifying regime's priests or seers. Prophecy instead inaugurates a new and more contentious relationship with the deity, one based on the lonely actions and passions of linearly unfolding subjectivity rather than the collective interpretation of constantly circulating signs. When D&G attribute prophecy to a "double turning away" of the deity and the subject (ATP 123), they discover the defining dynamics of the *r*-series and the *p*-series, which depend alike on this divergence; when they declare that the prophet at once "needs a sign to guarantee the word of God" and "is himself marked" by such a sign (ibid.), they sense the powerful yet paradoxical presence of the Word = *x* that compels these divergent series to converge.

---

[25] Regarding this example, see also Boer, "Arse," 308-315.

Incomplete as this overview of two of the four regimes of signs must be, it will suffice to account for the rise of the root-book in the transition from the signifying regime to a postsignifying one, as well as the role that this conception of the book plays in the latter. Under the signifying regime, as we have seen, the written word is thoroughly bound up with other signs in the semiotic and hermeneutical circles organized around the despot. A book under such conditions cannot be thought to stand on its own as a self-sufficient and self-contained source of meaning, because the book must refer outside itself to some overarching *oral tradition*, without which it cannot be understood. The signifying book is no more than a mnemonic or megaphone for tradition, always in principle replaceable, if not already in fact replaced, by an "external model, a referent, face, family or territory" that "preserves [its] oral character" (ATP 126-127). In the transition to the postsignifying regime, however, the book no less than the subject escapes the circuits of signifiance, effacing its connections to an orality outside itself as it becomes a source of agency and a site of subjectification in its own right. Whereas the signifying regime subordinates writing to an oral and external model, both orality and externality are themselves subordinated to writing under postsignifying conditions. Instead of books that refer to an overarching Tradition, we now find traditions that refer to an underlying Book. D&G write that "the book seems to be internalized, and to internalize everything: it becomes the sacred written Book" (ATP 127). Such a book thereby becomes an *image* of everything, an imitative yet authoritative reflection of the world as a whole. At its most extreme, this totalizing tendency allows the book to play a semiotic role that is simultaneously central and centralizing, not unlike that of the signifying despot, such that the book "takes the place of the face and God" as "the origin and finality of the world" (ibid.).

As the preceding description makes clear, D&G all but identify the characteristic book of the postsignifying regime with the Bibles (*sensu lato*) of the major monotheistic faiths: the Hebrew Bible, the Old and New Testaments, the Quran.[26] A similarly close but more implicit connection may be established between this all-internalizing postsignifying Book and the (tap)root-book, in virtue of the latter's "noble, signifying, and subjective organic interiority" (ATP 5).[27] Assessing D&G's claims from the standpoint of modern biblical studies, it is hard to deny that the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament—I do not claim to speak for scholars of the New Testament, much less the Quran—exhibits a remarkably strong affinity for the conditions of the postsignifying regime. Biblical texts from multiple periods commend or even command the centrality of a *book* (ספר), chiefly the Torah or its precursors, around which Jewish identity is to be constructed. The book of Deuteronomy is especially instructive in this regard, as it envisions even the king (i.e., the would-be despot of the signifying regime) as subordinate to the laws enshrined in that book (Deut 17:14-20, esp. 18-19). A few centuries later, early Judaism's orientation around the Torah *qua* Book is perhaps most fully articulated in the text of Nehemiah, which recounts Ezra's promulgation of just such a book before the (re)assembled community of Jerusalem (Neh 8:1-11). Even if the Levites' "interpretation" (מפרש; 8:8) of Ezra's reading involves more than mere translation, it is nonetheless differentiated from the hieratic and hermetic "interpretosis" of the signifying regime insofar as it extends, exoterically and immediately, to the entire community as a means of their subjective self-determination (i.e., subjectification), instead of moving through successive and increasingly esoteric circles of hermeneutical hegemony in the interest of a despot.[28] Still, as with just about any issue, the Hebrew Bible is by no means monolithic in its attitude toward this one. Despite the unusually detailed and generally positive portrayals of textuality in the book that bears his name, even Jeremiah decries the "lying pen of scribes" (Jer 8:8) as a distorting influence on more fundamental oral traditions, to which the written word ought to submit.[29] At the same time, the very writtenness of Jeremiah's denunciation of writing ironically recalls and reinforces the prophet's role as the paradigmatic postsignifying functionary. Here as elsewhere, it is important to remember that individual regimes of signs are never observed in a pure state, but only in "concrete mixed semiotics" comprising multiple mutually interacting systems (ATP 136, 139).

---

[26] Cf. ATP 127, where D&G not only cite the Quran and the Old and New Testaments but also opine that a host of modern writings ("Wagner, Mallarmé, and Joyce, Marx, and Freud") are all "still Bibles," each serving some process of subjectification within the passional postsignifying regime.

[27] Cf. Thoburn, "Strangest Cult," 56-57, who also links these concepts.

---

[28] On the subjective (indeed, subjectifying) centrality of the book in this episode, "wherein the Torah replaces the individual leader," see Tamara Cohn Eskenazi, *In an Age of Prose: A Literary Approach to Ezra-Nehemiah*, SBLMS 36 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 96-111, here 99. Against the common hypothesis that the Levites "interpreted" by translating the Torah's obsolescent Hebrew into vernacular Aramaic, see Lester L. Grabbe, *Ezra-Nehemiah* (London: Routledge, 1998), 53-54.

On "interpretosis," see ATP 114, 117; cf. Stephen D. Moore, "A Bible That Expresses Everything While Communicating Nothing: Deleuze and Guattari's Cure for Interpretosis," in *Biblical Exegesis without Authorial Intention? Interdisciplinary Approaches to Authorship and Meaning*, ed. Clarissa Breu, BibInt 172 (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 108-125, here 109. Although interpretation persists in the postsignifying regime, its "function…has totally changed": perhaps "it disappears entirely in favor of a pure and literal recitation forbidding the slightest change, addition, or commentary…. Or else interpretation survives but becomes internal to the book itself, which loses its circulatory function for outside elements…. Finally, interpretation may reject all intermediaries or specialists and become direct, since the book is written both in itself and in the heart, once as a point of subjectification and again in the subject…" (ATP 127). If the last of these outcomes best describes "the Reformation concept of the book" (ibid.), the first two come closer to the early Jewish experience of the Bible. For the rabbis of late antiquity, the rote recitation of fixed scriptural formulas was preferable to direct literary engagement with the written biblical text; the "Spoken Scripture" (*mikra*) of the former encompassed both the "Written Torah" of the latter and the "Oral Torah" of rabbinic tradition. On these aspects of pre-medieval Jewish scriptural practice, see Rebecca Scharbach Wollenberg, *The Closed Book: How the Rabbis Taught the Jews (Not) to Read the Bible* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2023). Although the rabbis' insistence on orality recalls the interpretive circuits of the signifying regime, these practices are given a decidedly postsignifying orientation by the (written, albeit hidden) textual axis around which they revolve.

Though the postsignifying regime lays claim to the "sacred written Book," other considerations prevent an overly hasty equivalence of the (Hebrew) Bible with D&G's "root-book." At the material level, the earliest biblical manuscripts were not taproot-like codices but comparatively rhizomorphic *scrolls.*[30] D&G themselves come close to invoking this ancient medium of text production as a figure for the relationship between the rhizome-book and the "plane of exteriority" (or "consistency"), a concept better explained below (see 5.4): "The ideal for a book would be to lay everything out on a plane of exteriority of this kind, *on a single page, the same sheet:* lived events, historical determinations, concepts, individuals, groups, social formations" (ATP 9, emphasis added). The resistance of the scroll to the root-book, even under the postsignifying regime of signs, is perhaps nowhere more overtly expressed than in the literature of the sectarian community at Qumran. No less than the Jews themselves against the despotic hegemony of foreign empires, the Essenes pursued a passional, postsignifying subjectivity in distinction from the mainstream Judaisms of their day, such as that of the Pharisees.[31] As indicated by both the scale and content of the extant literature, books (or rather, scrolls) were clearly integral to the proceedings of subjectification at Qumran.[32] However, this literature also exhibits a *porous pluriformity*, wherein divergent and even apparently contradictory traditions and editions of books coexist without any rigid demarcation of an exhaustive and exclusive "canon"; this arrangement cannot be assimilated to the "organic interiority" of even the early chirographic codices (e.g., Leningradensis), much less later printed and mass-produced editions of the Bible.[33] Yet, by the advent of the latter, the transformation of the Bible into an "enclosed and sufficient" root-book "constituted as an image of the world" appears to be complete, a development eventually encapsulated in Luther's famous dictum of *sola scriptura*.[34] Indeed, encomiums to the world-reflective totality of scripture have deep roots in both Judaism and Christianity. The Mishnah urges readers to "turn [the Torah] over, and turn it over [again], for everything is in it (דכלא בה)…do not move away from it, for you have no better portion than it" (*Pirkei Avot* 5:22).[35] At the eve of classical antiquity, Augustine likewise asserted that “whatever [one] may have learned from other sources, if it is hurtful, it is there [in the Bible] condemned; if it is useful, it is therein contained” (*De doctrina christiana* 2.42.63 [Shaw]). Given what became of the Bible in the many centuries after Qumran, how can we consider it to be anything other than a, if not *the*, paradigm for the root-book?

---

[29] For this reading of Jer 8:8, see William M. Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book: The Textualization of Ancient Israel* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 114-117; cf. 136-138. For the favorable focus on writing in Jeremiah, see Mark Leuchter, "The Pen of Scribes: Writing, Textuality, and the Book of Jeremiah," in *The Book of Jeremiah: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation*, ed. Jack R. Lundbom, Craig A. Evans, and Bradford A. Anderson, VTSup 178 (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 3-25, esp. 10, n. 29 on the interpretation of Jer 8:8 (all of which Leuchter reads as the prophet "quoting his adversaries"); see also the previous chapter (esp. 4.3.3 and 4.4.2).

[30] On the history and materiality of scrolls, see James Nati, "The Rolling Corpus: Materiality and Pluriformity at Qumran, with Special Consideration of the *Serekh ha-Yaḥad*," *DSD* 27 (2020): 161-201. For this and other anachronisms that undergird conventional conceptions of biblical "books," see also Eva Mroczek, "Thinking Digitally About the Dead Sea Scrolls: Book History Before and Beyond the Book," *Book History* 14 (2011): 241-269; idem, *The Literary Imagination in Jewish Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); Nati, *Textual Criticism and the Ontology of Literature in Early Judaism: An Analysis of the Serekh ha-Yaḥad*, JSJSup 198 (Leiden: Brill, 2022).

---

[31] On the construction of subjectivity at Qumran, and the role of texts therein, see Carol A. Newsom, *The Self as Symbolic Space: Constructing Identity and Community at Qumran*, STDJ 52 (Atlanta: SBL, 2004), esp. 23-75 on the departure of this sectarian subjectivity from more popular modes of Second Temple Judaism.

[32] For studies of particular texts, namely the Serekh ha-Yaḥad and the Hodayot, see Newsom, *Self*, 77-346.

[33] On pluriformity and (the lack of) canonicity at Qumran, see Nati, *Ontology of Literature*, 11-18, 29-31; see also Eugene Ulrich, "Qumran Evidence for the Text and Canon of the Bible," in *Scribal Practice, Text and Canon in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Essays in Memory of Peter W. Flint*, ed. John J. Collins and Ananda Geyser-Fouché, STDJ 130 (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 7-22. On the implications of these insights for Second Temple Judaism more broadly, see Mroczek, "The Hegemony of the Biblical in the Study of Second Temple Literature," *Journal of Ancient Judaism* 6 (2015): 2-35.

[34] Thus Thoburn, "Strangest Cult," 55-56, who cites illustrative statements to this effect from Francis Bacon (1605) and Alejo Venegas (1550). On this trend in Protestant exegesis, see Hans W. Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study of Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974), 18-40.

[35] Cited in Ulla Koch-Westenholz, *Mesopotamian Astrology: An Introduction to Babylonian and Assyrian Celestial Divination*, CNIP 19 (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 1995), 150.

## 5.3. Historical Criticism and the Radicle-Book

The answer, which leads as well to D&G’s second ontology of the book, is to be found in the enterprise of *historical criticism* that emerged in early-modern Europe, dominated biblical studies until the latter half of the twentieth century, and continues to be widely practiced today.[36] Relative to the “precritical” era that preceded it, the rise of historical criticism is most readily understood as the shift from a supernatural epistemological framework to a primarily *naturalistic* one, according to which explanations of the Bible’s meaning(s) and origin(s) ought to follow the same premises and procedures that would be applied to any other book written by human beings.[37] Although they were far from naïve about the messy and historically contingent nature of the written biblical text, the precritical traditions of Judaism and Christianity were nonetheless anchored in some foundational conception of scripture as a unified, coherent, and God-given whole, ensuring that “[t]he uniformity of scripture reflects the uniformity of truth.”[38] Historical criticism, in contrast, seeks to decompose that whole into its constituent parts, on the basis of their distinct compositional origins and ideological orientations. As almost every first-year seminarian quickly learns, the historical context of a biblical text often differs radically from its literary contents: among the most famous examples are Wilhelm de Wette's remarkably durable thesis of a Josianic (late 7th century BCE) date for the putatively Mosaic book of Deuteronomy, and Julius Wellhausen's somewhat-less-durable Documentary Hypothesis for the composition of (the rest of) the Pentateuch.[39] In relation to the firmly rooted unity of the precritical Bible, few aspects of historical criticism are more revealing than its diametrically opposed attitude toward *contradictions* that might threaten that unity. For both the pious traditionalist and the historical critic, at some level, inner-biblical contradictions are only ever apparent; however, where the traditionalist maintains unity between seemingly contradictory passages through harmonization, "the exegetical counterpart to belief in the coherence of the divine will," the critic discerns disunity through periodization, on the assumption that divergent viewpoints reflect different sources created in disparate contexts.[40]

---

[36] For a detailed, albeit dated, account of historical criticism, see Edgar Krentz, *The Historical-Critical Method* (Philadelphia, Fortress, 1975), 6-32. More recently, see John J. Collins, *The Bible after Babel: Historical Criticism in a Postmodern Age* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), esp. 1-25 for a brief overview of the enterprise and its current challenges.

[37] On the connection between epistemological naturalism and modern historical criticism, as prefigured in the writings of Spinoza (1632-1677), see J. Samuel Preus, *Spinoza and the Irrelevance of Biblical Authority* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 154-202.

[38] On early Jewish awareness of the Bible’s textual disorder, see Mroczek, “‘Without Torah and Scripture’: Biblical Absence and the History of Revelation,” *HS* 61 (2020): 97-122; Wollenberg, *Closed Book*, 26-58. On similar sentiments among early modern Christians, see Michael C. Legaspi, *The Death of Scripture and the Rise of Biblical Studies*, OSHT (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 18-25. For the quote, see Jon D. Levenson, *The Hebrew*

Since the historical-critical project can be traced at least as far back as Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1670), its notion of a historically conditioned and disunified Bible constitutes perhaps the earliest example of a book conceived according to D&G's second biblio-botanical image, the "radicle-system, or fascicular root…to which our modernity pays

---

*Bible, the Old Testament, and Historical Criticism: Jews and Christians in Biblical Studies* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 5.

[39] On de Wette, see John W. Rogerson, *J.M.L. de Wette, Founder of Modern Biblical Criticism: An Intellectual Biography*, JSOTSup 126 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), esp. 39-42, 58-60 on de Wette's view of the date of Deuteronomy. On Wellhausen's hypothesis and its contentious history, see Ernest Nicholson, *The Pentateuch in the Twentieth Century: The Legacy of Julius Wellhausen* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

[40] For this contrast in the treatment of contradictions, see Levenson, *Hebrew Bible*, 2-6, here 5.

willing allegiance" (ATP 5).[41] The radicle-book (or, more accurately, "fascicular root-book") is not so much a departure from the first image of the book as it is a mere modification, a "botched escape" that injects a certain measure of superficial disorder or chaos into the root-book without disturbing its deeper unity.[42] Instead of the singular and linearly organized taproot, we now find a multiply branching root-structure, which nonetheless reproduces the fundamental holism of the former through a process of hierarchical bifurcation that subordinates differences to successive nodes of originary identity. So long as it provides a suitable basis for its ultimate unification—a central theme, a sustained method, a famous name—even a book constructed as a "fascicular" bundle of branching roots will still come to function as a (tap)root-book in the end. Based on their references to James Joyce and William Burroughs, D&G clearly regard the radicle-book as a thoroughly modern, if not postmodern, product. As Thoburn observes, "The concept seems designed precisely to scupper modernist experiments in the form of writing."[43] It is the "natural reality" of the (post)modern world (ATP 5), with its pluralistic proliferation of incommensurable perspectives and resulting dea(r)th of foundational metanarratives, that creates the characteristic fractures in the radicle-book, which fragments itself as it struggles to express the realities of a fragmented world.[44]

---

[41] For Spinoza's contribution to historical criticism, see n. 37 above.

[42] Thoburn, "Strangest Cult," 62. Hence the preferability of the adjective "fascicular" over the substantive "radicle," although I will continue to use the latter in the interest of concision.

[43] Ibid.

[44] For the relationship of modernism to metanarrativity, and postmodernism defined as "incredulity toward metanarratives," see Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Frederic Jameson, Theory and History of Literature 10 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), esp. xxiv for the latter definition, so suggestive yet "[s]implifying to the extreme."

And yet, in principle if not in fact, a "spiritual reality" steps in to arrest the fragmentation of such a work by supplying it with a sense of wholeness along a "supplementary dimension." This is the reality of the *subject*, in contrast to the natural reality of the object: in the radicle-book, "unity is consistently thwarted and obstructed in the object, while a new type of unity triumphs in the subject" (ATP 6). As we saw above (in 5.2), the root-book is already a site of subjectification; the radicle-book augments and extends those proceedings, for its author even more than its reader. In proportion to their success in straining the limits of artistic and linguistic representation, the authors of radicle-books assume the mantle of the creative visionary, the radical revolutionary, the inspired genius. They "are indeed angel makers, *doctores angelici*, because they affirm a properly angelic and superior unity" (ibid.). Superior as it may be, however, the unity guaranteed by the author of a radicle-book makes no decisive break with that of the root-book. Rather, for books of both types, the figure of the author exerts an essentially conservative pressure toward conformity and homogeneity. More extensively than D&G, Michel Foucault has elucidated the consolidating effects of the "author function" in literature and the discourse that surrounds it.[45] Even in the most resolutely experimental literature, the author still supplies "the principle of thrift in the proliferation of meaning," pointing toward what seem to be "inexhaustible worlds of signification" only on the condition that many more are excluded so as to protect the overall coherence and integrity of the oeuvre.[46] The discursive formulas and dismissive gestures associated with this principle are all too familiar: "If you read her other works/unpublished notes/critical biography, you'll see that she *really* means…"

---

[45] See Foucault, "What Is an Author?", in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Vintage, 2010), 101-120. On the significance of this essay for biblical scholarship, especially in the wake of Deleuze, see Moore, *Bible after Deleuze*, 60-63.

[46] Foucault, "Author?", 118. Cf. Sandra Heinen, "Exegesis without Authorial Intention? On the Role of the 'Author Construct' in Text Interpretation," in Breu, *Exegesis without Intention*, 7-23, here 9.

Compared to the root-book, then, the radicle-book presents us with two interrelated continuities, one in its object and another in its subject. First, not despite but because of its many fractures, the radicle-book retains the root-book's mimetic role as the image of a now-fractured world, like tempestuous waters mirroring the gray chaos of a thunderous sky. Second, no less than the root-book, the radicle-book requires attribution to an authorial subject in whose vision and volition this peculiar unity-from-disunity is grounded. Although the emergence of historical criticism considerably predates D&G's exemplars of the radicle-book in the works of Joyce or Burroughs, much the same continuities can be seen to link the historical-critical Bible, *qua* radicle-book, with the taproot-like Bible that predominated in the precritical era. It is as if the fragmentation of the Bible anticipated, and to some extent precipitated, that of the world; or perhaps the Bible's fascicular fragmentation could only be recognized as such after other books and events had more amply instantiated that paradigm.[47] In either case, at the representational or mimetic level, historical criticism preserves the precritical presumption of a duplicative correspondence between Bible and world by (rightly, for the most part) retrojecting the natural messiness of human life onto the (supposedly) supernatural origins of the biblical text.[48] Accordingly, the text is no longer thought to be an organic whole that directly represents the divine will from the privileged perspectives of a procession of more or less mythical personages—Moses, Joshua, Samuel and so on (cf. *Bava Batra* 14b)—but a far more artificial unity comprising the contentious and cacophonous voices of many diverse groups: political factions, priestly families, scribal schools, etc. Even if these voices can still be synthesized and systematized into a canonical totality that retains the universal pretensions of the precritical Bible, as certain forays in "biblical theology" would have it, what each voice presents directly and individually is a picture only of its own ideology and, through that lens, its immediate historical circumstances.[49] For example, the famous narrative now delimited as Genesis 1:1-2:4a (itself a testament to historical-critical fragmentation) is no straightforward account of the origins of the universe, but a more oblique witness to the Priestly Source's creative appropriation of Mesopotamian creation mythology, presumably in an exilic or postexilic context.[50] Such depictions are inevitably more partial and less reliable than the pristine panoramic vistas revealed by the Bible in a precritical age, but they remain representational all the same.

---

[47] Cf. Legaspi, *Death of Scripture*, 3-5, who attributes the Bible's fracturing to the Reformation and other schisms of early modern Christianity.

[48] To be sure, some of this messiness was already recognized before the rise of modern biblical criticism; see n. 38 above.

They remain authorial, as well. This continuity is arguably even more significant than the representational resemblances just described, in virtue of the pervasive persistence of questions of authorship across the history of biblical scholarship, and especially in studies of Jeremiah and the other Latter Prophets.[51] Although historical criticism has substantially reframed those questions, its answers have exhibited a distinctly precritical instinct to protect both the figure of the author and the unifying force of the "author function," albeit in different guises. Surveying the aforementioned list of biblical authors given in the Babylonian Talmud (*Bava Batra* 14b), it quickly becomes apparent that the rabbis made these attributions according to a criterion of *historical probability*, whereby each book is assigned to a figure more or less contemporary with the events described therein. As Meir Sternberg observes of this rabbinical logic, "The qualifying principle is that each writer should have a reasonable claim to familiarity with the specific subject or information treated in the book: through personal experience…and/or access to traditional lore[.]"[52] This "empirical" model of biblical authorship may be broadly distinguished from an "inspirational" model that treats the human author as little more than the amanuensis of an all-powerful God. Sternberg cites an especially poignant example of the inspirational model from the same Talmudic tractate. In a debate over Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, the last eight verses of which (Deut 34:5-12) were customarily assigned to Joshua because they describe Moses's death, a certain Rabbi Simeon objects to this consensus. "Can the scroll of the Law be short of one word," he asks, "and is it not written: 'Take this book of the law'? No; what we must say is that up to this point the Holy One, blessed be he, dictated and Moses repeated and wrote, and from this point on God dictated and *Moses wrote with tears*"—knowing all the while that he would die before Israel entered its promised land.[53]

---

[49] The work of Brevard S. Childs provides an apt example of such systematization: see *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970); *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979); *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985). Even avowedly pluralistic biblical theologians can be drawn toward this species of unification. See, for instance, Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Advocacy, Dispute* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), which subsumes the whole Hebrew Bible under a single global metaphor of "testimony" at "trial" (117-120) even as it employs that very metaphor to articulate divergent theological perspectives within the text.

[50] See Kenton L. Sparks, "*Enūma Elish* and Priestly Mimesis: Elite Emulation in Nascent Judaism," *JBL* 126 (2007): 625-648, esp. 629-632 on Genesis 1.

[51] On the disproportionate focus on authorship in the prophetic books, see Martti Nissinen, "Reflections on the 'Historical-Critical' Method: Historical Criticism and Critical Historicism," in *Method Matters: Essays on the Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Honor of David L. Petersen*, ed. Joel M. LeMon and Kent Harold Richards, SBLRBS 56 (Atlanta: SBL, 2009), 479-504, here 494-495.

The inspirational model, which safeguards scriptural integrity by appealing to divine omnipotence and omniscience, cannot easily cohere with the naturalistic epistemology of historical criticism: Moses could not have written the Pentateuch, weeping or otherwise, if he never existed as the (post)biblical traditions say he did. On the other hand, the empirical model remains alive and well to this day, although its canons of probability and operative conception of authorship have changed over time. Compared to the august authors imagined by the rabbis, drawn as far as possible from the biblical text itself, historical-critical hypotheses tend to assume a greater distance between the compositional activity of biblical writers and the books of the Bible as we have them, as well as between the identities of those writers and the characters in their texts. In many cases, authorship is no longer assigned to specific individuals at all—with some notable exceptions, like Jeremiah and Baruch (see 4.4 above and 5.5 below)—but is instead distributed among "schools," "circles," and other essentially anonymous groups determined by ideological affiliation (e.g., Deuteronomists) or social filiation (e.g., Levites and Zadokites/Aaronides).[54]

---

[52] Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading*, ISBL (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985), 60.

[53] *Bava Batra* 15a; cited in Sternberg, *Poetics*, 61 (emphasis added).

Even with these modifications, it is important to recognize that the very notion of "authorship" in the (Hebrew) Bible owes more to the late influence of Hellenism than to any emic conceptions of literary production in the predominantly oral and scribal cultures of the ancient Near East.[55] The anachronism of biblical authorship draws us already toward D&G's third ontology of the book, which proposes to abolish the figure of the author altogether, and the author function therewith (see 5.4 below). First, though, we should note the perpetuation of this function within the framework of historical criticism. Whether individual or collective, and regardless of the fragmentary or unfamiliar form of its putative compositions, an authorial attribution works almost apotropaically to ward off many, indeed most, possible interpretations of those compositions as unjustified, on the basis of their supposed incoherence with the relevant historical circumstances and the reconstructed position of the author(s) therein. So long as the figure of the author persists, no amount of diversity or plurality will suffice to silence that figure's favorite mantra: "If you look at this text in its original social/historical/literary context, you'll see that it *really* means…"[56]

---

[54] Another potential exception is Nehemiah, whose own account of the rebuilding of Jerusalem may stand behind the biblical book that now bears his (and, in the Jewish canon, Ezra's) name; on the uniqueness of Nehemiah (and Ezra) as an identifiable first-person narrator, see Sternberg, *Poetics*, 73. However, to the extent that a "Nehemiah memoir" can be exegetically recovered, it bears witness to extensive expansion and reworking by other, less discernible hands: on the growth of this book, see Jacob L. Wright, *Rebuilding Identity: The Nehemiah-Memoir and its Earliest Readers*, BZAW 348 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004).

[55] See Schniedewind, *Bible Became*, 7-11. On authorship in the ancient Near East, see also Karel van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 27-49, esp. 31, 39 on the impact of Hellenism. Cf. Mroczek, "Thinking Digitally," 251-253 on the inappropriateness of codex- and print-derived conceptions of authorship in the scribal and scroll-based literary environment of early Judaism. On the primacy of orality in ancient Israel and its milieu, see Susan Niditch, *Oral World and Written Word: Ancient Israelite Literature*, LAI (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1996).

Conventional notions of authorship would thus seem to be more at home in the New Testament, which "[i]n regard to the historical epoch…is as such Hellenistic" (Hans Dieter Betz, "Hellenism," *ABD* III:127-135, here 128). Even there, however, its application is hardly straightforward, as attested by the intractable "Synoptic Problem" or the confounding case of Hebrews.

Compared to the old precritical approaches, historical criticism has undoubtedly effected a prodigious proliferation of authors and their perspectives, but this development is ultimately nothing more than the derivation of a radicle-book from the root-book. In particular, D&G's assessment of "[m]ost modern methods for making series proliferate or a multiplicity grow," such as one might find in certain avant-garde novels, could apply as well to the methods of modern biblical criticism: they "are perfectly valid in one direction, for example, a linear direction, whereas a unity of totalization asserts itself even more firmly in another, circular or cyclic, dimension" (ATP 6). In this case, historical criticism shattered the straightforward totality of traditional authorship, proceeding in a long and solemn line from Moses to Ezra and beyond, only to discover a more circuitous compositional whole; namely, the multilinear processes of revision, redaction, recension, and reception that eventually clustered around a few ancient witnesses to the books of the Hebrew Bible (e.g., the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Septuagint and its *Vorlage*) and ultimately elevated the Masoretic Text of that Bible as uniquely authoritative for most Jews and Christians.[57] Adapting a useful distinction from the subfield of tradition history, we might say that a linear unity in the contents of the biblical text (*traditum*) was replaced by a cyclical unity in the channels of textual transmission (*traditio*).[58] What was once a single and solid taproot became a dense network of bifurcating branches, but all the features that once defined the former—unity, interiority, hierarchy, homogeneity—feel no less at home in the latter.

---

[56] There are, of course, other appurtenances of the author function in biblical studies. See, for example, James W. Watts, "Text and Redaction in Jeremiah's Oracles against the Nations," *CBQ* 54 (1992): 432-447, here 436-442, on the effect of deeming ancient textual modifications to be "scribal" or "redactional": "Because the latter changes seem more 'editorial' or 'authorial' than the former, the label 'redactional' often raises the value of that form of the text in the eyes of modern critics. A scribal change is usually considered a corruption of the 'original' text. A redactional change, however, may be considered an improvement leading up to the 'final form' of the text" (438). The redactional/scribal distinction thus works to construct and maintain the ancient author(s) as privileged guarantor(s) of the Bible's textual and theological cohesion, even though "the earliest tradents…do not seem to have distinguished their [redactional] editorial function from their [scribal] copying task" (ibid.).

I should probably clarify at this point that the foregoing discussion of the historical-critical Bible as a radicle-book is not intended as a wholesale critique of the practice of historical criticism itself. My target is rather a regnant conception of the Bible *qua* book that came to be associated with that practice, mainly as a heuristic to aid in the explication of D&G's third ontology of the book, the "rhizome," below. From a non-heuristic standpoint, though, it is clear that the field of biblical studies could hardly survive without the insights and instigations of historical criticism; if it could, it would be unrecognizable and, in all likelihood, undesirable.[59] Nor, for that matter, is historical criticism any more monolithic than the Bible it studies. Reluctant as the enterprise was to admit a diversity of voices, creating hegemonic imbalances of power that have yet to be fully rectified, it has always encompassed a diversity of viewpoints on specific questions about biblical books and their subjects or objects. Within this welter, some readers have so totally embraced the totalizing tendencies of the radicle-book as to mark a kind of return to the precritical root-book; others have so thoroughly pursued the fragmentation of this same fascicular root-structure as to anticipate the rhizome-book envisioned by D&G.

---

[57] On these developments, see Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 2nd rev. ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress; Assen: Royal Van Gorcum, 1992), 155-197, who rejects the notion of a mutually exclusive "tripartite division" between distinct Samaritan, Septuagint, and Masoretic "recensions" or "text-types" in favor of a "multiplicity of texts…which relate to each other in an intricate web of agreements and differences" (160). Although Tov's theory of a single original and "final authoritative text which it is the object of textual criticism to reconstruct" (177) can hardly be called Deleuzian, his emphasis on mixed differences over fixed categories in the evaluation of biblical manuscripts accords well with the concepts of multiplicity, rhizome, and assemblage applied the Hebrew Bible below (see 5.4-5). In keeping with the chaotic and contested nature of rhizomatic multiplicities, moreover, Tov regards the ascendence of MT as an entirely contingent "outcome of political and socio-religious factors": "It is not that [MT] triumphed over the other texts, but rather, that those who fostered it probably constituted the only organized group which survived the destruction of the Second Temple" (195).

For a critique of Tov's concept of the "original text," see Brennan W. Breed, *Nomadic Text: A Theory of Biblical Reception History*, ISBL (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2014), 17-27. See also Gary D. Martin, *Multiple Originals: New Approaches to Hebrew Bible Textual Criticism*, TCSt 7 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010), 11-61, esp. 58-61 on Tov.

[58] *Traditio* refers to "the process (in its totality and in its details) whereby traditional material is passed from one generation to the next," while *traditum* denotes "the traditional material itself that is being transmitted"; for this distinction, see Douglas A. Knight, *Rediscovering the Traditions of Israel*, 3rd ed., SBLStBL 16 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 5-16, here 5. See also Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 6-18 and *passim*, who adapts Knight's distinction, originally used "primarily with respect to oral materials" (6, n. 17), for the analysis of written texts.

Among studies that seem to yearn for the taproot of yore, we find such figures as Gerhard von Rad's Yahwist, whose "massive *tour de force*" in building up the scant statements of the *kleines geschichtliches Credo* (Deut 26:5b-9; cf. 6:20-24) into the first complete narrative of Israel's origins could put even the lachrymose Moses of Rabbi Simeon to shame.[60] For von Rad, in short, the Yahwist held the key to the "form-critical problem of the Hexateuch." At the same time, by concentrating authorial control in the hypothetical hands of this one inspired innovator, von Rad stepped squarely beyond the comparatively diffuse compositional theories of his predecessors—a development that can rightly be called the "von Rad-icalization" of biblical authorship.[61] A similarly (von-)radical impulse would recur decades later in the work of John

---

[59] Among other methodological virtues, John Collins (*Bible after Babel*, 10) notes that historical criticism has "created an arena where people with different faith commitments can work together and have meaningful conversations"; when the conversations concern topics as volatile as the origin and meaning of the Word of God, the significance of this achievement cannot be overstated.

[60] See von Rad, "The Form-Critical Problem of the Hexateuch," in idem, *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, trans. E. W. Trueman Dicken (London: SCM Press, 1966), 1-78, here 48. For Rabbi Simeon, see n. 53 above.

[61] On this critique of von Rad (as well as John Van Seters and Martin Noth below), cf. Jacob L. Wright, *Why the Bible Began: An Alternative History of Scripture and Its Origins* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 243-245. On the Yahwist as a "classically humanist authorial subject" (alongside Shakespeare and the "Fourth Evangelist"), see Moore, *Bible after Deleuze*, 89.

Van Seters, who also sought to subsume Pentateuchal narratives under the authorial aegis of a Yahwist, imagined now as a shrewd exilic historiographer collecting and combining sources in the manner of Herodotus.[62] Elsewhere in the canon, the continuity of the root-book in the radicle-book may help to explain Martin Noth's influential attribution of the Former Prophets to a "Deuteronomistic Historian" (DtrH), laboring alone amid the ruins of Judah, who integrated older texts and traditions about Israel's time in Canaan into a "comprehensive historical work."[63]

Notably, and in contrast to his conception of the DtrH, Noth's account of the (non-Priestly) Pentateuch mostly resists the pull of the root-book. Whereas Von Rad and Van Seters lionized the Yahwist as a consummate artist, whose personal vision for the Pentateuch (or Hexateuch) would suffice to hold its motley materials together, Noth's Yahwist is little more than an archivist who dutifully recorded a communal stock of traditions (*Grundlage*) that had already developed, to borrow a phrase from Foucault, "in the anonymity of a murmur" as successive generations of Israelites retold the stories of their ancestors.[64] (On the other hand, Noth's P reads like a reproduction of his DtrH: "the work of *one man* with a *definite plan*…."[65]) More germane to the present study, William McKane's much-cited model of Jeremiah as a "rolling corpus" presses the internal tensions of the radicle-book almost to the point of rhizomatic growth. Even though McKane himself would surely balk at the label

---

[62] For a recent overview of this theory, see Van Seters, *The Yahwist: A Historian of Israelite Origins* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013); see also idem, *Prologue to History: The Yahwist as Historian in Genesis* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1992); *The Life of Moses: The Yahwist as Historian in Exodus–Numbers* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1994).

[63] See Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History*, 2nd ed., JSOTSup 15 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), esp. 118-145 (here 120).

[64] See Noth, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions*, trans. Bernhard W. Anderson (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), esp. 40-41 against the "epoch-making role" of von Rad's Yahwist. On anonymity, see Foucault, "Author," 119.

[65] Noth, *Traditions*, 11 (emphasis added).

"poststructuralist," few terms can so neatly encapsulate the "disruptive decentering event" effected by his work.[66] To say that the book of Jeremiah is a "rolling corpus" is to attribute its growth not to programmatic authorial intention, but to the altogether adventitious "triggering" of new additions through *ad hoc* commentary on old ones, like a snowball picking up debris as it tumbles down a hill.[67] Indeed, posing the question of growth in terms of a "corpus" rather than a "composition" is already an act of resistance against the unifying forces that would turn Jeremiah into a root-book. In many cases, as McKane observes, "to call [Jeremianic texts] 'compositions' is to accord them a degree of planning and thoughtfulness which they do not possess."[68]

The rhizome-book opposes not only authorship by a subject, but representation of an object as well. Against the latter, some of the most urgent and important critiques have been voiced by those once excluded from the guild of biblical studies: women, people of color, queer people, colonized people. For example, feminist and womanist readers have increasingly identified and interrogated long-ignored tropes of terror, violence, and objectification that surround depictions of women, real and imagined, in the biblical text. Phyllis Trible erects exegetical memorials to the overlooked and often unnamed female victims in narratives of patriarchal violence; Renita Weems confronts the abusive dynamics of the Bible's metaphorical marriage between a feminized Israel and its domineering God; Gale Yee reveals how gender, race, ethnicity, and class intersect in the persistent biblical symbolism of women as the embodiment of evil; among many others.[69] Within Jeremiah studies, Amy Kalmanofsky has extended the work of Trible, Weems, and Yee in exposing the book's employment of a "rhetoric of horror" that frequently constructs its monsters in gendered terms.[70] More positively, Kathleen O'Connor has reclaimed Jeremiah's pervasive sense of chronological disorder, once considered a problem to be solved by historical-critical investigation, as a productive literary device that "mimics the vastness of Judah's destruction and its effects upon the people."[71] Even if these readings remain representational insofar as they maintain a reproductive correspondence between (neglected features of) the Bible and (marginalized parts of) the world, they nonetheless challenge the primacy of representation by forcing us to reconsider both its scope and its source. Instead of inquiring immediately about what the Bible shows us—in God, in the world, in ourselves—we now have to ask: who decides what it shows us and, more importantly, what it doesn't?

---

[66] On McKane's unwitting poststructuralism, see Claire E. Carroll, "Another Dodecade: A Dialectic Model of the Decentred Universe of Jeremiah Studies 1996–2008," *CBR* 8 (2010): 162-182, here 167-168.

[67] See McKane, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah. Volume I: Introduction and Commentary on Jeremiah I-XXV*, ICC (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), esp. lxii-lxxxiii on the process of "triggering"; *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah*, *Volume II: Commentary on Jeremiah XXVI-LII*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996); "Relations Between Prose and Poetry in the Book of Jeremiah with Special Reference to Jeremiah iii 6-11 and xii 14-17," in *A Prophet to the Nations: Essays in Jeremiah Studies*, ed. Leo G. Purdue and Brian W. Kovacs (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1984), 269-284.

[68] McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, lxii.

Each of these examples points toward an inchoate aspect of the rhizome-book, and of the Hebrew Bible conceived as such: a history without a historian, a corpus without compositions, a representation without reification. And yet, no one of these intimations, nor all of them together, can fully capture the creativity and complexity of the rhizome as a philosophical concept. To learn how to think the rhizome, and how to read the Bible as a rhizome-book, we must turn once again to D&G.

---

[69] Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives*, OBT (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984); Weems, *Battered Love: Marriage, Sex, and Violence in the Hebrew Prophets*, OBT (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995); Yee, *Poor Banished Children of Eve: Woman as Evil in the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003). To name just one further example, which well encapsulates the post-radicle and proto-rhizomatic potential of reading from the(se) margins, see J. Cheryl Exum, *Fragmented Women: Feminist (Sub)versions of Biblical Narratives*, 2nd ed., Cornerstones (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016).

[70] See Kalmanofsky, *Terror All Around: The Rhetoric of Horror in the Book of Jeremiah*, LHBOTS 390 (New York: T&T Clark, 2008); "The Monstrous-Feminine in the Book of Jeremiah," in *Jeremiah (Dis)Placed: New Directions in Writing/Reading Jeremiah*, ed. A. R. Pete Diamond and Louis Stulman, LHBOTS 529 (London: T&T Clark International, 2011), 190-208; "Bare Naked: A Gender Analysis of the Naked Body in Jeremiah 13," in *Jeremiah Invented: Constructions and Deconstructions of Jeremiah*, ed. Else K. Holt and Carolyn J. Sharp, LHBOTS 595 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 49-62.

[71] See O'Connor, *Jeremiah: Pain and Promise* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), 125-134, here 133: in short, "Jeremiah's lack of chronological order is mimetic."

### 5.4. Assemblages, "Antimimesis," and the Rhizome-Book

Neither a taproot nor a fascicular bundle of roots is a tree, but both resemble trees in their organizational geometry: from a primary axis sprout secondary shoots and tertiary offshoots, every point of which is rigidly related to all the others in an elaborate hierarchy. In a word, both taproots and radicles are *arborescent*, tree-like, and it is this widely attested structural schema (in philosophy, psychology, politics, economics, etc.) that D&G mean to critique with their concept of the "rhizome."[72] While an opposition between trees and rhizomes would seem to depend on a simple category mistake—consider the aspen—a broader distinction between arborescent and rhizomatic *systems*, which are hardly limited to botany or biology, has more to commend it.[73] As D&G write:

> A rhizome as subterranean stem is absolutely different from roots and radicles. Bulbs and tubers are rhizomes. Plants with roots or radicles may be rhizomorphic in other respects altogether: the question is whether plant life in its specificity is not entirely rhizomatic. Even some animals are, in their pack form. Rats are rhizomes. Burrows are too, in all of their functions of shelter, supply, movement, evasion, and breakout. The rhizome itself

---

[72] On "arboresence," see Brian Massumi, "Translator's Foreward," ATP xii-xiii.

[73] For a critique of the rhizome along these lines, see Michael Marder, "Deleuze's Rhizome (or, in Philosophical Defense of Trees)," in idem, *Grafts: Writings on Plants* (Minneapolis: Univocal, 2016), 135-138, esp. 136 on the rhizomatic attributes of Pando, a "genetically identical" grove of quaking aspen in Fishlake National Forest, Utah, that shares a single 106-acre root system.

> assumes very diverse forms, from ramified surface extension in all directions to concretion into bulbs and tubers. (ATP 6-7)

It is worth noting that not only philosophy but ecology suggests an affirmative answer to D&G's "question" about the inherently rhizomatic nature of plant life, since even the seemingly individualistic trees of a forest commune with one another via mycorrhizae (plant-fungi symbioses) in intricate webs of interconnection and interdependence.[74] The presence of rhizomatic elements even in apparently arborescent arrangements produces a crucial corollary to D&G's critique of trees. The rhizomatic and the arborescent are opposed in principle, but in practice their borders are much fuzzier: rhizomes may grow in(to) trees, just as trees may grow in(to) rhizomes.[75] The goal is not so much to *find* rhizomes that can resist the arborescent paradigm of the tree, but to *create* them—even, or especially, where trees already exist. A rhizome is a multiplicity, but "[t]he multiple *must be made*," in the Bible no less than in any other domain (ATP 6, emphasis original).

At this point, I can only concur with D&G's own misgivings about the clarity of their concept: "We get the distinct feeling that we will convince no one unless we enumerate certain approximate characteristics of the rhizome" (ATP 7). They explicitly list six "principles," the first and last two of which are closely related and thus numbered together: "connection and heterogeneity"; "multiplicity"; "asignifying rupture"; and "cartography and decalcomania" (ATP 7-13). But what exactly does it mean to say that a rhizome is a connected, heterogenous, cartographic multiplicity wherein ruptures do not signify? It means, first of all, that "any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be" (ATP 7). The total and imperative immediacy of interconnection in a rhizome marks this system's first major difference from the tree. Although each element in an arborescent hierarchy is ultimately connected to every other, any horizontal or diagonal movement across this network is always mediated by movement along a primary *vertical* dimension, the very primacy of which defines the tree as such.[76] This uniquely determinative dimension of height or depth thus establishes a single set of static positions for, and stable relations between, all the elements subordinated within the hierarchy. Only after ascending to the proper level from a point on one branch, following the progressively higher ranks of authority or generality that constitute the arborescent chain of command, can one descend to reach a different point on any other branch.

---

[74] On the role of fungal mycelium as "nature's Internet," see Paul Stamets, *Mycelium Running: How Mushrooms Can Help Save the World* (Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 2005), 2-11. Cf. Marder, "Deleuze's Rhizome," 136-137, who makes a similar case without (explicit) recourse to fungi.

[75] Cf. ATP 15: "There exist tree or root structures in rhizomes; conversely, a tree branch or root division may begin to burgeon into a rhizome."

Connections in a rhizome are comparatively adventitious, immediate, and disparate: "semiotic chains of every nature are connected to very diverse modes of coding (biological, political, economic, etc.) that bring into play not only different regimes of signs but also states of things of differing status" (ATP 7).[77] This is not to say, however, that these connections are evenly or uniformly distributed, so as to be utterly and unremarkably on a par with one another. Rather, within the rhizome, differential flows of power and desire ensure that some of its segments will attract more relations than others, like so many "bulbs" or "tubers" that become concentrated in disproportionately fertile patches of soil (ATP 7). At the same time, like a creeping vine, the rhizome strives incessantly to stretch its own limits by forming and reforming multifaceted relationships with its external environment. Indeed, this self-surpassing search for interconnection is so integral to the rhizome that its absence indicates decline or decay: such a system "is never closed upon itself, except as a function of impotence" (ATP 8).

---

[76] However, Marder ("Deleuze's Rhizome," 137) contends that the supposed primacy of verticality in the tree has more to do with the history of metaphysics than the nature of biophysics: "The tree and the root are *essentially superficial*, regardless of the height and the depth they have come to represent" (emphasis original).

[77] On "regimes of signs," see 5.2 above.

Such varied and variable interrelations both assume and assure *heterogeneity* in the rhizome, whereby it incorporates a haphazard host of apparently incongruous entities. For this reason, D&G also refer to rhizomatic systems as *assemblages* (ATP 4 and *passim*). As Jane Bennett describes them, Deleuzoguattarian assemblages are "ad hoc groupings of diverse elements…that are able to function despite the persistent presence of energies that confound them from within."[78] Among other examples, Bennett points to a 2003 North American power blackout that happened to combine a heterogeneous array of human and non-human entities, without clear determinations of subjective responsibility or objective causality: the power plants, staffed by humans and machines; the transmission wires and their safety mechanisms; an ill-timed brush fire; the executive avarice of energy corporations; consumer demand; government (de)regulation; even electricity itself, unto its constitutive electrons.[79] For all their individual differences, though, the elements of an assemblage may be more generally divided into *material* and *semiotic* components, each of which amounts to a kind of assemblage in its own right—recall Deleuze's earlier remark that "all structures are infrastructures" (HRS 188).[80] The material component is a concrete assortment of intermingling and interacting bodies, which D&G call a "machinic assemblage" (ATP 7, 88). The semiotic component, on the other hand, comprises a no less concrete arrangement of statements, actions, and other attributes that are said of those bodies, together constituting a "collective assemblage of enunciation" (ibid.); in linguistic terms, this is not the abstract totality of *langue* so much as the sum total of particular *paroles*.[81] From another perspective, an assemblage also possesses distinct *virtual* and *actual* components, insofar as these concepts can be correlated with the language of "territory" favored by D&G.[82] Terminological nuances notwithstanding, we may distinguish between the actual or "territorial" sides of an assemblage, which "stabilize it" and compel it to be what it already is, and the virtual sides or "cutting edges of deterritorialization," which "carry it away" by allowing it to become something other than what it has been (ATP 88).[83]

---

[78] Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 23-24. On assemblages, see also Lecercle, *Deleuze and Language*, 184-193 and Moore, *Bible after Deleuze*, 75-77.

[79] See Bennett, *Matter*, 24-28.

[80] Cf. the discussion at nn. 53-54 in 2.4.

The third principle of the rhizome, *multiplicity*, is arguably the most important. In the deliberately opaque definition given at the outset of this section—"a connected, heterogenous, cartographic multiplicity wherein ruptures do not signify"—"multiplicity" is the substantive of which all the other principles are predicated. This is no accident: "it is only when the multiple is effectively treated as a substantive, 'multiplicity,' that it ceases to have any relation to the One as subject or object, natural or spiritual reality, image and world. Multiplicities are rhizomatic" (ATP 8). Borrowed from mathematics via the philosophy of Henri Bergson, the concept of multiplicity works here to forestall the dilemma of unity or disunity, whose two prongs respectively doomed the root-book and the radicle-book (see 5.2 and 5.3 above).[84] A multiplicity resists the overarching, coherent wholeness of "the One," just as it rejects the unconstrained and undifferentiated chaos that tends to beset "the Many" in the One's absence. Elsewhere, Deleuze describes multiplicity as "an organization belonging to the many as such, which has no need whatsoever of unity in order to form a system" (DR 182). Instead of fixed "points or positions…such as those found in a structure, tree, or root," a multiplicity consists chiefly of virtual "lines" extending along multiple "dimensions" (ATP 8), which traverse and transect its diverse virtual and actual components.[85] As a simple example, Deleuze identifies color as "a three-dimensional multiplicity" (DR 182); a literary-historical multiplicity like the Bible would involve at least four dimensions, and likely many more. What matters most at this point is not the specific number of dimensions in any particular multiplicity, however, but two general properties of this dimensionality itself. First, the quantitative question of the number of dimensions is inextricably bound up with a qualitative question of nature: to increase or decrease the number of dimensions is always to create a new and different multiplicity (ATP 8). Second, regardless of the number or nature of the lines that define it, a multiplicity never avails itself of a "supplementary dimension" that would supply it with a transcendental unity or overarching principle of unification (ATP 9). D&G's proposed "formula" for a rhizomatic multiplicity of *n* dimensions, "*n* – 1," literally signifies the *subtraction of unity* ("the One") from such a system (ATP 6; cf. 17, 21, 24, 99). Instead of internal and reflexive relations of unity or self-identity, multiplicities are grounded in external relations of *consistency* with other multiplicities. This is to say that all multiplicities are arranged so as to lie "flat" on "a single plane of consistency or exteriority" (ATP 9): like a vast metaphysical scroll the size of becoming (see 5.2 above), this plane is nothing other than the wholly differen*t*iated and undifferen*c*iated expanse of the virtual.[86]

---

[81] On *langue* vs. *parole*, see Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Roy Harris (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 13-17; on the priority of the latter over the former, see V. N. Vološinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, trans. Ladislav Matejka and I. R. Titunik (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), here 58-82. D&G's conception of language has much in common with that of Vološinov (and, *ipso facto*, his close collaborator and alleged ghostwriter Mikhail Bakhtin), whom they cite approvingly in ATP (524). On D&G's alignment with Vološinov/Bakhtin, see Lecercle, *Deleuze and Language*, 172.

[82] For the virtual and the actual, see 2.3. On the complex concept of territory, which involves not only deterritorialization but also a conversely complementary movement of "reterritorialization," see François Zourabichvili, *Deleuze: A Philosophy of the Event* with *The Vocabulary of Deleuze*, ed. Gregg Lambert and Daniel W. Smith, trans. Kieran Aarons (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 165-167, who notes that territory "does not consist in the objective delimitation of a geographical location" but rather "circumscribes for a given person the field of the familiar and the captivating, marks distances from others, and protects against chaos" (166).

[83] On the link between "becoming" and (de)territorialization, see Zourabichvili, *Vocabulary*, 149-150.

---

[84] On the Bergsonian lineage of this concept, see Zourabichvili, *Vocabulary*, 179-182, here 180.

[85] This is to say that multiplicities encompass the whole process of "different/ciation" (on which see 2.3), straddling both sides of the distinction between virtual and actual. Thus Zourabichvili, *Vocabulary*, 180: "the problem now becomes one of distinguishing between two kinds of multiplicity (one that is actual-extensive, divided into *parts* external to one another, such as matter or extension; and one that is virtual-intensive, dividing itself only into *dimensions* enveloped in one another, such as memory or duration)" (emphasis original).

The fourth principle, "asignifying rupture," militates "against the oversignifying breaks separating structures or cutting across a single structure" (ATP 9). This principle contrastively clarifies the consequences of dimensionality described in the previous paragraph: a change in the number of dimensions means a change in the nature of the rhizome, but a schism or other shift in the contours of the rhizome itself means nothing. Rhizomatic divisions are thereby distinguished from the many *signifying* ruptures with which we are all acquainted in one form or another. A breakage in space may create a homeland for a diaspora, or an "Old World" for a "New" one; a breakage in time may construct a benighted past in the hindsight of an enlightened present, or vice versa. More profoundly, the very ground of signification may be sought in such divisions, both among signs themselves and between any given sign and what it signifies.[87] When a rhizome divides, however, we "can never posit a dualism or a dichotomy, even in the rudimentary form of the good and the bad" (ibid.). This absence of signification extends to other basic binarisms, such as that which marks out a beginning and an end: lacking both, a rhizome always (re)grows outward from the "middle" (*milieu*; ATP 21, cf. xvii). In general, the result of rhizomatic rupture is not the straightforward production of meaning, but a messier profusion of interactions and interpenetrations—of the rhizome in other domains, and of other domains in it.

---

[86] For "different/ciation," see 2.3. For the identification of the virtual with the plane of consistency/exteriority, see ATP xvii.

[87] Cf. Saussure, *Course*, 76-77, 134-143, esp. the bipartite diagrams on 77, 134-135. On the centrality of binary structure in more recent (Chomskyan) linguistics, see also Lecercle, *Deleuze and Language*, 77.

Despite all appearances, the rhizome is resolutely *antimimetic*, even when we encounter it in the beguiling guises of biological mimicry (e.g., the eyespots of a butterfly) or aesthetic representation (e.g., the book and other art forms).[88] In neither case are we dealing with the duplicative reproduction of complementary objects (the image and its model), but rather an "aparallel evolution" of disparate entities that affect one another precisely to the extent that they effect changes, or "becomings," in one another (ATP 10).[89] A rhizome does not reflect anything so much as it *refracts everything*, making a difference in the world even as the world makes a difference in it. For a rhizome-book, as we will see, the consequences of this refractive "antimimesis" are far-reaching indeed.

First, though, I should address the final principle(s), "cartography and decalcomania" (ATP 12-13). If the principle of asignifying rupture assures an antimimetic orientation for the rhizome, the principle of cartography—of which "decalcomania," a method of decorative transfer (and the source of the English word "decal"), is merely the inverse—contributes an analogous *antistructural* impetus. That is, a rhizome resists integration into genetic or evolutionary structures that presume to explain its origin and development, because it lacks the clearly demarcated limits, stages, and strata that such schemata invariably demand. D&G describe prefab Procrustean paradigms of this sort as "tracings" that, by definition, are "infinitely reproducible" insofar as they purport to describe objects (e.g., the unconscious or a language-system) that are always “already there from the start” (ATP 12). Against the tracing or “decaling” of structures on a rhizome, D&G advocate for a more properly rhizomatic method of *cartography* that produces diagrammatic “maps” rather than programmatic tracings; these maps are characterized, first and foremost, by their being “entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real” (ibid.). In contrast, a tracing merely reproduces some preexisting part of the real that it thereby reifies as its model, “like a photograph or an X ray that begins by selecting or isolating…what it intends to reproduce” (ATP 13). In this regard, cartography extends and augments the process of asignifying rupture. The rupturing of a rhizome always entangles it with other beings so as to effect other becomings, but the rhizome itself is a map that shows where such interpenetration has already occurred and, more importantly, where it may yet occur.

---

[88] See ATP 10-11 on the opposition of rhizome to mimesis, mimicry, and similar concepts; ATP 21 on the rhizome as an "antigenealogy" and "antimemory" (or "short-term memory"), which likewise repudiate both "external reproduction as image-tree [and] internal reproduction as tree-structure." Cf. Deleuze, *Proust and Signs: The Complete Text*, trans. Richard Howard, Theory out of Bounds 17 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 105-115 on the non-reflecting and non-totalizing style of the "Antilogos" in Proust's rhizomatic *Recherche*.

[89] "Affect" in this sense is a key concept for D&G. Massumi (ATP xvi) describes it as "an ability to affect and be affected. It is a prepersonal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation or diminution in that body's capacity to act." On this concept, see also Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*, Post-Contemporary Interventions (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002).

At the same time, as with arborescent and rhizomatic systems more generally, maps and tracings are not so opposed as to constitute the respectively “good” and “bad” sides of a stark dichotomy: maps can be traced, just as tracings can be “put back on the map” (ibid.). There is thus no reason to consign all structures—and among them, the structures of epistemic intermediation and Jer so painstakingly derived in the previous chapters—to a wastebin of tracings destined for intellectual incineration. Whatever else may be said of it, my use of Deleuze to rethink prophecy and the prophet Jeremiah has been nothing if not experimental. For all its abstraction, it has also maintained close contacts with reality, even if many of the most fruitful connections remain latent and unexplored. My analysis of epistemic intermediation, in particular, would not have proceeded as it did without the contentious discourse around the COVID-19 pandemic and other crises of information that continue to trouble our world. Far from forcing the prophets and their texts into a pregiven permanent schema, I have sought to design for them new and strictly temporary structures, ones that can more ably account for the chaotic and contingent corpora of prophetic literature that I, reading and writing at this particular point in time and space, am given.

But I digress. Having laid out the principles that define a rhizome in general, I should briefly describe the more specific concept of the "rhizome-book" before considering how the (Hebrew) Bible, and Jeremiah in particular, may be read as such. It perhaps goes without saying that a rhizome-book is a book that embodies the various principles of the rhizome; or, at least, it is one that possesses a certain tendency or potential to be read according to those principles. Less tautologically, the rhizome-book can be distinguished from its arborescent counterparts in several interrelated ways that follow from the principles outlined above. To start, whereas connections in root- and radicle-books are determined in advance by an inherent hierarchical structure, the rhizome-book encourages and even demands a more open and multitudinous network of connections, not only among its internal parts but also with whatever lies outside it. On the inside, every word and sentence invokes any other, such that the book and its sections constitute a vast middle without beginning or end; any apparent beginning is always *in media res*, just as any final period is really a comma or an ellipsis.[90] As for the outside, it is dominated in an arborescent book by the authorial Subject and the mimetic Object, but a rhizome-book overthrows these figureheads so as to reveal more diffuse relations with a more diverse array of matters and signs. These sundry entities include not only the book's author, but also the author's parents and teachers and role models, whoever taught her to think and read and write; the editors, cover designers, and bookmakers; the foods that sustain metabolism in these various human bodies, and perhaps the caffeinated beverages (or other substances) that stimulate their brains;

---

[90] It is for this reason that D&G call the sections of their book "plateaus," which "communicate with one another across microfissures, as in a brain," rather than "chapters" that assume "culmination and termination points" (ATP 22, cf. xiv-xv).

the infrastructural and logistical organizations that facilitate the book's commercial distribution; the trees that once supplied its paper, or the electricity that endlessly regenerates its pixels; the denotations and connotations intended by its author, as much as every unintentional meaning happened upon by its readers; its uncited influences, as much as the sources listed in its bibliography; not to mention whatever rants, raves, and other reactions the book provokes from its hardened academic critics, its biased corporate boosters, its implacable social-media commenters.[91] On the whole, such a book is not a separate and transcendent image of the world, but an immanent and imbricated piece of the world itself.

As a result of this heterogeneous interconnectivity, the rhizome-book wards off totalizing interpretations: for example, those that attempt to explain its genesis once and for all, whether in terms of the genius of the author or the conditions of her environment. This is not to say that a rhizome-book has no developmental history, but rather that any comprehensive genetic or compositional theory will inevitably miss the most essential point of such a book, which bids us to replace explanatory excavations with exploratory surveys describing how the text has affected, and been affected by, a world that includes all the (f)actors mentioned in the last paragraph, and many more besides. As with genesis—the composition of a manuscript by a living person operating outside the text as author—so too with *poesis*, the construction of meaning by a literary persona positioned inside the text as narrator, character, etc.[92] A root-book may admit of only one meaning spoken in a single voice (e.g., the voice of God), and a radicle-book of a polyphonic chorus of dialogical or dialectical meanings, but the rhizome-book bids us to jettison meaning(s) and voice(s) altogether. "We will never ask what a book means, as signified or signifier," declare D&G; "we will not look for anything to understand in it" (ATP 4).[93]

---

[91] Cf. the similar lists of "variously formed matters" (ATP 3) in Moore, "Interpretosis," 111 and idem, *Bible after Deleuze*, 76-77.

[92] On the distinction between genetics and poetics and its implications, see Sternberg, *Poetics*, 68-83. It is worth noting that Sternberg himself has perhaps gone further than any other modern literary critic in treating the narratives of the Hebrew Bible as the pieces of a radicle- or root-book. For Sternberg, the genetic plurality of authorship in biblical narrative *must* be subsumed under the totalistic, downright despotic poetic unity of a single narratorial persona who arrogates the very omniscience of the deity. At every step, this persona reminds the reader: "'I am everywhere, transcendent, and therefore speak with authority'" (73).

A rhizome-book ought to be judged not by its real or possible meanings, but by its virtual potential to make actual differences in desire, in thought, in life—always with the aid of other beings in rhizomatic conjunctions and conjugations.[94] D&G continue: "We will ask what [a book] functions with, in connection with what other things it does or does not transmit intensities, in which other multiplicities its own are inserted and metamorphosed…. A book exists only through the outside and on the outside. A book itself is a little machine…" (ibid.). In the machinic operation of such a book, mimetic procedures play a strictly secondary and instrumental role. More than once in their discussion, D&G invoke the exemplary system of an orchid pollinated by a wasp. Although the orchid's reproductive organ may be said to resemble the wasp, an overly narrow focus on the mimetic correspondence overlooks everything else that this particular conjugation achieves: "an increase in valence, a veritable becoming, a becoming-wasp of the orchid and a becoming-orchid of the wasp" (ATP 10, cf. 12).[95]

## 5.5. Only Life Can Make a Rhizome: Reading Jeremiah (and the Bible) as an Assemblage

---

[93] Cf. Moore, "Interpretosis," 110, who describes the introduction to ATP as an "anti-hermeneutic manifesto."

[94] On Deleuze's insistence on "extra-textual practice" over intra-textual interpretation, see also Moore, "Interpretosis," 110-112.

[95] On this little "parable of the orchid and the wasp," see also Moore, *Bible after Deleuze*, 144-145, who analogously understands the relationship between text and reader as a "ceaseless symbiotic process" in which "each unalike body…constantly becomes more and other than it was, and always in communion with what it is not" (145).

At this point, it is worth recalling an important caveat from the beginning of the discussion (see the first paragraph of 5.2 above): the three “ontologies” described in this chapter are not fully distinct categories into which books must be definitively sorted, but “tendencies” or “organizing patterns” that may well coexist in one and the same book.[96] This is as true of the Bible as it is of any other book, save perhaps one as deliberately and demandingly rhizomatic as *A Thousand Plateaus* itself. The question of biblical ontology is thus less about the accuracy of these theories than their *adequacy*: which has the greatest potential to generate new insights and open new avenues for interpretation when applied to the text in its current state? Though the preceding sections have shown that the Bible is hardly hostile to arborescent treatment, I contend that the rhizomatic model is better equipped to handle the immensity and intractable complexity of this composite corpus. In fact, this model is arguably even more effective for the *Hebrew* Bible, which is not merely the largest and most ancient stratum of Judeo-Christian scripture, but also the only one that is broadly shared by communities on both sides of the hyphen.

In the Hebrew Bible—including the copious layers of primary and secondary “extrabiblical” literature that surround and, in different ways, support it—the principles of the rhizome are amply embodied.[97] A robust interconnectivity, already attested in the ancient allusions that suffuse the biblical text itself, is repeatedly reaffirmed in the indices of scriptural and other primary sources that attend modern scholarship on even the slimmest pericopes: it occasions no surprise to see a cross-section of the whole landscape of ancient Near Eastern literature, much less the biblical canon, appended to a study of just ten or twenty verses.[98] Even if the Hebrew Bible seems to present us with some semblance of hierarchy in, say, the antiquity and primacy of the Pentateuch (*qua* "Torah") over the Prophets and (*a fortiori*) the Writings, this apparent vertical rigidity is undermined by the many horizontal and diagonal (in a word, "transversal") connections that cut across the text so as to defy arborescent ordering.[99] Did not the development of the Pentateuch depend on the "monotheizing" impulses of earlier and lowlier texts, such as Psalm 82 or Deutero-Isaiah, and on the traumatic extratextual histories to which they obliquely bear witness? Under the conditions of modernity, in an ironic twist, the triumphant narratives of the "Books of Moses" have come to rely on the historicizing evidence of an Egyptian object, the Merneptah Stele, that proves the existence of an "Israel" only insofar as it preserves that same Israel's defeat.[100] In all, the Pentateuch is neither the crown of a tree nor the base of branching roots, but a particularly dense, bulbous agglomeration of texts and other material-semiotic tissues growing somewhere in the middle of the biblical rhizome.[101]

---

[96] Thoburn, “Strangest Cult,” 55; see n. 14 above.

[97] Although “extrabiblical” is most often used to denote primary sources from Israel or the broader Ancient Near East that are not included in the Hebrew Bible, these sources are in many cases inseparable from the secondary (and tertiary) ones that make them widely available to scholars, much less the general public. Much as we may try to rein in this term, the sematic slope is simply too slippery: if the texts collected in *The Context of Scripture* (ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, 3 vols. [Leiden: Brill, 2003]) are “extrabiblical” sources, then why not the collection itself, or the *Anchor Bible* series, or the latest edition of the *Journal of Biblical Literature*?

The heterogeneity of this rhizome is likewise evident in its variegated material components, which encompass everything from ancient biblical manuscripts to more recent print and digital editions. Here we find such diverse matters as the minute silver scrolls of Ketef Hinnom, containing a version of the Priestly Blessing (Num 6:24-27) that is the oldest known witness to a "biblical" text; the papyri and parchments (i.e., processed plant and animal bodies) of the Dead Sea Scrolls, together with the jars and graves and caves (i.e., artificial and natural stones) in which these and other ancient witnesses were preserved; untold numbers of potsherds, bullae, and other artifacts that may or may not have anything to do with the texts that survive from their world; the pages of Gutenberg's Bible, and the printing press that made them possible; the servers that run the many online editions of the biblical text, and the networks of cables and signals that make them accessible across much of our planet.[102] As for multiplicity, consider not only the Bible's properly substantive compositional disunity as a "Book of books," but also its literary multidimensionality, whereby it changes in nature as soon as one of its components is gained, lost, or otherwise altered.[103] The different sequences of books (and, in some cases, their parts) in the Septuagint and the Masoretic Text produce at least two distinct Bibles.[104] In much the same way, (Protestant) Christianity's combination of the Hebrew scriptures with the New Testament yields a fundamentally different sacred text than the same corpus augmented by the midrash of Jewish tradition, or by the inclusion of the apocryphal books—or are they "deuterocanonical"?[105] Even the ongoing supplementation of secondary literature, scholarly and otherwise, effects comparable qualitative transformations in the biblical text. A Hebrew Bible "explained" (*erklärt*) by sets of academic commentaries will not be the same as one read without them; the same may be said for the presence or absence of whatever institutional credentials (or independent riches) are required to bypass the pervasive paywalls that limit access to these exegetical resources. So too will almost any "Hebrew Bible" differ from the same base text contemplated, *qua* Old Testament, alongside a popular (and probably far more affordable) series of Christian devotionals.[106]

---

[98] See, for example, Noam Mizrahi, *Witnessing a Prophetic Text in the Making: The Literary, Textual and Linguistic Development of Jeremiah 10:1-16*, BZAW 502 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), 221-232.

[99] On the rhizomatic power of the transversal, see ATP 11 and *passim*. On the ambiguous identification of "Torah" with "Pentateuch," see Mroczek, "Hegemony," 32: "[T]he question of what 'torah' or 'torah of Moses' means from Ezra-Nehemiah onward has not been settled, and cannot be answered with unequivocal reference to the Pentateuch."

[100] On this stele and its historical implications, see *inter alia* G. W. Ahlström and D. Edelman, "Merneptah's Israel," *JNES* 44 (1985): 59-61; Gary A. Rendsburg, "The Date of the Exodus and the Conquest/Settlement: The Case for the 1100s," *VT* 42 (1992): 510-527; Michael G. Hasel, "Israel in the Merneptah Stele," *BASOR* 296 (1994): 45-61.

[101] In some (decidedly nonlinguistic) sense, all assemblages are "textual" (from Latin *texō*, "I weave") insofar as they interlace matters (the "machinic assemblage") with meanings and signs (the "collective assemblage of enunciation"): "The form of expression is constituted by the warp of expresseds, and the form of content by the woof of bodies. … The warp of the instantaneous [semiotic] transformations is always inserted into the woof of the continuous [material] modifications" (ATP 86). Of course, this does not mean that we who study texts as traditionally defined should impose literary analysis on the rest of the world, but rather that we should find ways to incorporate the rest of the world into our analysis of literature.

---

[102] For the Ketef Hinnom scrolls, see Gabriel Barkay et al., "The Amulets from Ketef Hinnom: A New Edition and Evaluation," *BASOR* 334 (2004): 41-71; the biblical rhizome includes these "scrolls" even though they were "apotropaic and/or sanctifying" objects whose "inscriptions were never meant to be seen again…once written and rolled up" (46). In this regard, the "texts" of the amulets are "like the inscriptions in *mezuzot* and *tefillin*" for later Judaism (ibid.), which must also be reckoned as components of the same rhizomatic system; each exemplifies the biblical text's endless capacity for "nonsemantic impact," on which see Breed, *Nomadic Text*, 136.

On the materiality of the Dead Sea Scrolls, see Nati, "Rolling Corpus," 161-201. On the organic basis for this materiality in the bodies of ancient animals, see Ken Stone, *Reading the Hebrew Bible with Animal Studies* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2018), 21-23; also Sarit Anava et al., "Illuminating Genetic Mysteries of the Dead Sea Scrolls," *Cell* 181 (2020): 1218-1231.

For the contributions of Gutenberg and more modern digital technologies to the biblical rhizome, see Jeffrey S. Siker, "Bible as Book in the Digital Realm," *HS* 61 (2020): 173-196; see also n. 106 below.

[103] For the Bible as a "Book of books," see Heinen, "Author Construct," 14.

[104] This is especially true of Jeremiah, on which see the discussion at the beginning of 4.3 in the previous chapter.

Suggestive as these rhizomatic (re)formulations may be, their immediate consequences for the study of the Hebrew Bible remain rather unclear. The principles of asignifying rupture and cartography are now most instructive in pointing us toward new objects and different directions for biblical criticism. First, these principles bid us to refrain from seeking any ultimate foundation or pivotal axis at the heart of the text, such as an original form (*Urtext*) or a theological center (*Mitte*), and to resist any overarching evolutionary schema that might require or presuppose such grounding. As a rule, textual excavations of this nature are sustained by the search for signifying ruptures: between an original and its copies, a center and its periphery, a composition and its reception, and so on. When the Hebrew Bible is read as a rhizome-book, however, its divisions should be treated first and foremost as *asignifying*. To distinguish “Priestly” and “non-Priestly” sources, or “Deuteronomistic” texts from “non-Deuteronomistic” ones, is not to simplify, much less solve, a problem of compositional history; it is only to create two new rhizomes of smaller size but similar complexity, which exhibit all the same principles while expressing different powers of the biblical system. These objects of genetic criticism do not relate to one another as the leaves of a stately tree—all sequentially distributed and hierarchically unified, branching only if the blessing of sufficient reason has been granted by the recoverable will of a recognizable author—but as a flatter network of *semiotic* (or *incorporeal*) *transformations*, each intimately and immanently bound up with concrete material components of the biblical rhizome.[107] (Importantly, these components encompass far more than the individual human beings who psychically reconceived or physically reinscribed the text.)

---

[105] At a deeper level, each of these Bibles is simply an actualization of different virtual capabilities of the same rhizomatic whole. This underlying unity of Jewish and Christian attitudes toward the biblical text is well expressed by Levenson, *Hebrew Bible*, 30: "Jews need their harmonistic midrash no less than Christians need theirs, for it is midrash that knits the tangled skein of passages together into a religiously usable 'text'…and continues the redactional process beyond the point of the finalization of the text."

[106] No less than the social or ideological position of the reader, the nature of the (Hebrew) Bible also depends on the medium or format in which it is read: for example, the experience of paging through a weighty printed edition of the whole Bible, bound in leather covers with gold trim, is quite unlike that of scrolling through a single chapter or verse displayed, perhaps alongside banner ads, on a webpage or smartphone app. On the differences between the Bibles of print and digital cultures, see Siker, "Digital Realm," 180-196, who also makes passing references to the constraints that affordability imposes on exegesis: "One problem shared by all of the [Bible software] programs is that they offer many resources that are free because they are in public domain. The uncritical reader, however, may not be aware that Matthew Henry's free commentary on the Bible was first published in the early eighteenth century" (196). Siker similarly suggests that "one reason for the general popularity of the King James Version in digital form is because it has been in public domain free of charge for quite some time" (195).

Of course, the changes effected by the digitization of the Bible, and of textuality more generally, are far from universally objectionable. Looking beyond the obvious advantages (e.g., accessibility, portability), Mroczek ("Thinking Digitally," 241-263) argues that many aspects of digital textuality actually bring us closer to ancient modes of reading and writing than we might expect: "Models of digital text help us to conceptualize text production as a collective process of growth, and to recognize surprising affinities between ancient and modern nonsequential textual practices" (262).

Within a rhizomatic system, “semiotic transformations” mark incorporeal and macroscopic shifts in meaning and naming that are effected by untold multitudes of material and microscopic changes.[108] As an example, D&G point to the volatility of the interwar German economy, which caused its beleaguered currency, the “papiermark,” to be restructured and rechristened as a “rentenmark.” Although this transformation occurred by fiat, invisibly and instantaneously (on November 20, 1923, the date affixed to this plateau about “Postulates of Linguistics”), it nonetheless required the far more gradual accumulation of modifications to the constitutive matters of German society at that time, chiefly in the form of mounting hyperinflation and its attendant pressures on the state, the family, the gut.[109] Of course, semiotic transformations also occur on smaller scales, where they similarly arise from an appropriate assembly of interacting material forces. Here, we may look to “the judge’s sentence that transforms the accused into a convict”: whether guilty or innocent, the individual who receives such a sentence is always caught up within an unfolding collision of ill-fated bodies (those of the victim, the police, the evidence, the media, etc.) on which the “pure instantaneous act” of the judge’s final declaration depends (ATP 80).[110] In turn, regardless of size or stature, any transformation of signs will beget further modifications of matter in its wake, such as the detention or destruction of “the body of the convict” by “the body of the prison” (ibid.).

---

[107] On these transformations, see ATP 80-88 and Moore, *Bible after Deleuze*, 81-83, 133-138.

[108] As so often happens in Deleuze’s thought, these concepts seem to rearticulate or reactualize others found elsewhere in the oeuvre. In particular, the semiotic effects and material causes of incorporeal transformations respectively recall the “clear-confused” and “distinct-obscure” ideas of DR (213-214; cf. n. 33 in 2.3), as well as the concept of incorporeal “quasi-causality” adapted from the Stoics in LS (6 and *passim*). On the Stoic lineage of Deleuze’s conception of incorporeals, see Moore, *Bible after Deleuze*, 81, n. 54.

The interplay of signs and bodies is particularly integral to the functioning of *literary* systems, as a result of the considerable coincidence of their material and semiotic components: even the slightest textual emendation simultaneously effects a transformation of signs (in the form of words and utterances) and a modification of matter (in the form of papers or pixels).

---

[109] For this example, see ATP 81-82, 88.

[110] As a happier example, Moore (*Bible after Deleuze*, 81) points to the ceremonial declaration of marriage (e.g., “I now pronounce you wife and wife”), which, when “uttered in a context and by an authority that would make them legally binding, would effect an incorporeal transformation in the bodies over which the words were spoken.” It is no coincidence that marriage is also a recurrent example in J. L. Austin’s *How To Do Things With Words: The William James Lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 5-8 and *passim*, as Deleuze’s semiotic transformations are essentially a souped-up version of Austin’s “speech acts” (cf. ATP 77).

Among literary systems, the Hebrew Bible has undergone a greater number of incorporeal transformations than most, simply by virtue of its advanced age and substantial scale. For the book of Jeremiah, specifically, these shifts would account not only for the haphazard triggering of minor additions to McKane's rolling corpus, each one generated by sufficient sensations of confusion and clarification in the minds of the book's tradents, but also for the much larger and comprehensive revisions envisioned by Konrad Schmid's theory of "book formation" (*Buchgestalten*).[111] Although Schmid's mostly linear sequence of ideologically coherent redactions ultimately runs away from the rhizome in the direction of the radicle, these periodic reworkings may be reconceptualized as semiotic transformations of a properly rhizomatic Jeremianic assemblage: each time this system passed some critical threshold of economic and sociopolitical (i.e., material) change, it became possible within the literary-semiotic regions of the system for the traditions about its paramount prophet to be rethought and rearticulated anew.[112] It perhaps goes without saying, at this point, that we err if we suppose that all such transformations can be exegetically recovered and schematically aligned so as to explain in full the actual genesis of a (much less *the*) biblical text. In fact, the genetic schemata of modern biblical criticism can themselves be understood as so many semiotic transformations taking place within the very assemblage that they purport to describe. Whether or not they find any factual basis in the world of ancient Israel, compositional theories are always answerable to other features of the system located farther afield in space and time: for example, the universities of early modern Europe or the (post)modern churches of the Americas today.

---

[111] Schmid, *Buchgestalten des Jeremiabuches: Untersuchungen zur Redaktions- und Rezeptionsgeschichte von Jer 30-33 im Kontext des Buches*, WMANT 72 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1996). On McKane, see the discussion at nn. 66-68 in 5.3 above.

[112] For a concise overview of Schmid's redactional model, see idem, *Buchgestalten*, 434-436; cf. Andrew G. Shead's review of the book in *VT* 49 (1999): 558-562, here 558-559.

Even something as simple as the placement of a single *patakh* or *atnakh* in a verse of the Masoretic Text betokens no static point of vocalization or punctuation—a signifying phonetic or syntactic rupture—but refers us instead to a whole series of dynamic transformations in the signs of the text, spurred at particular moments by accumulating material alterations to Hebrew as a linguistic assemblage. No less than the Hebrew Bible, (Biblical) Hebrew itself exhibits a remarkable range of rhizomatic features along both synchronic and diachronic dimensions.[113] Synchronically, the principles of the rhizome are embodied at the deepest levels of Hebrew syntax in the form of *parataxis*. In contrast to languages like English and Greek, whose sentences tend toward an arborescent "hypotaxis" of hierarchically subordinated clauses, Biblical Hebrew prefers to convey such connections through the simple coordination of the conjunctive *waw* ("and"). When D&G describe the "fabric of the rhizome" as "the conjunction, 'and…and…and…'" (ATP 25, cf. 98), they also sketch a skeletal translation of most Hebrew narratives![114] Yet, just as a rhizome is not an entirely flat plain but a more variegated and heterogeneous terrain of "bulbs and tubers" (ATP 7), Biblical Hebrew develops unevenly across its paratactic expanse. Clauses and concepts receive implicit emphasis from subtle differences in diction and word order, while meanings cluster around triconsonantal "roots" that recur in diverse parts of speech. Diachronically, on the other hand, Hebrew's long and varied history, which stretches from the earliest vernacular utterances of "Judahite" (cf. 2 Kgs 18:26) through later rabbinic incarnations and into other languages of antiquity and modernity (e.g., Yiddish, Ladino), has established unexpected transversal relations between quite disparate domains.[115] Consider the aforementioned *patakh* and *atnakh*, and the graphical systems of vowels (*niqqud*) and accents (*te'amim*) to which they respectively belong: these systems for "pointing" the Hebrew Bible have become integral and indispensable components of a consonantal text that was seemingly stabilized centuries before their invention.[116] Another instructive example is the very existence of Modern Hebrew as a living language, which was not so much resurrected or revived as it was *regrown* from a rhizomatic propagule in a new environment, under substantially different conditions that yielded suitably different results.

---

[113] Cf. Edward Ullendorff, "Is Biblical Hebrew a Language?" *BSOAS* 34 (1971): 241-255, here 254, whose negative answer to the titular question ("BH is clearly no more than a linguistic fragment") leads to a decidedly positive appraisal of Hebrew's rhizomatic nature: "*all* phases of the long and chequered life of Hebrew have a contribution to make to our understanding of the OT" (emphasis original).

[114] On parataxis, see Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, rev. ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 3 and *passim*; this style is also apparent in highly verbatim renderings like those of *Young's Literal Translation* (1862), albeit less artfully than in Alter's translations. Cf. ATP 526, n. 32, where D&G cite the influence of the "Old Testament" as one of the reasons that "'and' has an especially important role in English literature."

If the principle of asignifying rupture cautions us against a search for deep structure via signifying divisions, the principle of cartography encourages us, more positively, to direct our exegetical energies elsewhere. Recall that maps, for D&G, forge new connections within and beyond a rhizome as a result of their "experimentation in contact with the real" (ATP 12; see 5.4 above). For biblical studies, in practice, the radically open-ended process of cartographic exploration necessitates a certain *flattening* and *broadening* of existing methods of exegesis, whereby they might cooperate and even commingle with one another against all established methodological hierarchies. Such an undertaking has already been initiated by Brennan Breed's Deleuzian theory of biblical reception history as a kind of "nomadology."[117] Traditionally, reception history has been cast as a secondary and subsidiary subject for biblical criticism; as Breed notes, it is commonly conceived as an “afterlife” (*Nachleben*) dependent on prior study of the supposedly “original” stages of composition and transmission that constitute the true “life” of the text.[118] Breed argues, however, that this subordination has no firm basis in textual or historical reality: since there is no such thing as an “original” biblical text, *all* criticism counts as reception criticism if the latter “is understood as analyzing how unoriginal texts manifest unoriginal meanings.”[119]

---

[115] For an account of the ancient history of Hebrew that attends extensively to extralinguistic factors in the language's development, see Schniedewind, *A Social History of Hebrew: Its Origins through the Rabbinic Period*, AYBRL (New York: Yale University Press, 2013).

[116] On pointing and its history, see Martin, *Multiple Originals*, 81-88, who notes that what is today the "standard" system was originally just one of several: "When reference is made to '*the* Masoretic text' of the Hebrew Bible, what is primarily meant thereby is the Tiberian system of pointing the consonants, even though at the time of its development other systems, such as the Babylonian and Palestinian, coexisted with it" (84).

[117] On "nomadology," see Breed, *Nomadic Text*, 203-204.

I have no doubt that comparable inversions and subversions may be achieved in the face of any binary exegetical opposition, such as that which distinguishes “contextual” information (e.g., the results of archaeological, iconographic, philological and other analyses that operate chiefly beyond the boundaries of the biblical canon) from the contents of the “text itself.”[120] What we dualistically and dogmatically distinguish as “text” and “context” in fact comprises a far greater number of distinct adjoining regions within a single literary rhizome, among which no consistent relations of authority or priority can be established. Indeed, per the principle of asignifying rupture, any given textual or contextual datum in a rhizome-book is itself a rhizome, conjoined in fact with countless others and open in principle to connections with many more. For this reason, the very notion of a “literary” rhizome is something of a misnomer. A book or other literary artifact is simply a particularly tangible, portable, and reproducible part of a system that necessarily encompasses much more than “literature,” even in the broadest possible sense of the term. Of course, none of this means that we exegetes must leap headfirst into each and every rabbit hole uncovered by our work, but only that we should accord these apparent diversions the ontological and epistemological dignity that they deserve. Just as "the burrow is an animal rhizome," any interpretive "rabbit hole" is no more than another, equally legitimate entrance to the rhizomatic assemblage that is the biblical text; after all, "one of the most important characteristics of the rhizome is that it always has multiple entryways" (ATP 12).

---

[118] For a critique of the concept of *Nachleben* and its importation into biblical studies, see Breed, *Nomadic Text*, 3-5.

[119] Thus Breed, *Nomadic Text*, 205.

[120] This binary is reified and, to that extent, codified by popular reference works such as *The Context of Scripture*, on which see n. 97 above.

With the right effort, any biblical book can be shown to embody the principles of the rhizome, but they are particularly well exemplified by Jeremiah. The Jeremianic system is by no means limited to a single book or text but encompasses a properly heterogeneous assemblage of diverse factors and forces. An exhaustive enumeration of these elements is certainly not feasible at such a late point in this study, if it is possible at all, but several examples may suffice. Following from my analysis of "Jer" in the previous chapter, the canonical book of Jeremiah exhibits its orientation toward the rhizome through the presence of texts like Jer 52, a nearly verbatim but clearly edited borrowing from 2 Kgs 25 that inserts Jeremiah into the broader streams of Deuteronomistic tradition (and vice versa) without decisively subordinating one to the other (see 4.3.1). Much the same is true of the divergence between the LXX and MT editions of Jeremiah. However tempting it may be to fit these texts into an arborescent hierarchy that prioritizes the LXX or its *Vorlage* over (proto-)MT in relations of temporal sequence or compositional dependence, the historical realities of writing in the ancient Near East suggest that both editions are better understood as "independent organizations of a collection of textual materials that were previously unordered"—in other words, as differently actualized powers or products of a single virtual multiplicity.[121] Appropriately, the Jeremianic rhizome also exceeds the traditional canonical boundaries of the Hebrew Bible, as it extends beyond the MT and LXX to a wide range of para- and postbiblical literature: the Apocryphon of Jeremiah, the Epistle of Jeremiah, the books of Baruch, etc. Despite the deprivileging of these texts as “apocryphal” or “pseudepigraphic” or simply “extrabiblical,” at least some of their traditions about Jeremiah likely “belong to a period close to the final composition stage of the [biblical] book,” where they would have reciprocally and transversally interacted with (what would become) canonical traditions about the prophet (e.g., Jer 37-45*).[122]

---

[121] See Nathan Mastnjak, "Jeremiah as Collection: Scrolls, Sheets, and the Problem of Textual Arrangement," *CBQ* 80 (2018): 25-44, here 26.

Importantly, these textual components of the Jeremianic assemblage are bound up with countless other that are not primarily textual in nature. The considerable Jeremianic literature from Qumran, for example, cannot be understood apart from the sectarian life of the Essenes and the worlds, real and imagined, which they inhabited.[123] It is also necessary to leave the narrow confines of textuality in order to account for the schools of scribal “quasi-prophets” who transmitted and transformed the Jeremianic traditions in other localities (see 4.3.3 and 4.4.2).[124] Just as the rhizome spans texts and non-texts (or “con-texts”?), so too does it stretch outward across time and space. On the one hand, Jeremiah points us toward the broader histories of the ancient Near East, its peoples and polities (esp. Israel, Judah, Babylon), and their social institutions (esp. prophecy and other forms of religious intermediation). On the other hand, some of the most impactful pieces of this vast system lie nearer to the present, in periods that would normally be relegated to a textual "afterlife" by conventional (i.e., non-nomadological) reception history. With different foci but similar results, Mary Callaway and Joe Henderson have respectively critiqued Jeremiah's connections to the religious practices of early modern England and the Romantic ideology of liberal German Protestantism, each of which has contributed to the widespread conception of this prophet as an inspired poet with a complex "inner life."[125] Anachronistic as these connections and conceptions may be, they have become fully integrated into the very rhizome from which they grew: even a reading that rejects them must include them insofar as it negates them, to say nothing of their enduring popularity among scholarly and lay readers alike. The assemblage is similarly inclusive of contested artifacts like the clay bullae bearing the words "Baruch ben Neriah, the scribe," which adorn the pages of reputable Jeremiah scholarship despite their lack of verifiable provenance and telltale traces of forgery.[126] A sufficient shift in scholarly or "secondary" literature may even effect changes in the scriptural or "primary" texts of the assemblage. For instance, when the *Old Testament Library* replaced Robert Carroll's pathbreaking Jeremiah commentary with a far more conservative offering from Leslie Allen, it thereby reconfigured, however subtly, the biblical book encountered by academically inclined exegetes—especially seminarians, doctoral students, and others who are not fully conversant with the formidable *Forschungsgeschichte* that has developed around Jeremiah.[127]

---

[122] See Ronnie Goldstein, “Jeremiah between Destruction and Exile: From Biblical to Post-Biblical Traditions,” *DSD* 20 (2013): 433-451, here 435.

[123] On the texts from Qumran, see Kipp Davis, *The Cave 4* Apocryphon of Jeremiah *and the Qumran Jeremianic Traditions: Prophetic Persona and the Construction of Community Identity*, STDJ 111 (Leiden: Brill, 2014). For the social and psychological forces that shaped the Qumran community more generally, see n. 31 above.

[124] On these scribal groups, see Ehud Ben Zvi, “The Concept of Prophetic Books and its Historical Setting,” in *The Production of Prophecy: Constructing Prophecy and Prophets in Yehud*, ed. Diana V. Edelman and Ehud Ben Zvi (London: Equinox, 2009), 73-97, esp. 78-83 on the inadequacy of “the traditional triad of pre-exilic, exilic and post-exilic periods” (78) for classifying biblical texts and their communities. Where many scholars would work with this one chronological axis, Ben Zvi sees at least two more: geographical (e.g., Yehud vs Babylonia) and social (e.g., center vs periphery).

---

[125] See Henderson, "Duhm and Skinner's Invention of Jeremiah," in Holt and Sharp, *Jeremiah Invented*, 1-15; idem, *Jeremiah under the Shadow of Duhm: A Critique of the Use of Poetic Form as a Criterion of Authenticity* (London: T&T Clark, 2019); Callaway, "Peering Inside Jeremiah: How Early Modern English Culture Still Influences Our Reading of the Prophet," in Diamond and Stulman, *Jeremiah (Dis)Placed*, 279-289. See also Callaway, "Seduced by Method: History and Jeremiah 20," in Holt and Sharp, *Jeremiah Invented*, 16-33, esp. 20-22 on the legacy of Duhm, which substantially aligns with Henderson's critique.

[126] See Christopher A. Rollston, "The Bullae of Baruch ben Neriah the Scribe and the Seal of Maʿadanah Daughter of the King: Epigraphic Forgeries of the 20th Century," *ErIsr* 32 (2016): 79-90, esp. 82-83 on the acceptance of these bullae in scholarship at the turn of the century.

Having discussed some of the genetic implications of the rhizome for the Hebrew Bible and the book of Jeremiah, I must attend at last to the poetic and specifically "antimimetic" consequences of this model, particularly as they impinge on the *prophet* Jeremiah. Although I have repeatedly presented the question of Jeremiah's characterization as an essentially mimetic one, the principles of the rhizome show this formulation to be inadequate, if not altogether inappropriate. What Erich Auerbach famously identified as a minimalistic mimesis of the "background" in the Hebrew Bible turns out, upon closer inspection, to be no mimesis at all, but something of an entirely different nature.[128] Consider again the wasp and the orchid, which form an assemblage precisely in virtue of their fundamental heterogeneity rather than their superficial resemblance: the resulting system allows for reproduction, to be sure, but not of a representational variety![129] In the rhizomatic book of Jeremiah, the titular character is no less bound up with a host of other beings—ancient and modern, human and nonhuman, textual and contextual—in a system that is similarly *refractive*, rather than simply reflective. The distinctive features of this system were already outlined at the end of the previous chapter (see 4.4), but they bear repeating here. The book says nothing about Jeremiah's appearance, and hardly anything about his personality or personal history outside the narrow purview of his prophetic vocation. A reader enters the book ignorant of the circumstances of Jeremiah's birth, and leaves just as uninformed about the event of his death. Most of the prophet's words are really YHWH's words; so too are most of "his" actions, commanded as they are by the deity. On the whole, one wonders how much this strange being would have resembled even *ancient* readers of the book that bears his name, much less us moderns. As Reinhard Kratz has argued, Nietzsche's timeless "Homeric question" may be asked no less rightly of Jeremiah (or, for that matter, Baruch): "Was the person created out of a conception, or the conception out of a person?" While the latter is admittedly possible, the former looks increasingly probable.[130]

---

[127] On this decision and its ramifications, see Niels Peter Lemche, "Will Jeremiah Save the History of Ancient Israel?" in *Jeremiah in History and Tradition*, ed. Jim West and Niels Peter Lemche, Copenhagen International Seminar (New York: Routledge, 2019), 49-59, here 56-57.

Nor should it be forgotten that, like most entries in the major commentary series, both these volumes were written by white men. The longstanding and far-reaching dearth of diversity in such resources affects the biblical rhizome more pervasively, and perniciously, than the ideological leanings of any one study or scholar therein; on this problem, see Ekaputra Tupamahu, "The Stubborn Invisibility of Whiteness in Biblical Scholarship," *Political Theology Network*, 20 November 2020, https://politicaltheology.com/the-stubborn-invisibility-of-whiteness-in-biblical-scholarship/.

[128] See Auerbach, "Odysseus's Scar," in idem, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 3-23, here 12; see also the Introduction.

[129] For this Deleuzoguattarian "parable," see n. 95 above.

As soon as we begin to lament our inability to understand this prophet, though, Deleuze reassures us: we do not need to know who Jeremiah is, or was, to know what Jeremiah can *do*. For his earliest readers, Jeremiah furnished all sorts of "vehicles for arguing about issues urgently important to postexilic Judeans."[131] For at least some of those readers, he also functioned as a "perfect heroic protagonist" to be esteemed and emulated as such.[132] At Qumran, he is distinguished from the other biblical prophets by serving first and foremost as a "founder" in the community's imagination, one who was valued less for what he said than for who he was and what he did.[133] Jeremiah's authority for this community consisted not only in his specific revelations, as enshrined in his book's generically expected *r*-complex, but also in his overall *reputation*, as established by the unprecedented *p*-complex (see 4.3).[134] Such highly personified and hagiographical uses of the prophet are readily explicable in an ancient precritical context, when there was relatively little historical distance between the worlds "in front of" the (proto-)biblical texts and the world "behind" them, and hardly any analytical distance between the latter and a world "within" the text.[135] More surprising are the many ways in which similar readings have persisted into (post)modernity, from the early studies of Bernhard Duhm and John Skinner through the more recent work of Sheldon Blank, William Holladay, Jack Lundbom, Mark Leuchter, Carol Dempsey, and others.[136] Each in their own way, these readings assume not only that Jeremiah is somehow knowable as he actually existed, but also that he actually existed as a palmary paragon of religious fidelity, moral integrity, and intellectual ingenuity. As if it were not enough for Jeremiah to be a hero of the faith, some readers go so far as to make him the savior of historical criticism, a uniquely certain datum that could stand as a bulwark against the postmodern "collapse of history."[137]

---

[130] See Reinhard G. Kratz, "Why Jeremiah? The Invention of a Prophetic Figure," in *Jeremiah's Scriptures: Production, Reception, Interaction, and Transformation*, ed. Hindy Najman and Konrad Schmid, JSJSup 173 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 197-212, esp. 203-212.

[131] Carolyn J. Sharp, review of *Jeremiah: Preacher of Grace, Poet of Truth*, by Carol Dempsey, *RBL* 10 (2008): 203-206, here 205; see also idem, *Prophecy and Ideology in Jeremiah: Struggles for Authority in the Deutero-Jeremianic Prose*, OTS (London: T&T Clark, 2003).

[132] Goldstein, "Destruction," 438.

[133] See Davis, *Qumran Traditions*, 37-45, 302-307, who concludes that "Jeremiah appears to have been a figure for whom there was tremendous and ongoing respect, but the actual content of his prophecies did not always achieve that same level of textualised religious influence" (305).

---

[134] Notably, as reconstructed by Davis (*Qumran Traditions*, 103-174), 4QApocryphon of Jeremiah C$^a$ (4Q385a) contains a mix of prophetic oracles (*r*-texts) and narratives (*p*-texts), not unlike the biblical book of Jeremiah.

[135] The oft-cited distinction between these three textual "worlds" derives from the theoretical work of Paul Ricoeur (e.g., *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* [Fort Worth, TX: Texas Christian University Press, 1976], 87-94). For the (in)applicability of this distinction to the Hebrew Bible, cf. Brueggemann, *Theology*, 57-59 and Breed, *Nomadic Text*, 5-6.

[136] See Duhm, *Das Buch Jeremia*, KHC 11 (Tübingen/Leipzig: J. C. B. Mohr, 1901); Skinner, *Prophecy and Religion: Studies in the Life of Jeremiah* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948); Blank, *Jeremiah: Man and Prophet* (Cincinnati, OH: Hebrew Union College Press, 1961); Holladay, *Jeremiah: Spokesman out of Time* (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1974); Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 21A (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press; London: Bloomsbury, 2021), 107-140; Leuchter, *Josiah's Reform and Jeremiah's Scroll: Historical Calamity and Prophetic Response*, Hebrew Bible Monographs 6 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006); Dempsey, *Jeremiah: Preacher of Grace, Poet of Truth*, Interfaces (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007). For the last of these readings as "hagiographical," see Sharp, review of Dempsey, 205.

[137] See Lemche, "History," 49-56. For the concept of a "collapse of history" in and around biblical studies at the turn of the century, see Leo G. Perdue, *The Collapse of History: Reconstructing Old Testament Theology*, OBT

The problem with such reconstructions is not simply that they misconstrue the nature of a fundamentally nonhuman entity, which shed whatever personhood it once possessed in order to assume a purely prophetic existence, one that it could only obtain among the words of a book (see 4.4.). It is also that these readings unduly constrain the total power of the Jeremianic system, foreclosing all manner of novel exegetical outcomes in favor of the congenial image of a person who submits *a priori* to our standards of reason and decorum, who tells us only what we tell ourselves and confronts us only as we want to be confronted. In truth, we should not feel compelled to make Jeremiah's acquaintance, much less to give him a recognizable face—and with it, a suit and tie, a preacher's pulpit, pamphlets on purity and abstinence, and all the other vestments of certain modern-day religious professionals.[138] Perhaps we should try instead to personify this prophet in the way that Pete Diamond once did for YHWH (or was it Jeremiah?): put him in a baseball cap and a heavy coat, the Tetragrammaton tattooed across his knuckles, sipping a beer in the back booth of a Santa Barbara bar while conversing casually yet cryptically with the interlocutor seated, out of time, across the table.[139] Or maybe we can dispense with personification entirely and follow the example so memorably set by Hoyt Axton and Three Dog Night: "Jeremiah was a bullfrog…and he always had some mighty fine wine" (cf. Jer 23:9, 25:15-29, 35:5?). In any case, if we are going to repeat Jeremiah—and a reconstruction, whether

---

(Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994); idem, *Reconstructing Old Testament Theology: After the Collapse of History*, OBT (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005).

[138] This is the only way that I can visualize the Jeremiah of Lundbom, "'I Brought You into a Garden Land' (Jer 2:7)," in idem, *Writing Up Jeremiah: The Prophet and the Book* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2013), 133-136, esp. 135-136. See also Dempsey's *Jeremiah*, which literally bears an artist's depiction of (what I assume to be) Jeremiah's face on the cover.

[139] See Diamond, "Interlocutions: The Poetics of Voice in the Figuration of YHWH and His Oracular Agent, Jeremiah," *Int* 62 (2008): 48-65, esp. 63-65. As in the rest of Diamond's article, the boundaries between the two titular figures are deliberately, because dialogically, blurred.

faithful or fanciful, is always a repetition—let us repeat him *with a difference*, as Deleuze might say.

Of course, not every differential repetition must be as drastic as Diamond's (or Axton's). In particular, there may be good reason to fashion a more mundane and realistic image of the prophet, in the form of a "historical Jeremiah," to stand as one of the many explanatory pillars that support our current theories of ancient Hebrew prophecy, the late Judean monarchy and its fall, or even the growth of Jeremiah's "own" book.[140] Especially in this last domain, however, we must not overestimate the centrality or clarity of such an image, nor overstate its closeness to the literary character that shares its name. Otherwise, the supporting pillar becomes something more akin to a concealing screen, or perhaps a stencil that allows us to trace the face of Jeremiah (or Baruch, Seraiah, etc.) on the book—as if it were a recent monograph in need of a professional head shot, and not a diachronous multidimensional assemblage of disparate actual and virtual components![141] To fixate on the hypothetical contributions of these familiar names is to fall victim to all the forces of the author function and von-Radicalization (see 5.3 above). It is "to fabricate a beneficent God to explain geological movements" (ATP 3), to substitute a miracle in the history *of* the text for those that can no longer be affirmed of the history *in* the text.[142] The exodus from Egypt may be doubtful, and the conquest of Canaan dubious, but what other

---

[140] At the very least, we will remain committed to a "historical Jeremiah" so long as such a being "has to be reckoned among the entities over which our variables [of quantification] range in order to render one of our affirmations true" within our best historical-critical theories; for this understanding of ontological commitment, see Willard V. Quine, "On What There Is," *The Review of Metaphysics* 2 (1948): 21-38, here 32.

[141] On the relationship of Baruch and Seraiah to the literary growth of Jeremiah, see 4.4.2 in the previous chapter.

[142] Cf. Moore, "Interpretosis," 111.

Hebrew scripture has an author so near to it as the prophet Jeremiah is whenever we call on him?[143]

Surely some studies will continue to pursue the historical prophet, and should, insofar as they thereby respond to real needs of their authors and audiences. But the field of Jeremiah scholarship, and the broader guild of biblical studies, would do well to explore other interpretive options: not only *non-historical* readings of Jeremiah (or any other biblical figure), which have already been inaugurated by literary criticism and related enterprises, but *non-theological* ones, which are not ultimately beholden to the doctrines of Christianity, Judaism, or any particular sect or denomination thereof. If we are to arrest and reverse the slow atrophy of the Hebrew Bible playing out beyond the cloisters of the academy, where (at least in my white American Protestant context) Jeremiah has been reduced to little more than a source for shopworn spiritual affirmations (e.g., 1:5, 29:11), we need to forge innovative connections between the biblical assemblage and the many urgent, deeply human problems that define our present and future world.[144] In accordance with the heterogeneity and multiplicity of the assemblage itself, this is an inherently pluralistic project that outstrips the vision or volition of any individual reader; it is also an inevitably partial project, to the extent that we should not seek definitive solutions to our problems from any one place. But in a world increasingly beset by "war, famine, disease," (Jer 14:12 and *passim*), by "fire that burns without extinguisher" (4:4, 21:12), and by "terror all around” (6:25; 20:3, 10; 46:5), perhaps a prophet shaped by these very problems still has something new to teach us.

---

[143] Cf. Deut 4:7.

[144] On the plight of the Hebrew Bible *qua* Old Testament in contemporary American Christianity, see Brent A. Strawn, *The Old Testament Is Dying: A Diagnosis and Recommended Treatment*, Theological Explorations for the Church Catholic (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017). As for symptoms of the broader decline of biblical literacy (or, in Strawn's linguistic terms, "fluency") in American culture outside the church, I find myself drawn to the popular game show *Jeopardy!*, of which I am a regular viewer. Whenever a category on the Bible or Old Testament comes up, I am consistently shocked by how many of the clues are "triple stumpers," which elicit from the contestants only scattershot guesses or dumbfounded silence as I incredulously shout the all-too-obvious question-answer (e.g., "What is Joshua?") at my television screen.

# CONCLUSION: ANTI-KYTHERA

Have short-term ideas.
-Deleuze (ATP 25)

If Deleuze and Guattari are right that “a book itself is a little machine” (ATP 4), then the work of the exegete may be likened to that of the technician or the engineer. When the book malfunctions by falling out of step with cultural trends and producing meanings that are judged too obscure or too objectionable, the exegete is expected to diagnose these faults and fix them, perhaps with the publication of a new commentary or a more “modern” translation. When the book is operating as intended, the exegete is also equipped to innovate with this literary technology, even devising new readings for communities and circumstances that are unlike any envisioned by the book’s creators. In either case, the practice of exegesis consists in bringing collected knowledge and cultivated expertise to bear on current problems of the text. No less than a mechanical engineer knows mechanical systems, the “exegetical engineer” knows literary ones—not only what they are and how they work, but also when to use them and how to get them to work.

In this dissertation, I have sought to understand one remarkable function of the literary machine that is Jeremiah: namely, how this biblical book manages to produce such a compelling prophetic character, whose clarity and complexity are virtually unrivaled across the literature of the ancient Near East. Since this function seemed to be a question of representation or mimesis, I approached it at first with the tools that such questions normally require. In Chapter 1, I selected Jeremiah’s “confessions” as a manageable corpus of relevant texts, I read them closely in the original language and multiple translations, and I explored their literary and historical contexts using the appropriate exegetical resources. At the end of this analysis, I discovered that my initial question of prophetic mimesis was inseparable from a more profound problem of textual structure. The final confession happens to fall in the middle of a great divide between two fundamentally different modes of presenting Jeremiah and his world: one dominated by the prophet's dialogue with the Israelite deity, YHWH, and another focused on his contentious interactions with other people in and around the kingdom of Judah.

To address this new problem, I adopted a different approach inspired by the muscular poststructuralism of Gilles Deleuze. After a preparatory perusal of Deleuze's thought from the standpoint of "structure" in Chapter 2, I worked in Chapter 3 to find such an arrangement in ancient Near Eastern practices of "epistemic intermediation," the dissemination of privileged or specialized knowledge that is common to both (intuitive) prophecy and (technical) divination. Applying Deleuze's structural insights to Thomas Overholt's social-scientific research on prophecy, I characterized epistemic intermediation as the dynamic interplay of a "revelation series" (or "*r*-series") and a "proclamation series" (or "*p*-series"). The *r*-series describes the transpersonal receipt of a message from a supernatural and otherwise inaccessible source; the *p*-series describes the interpersonal delivery of such a message to its intended human audience. Turning to the textual products of epistemic intermediation in the ancient Near East, I found that these series appear in two distinct and diametrically different configurations across the extant corpora of prophetic literature. The oracular "*r*-texts" preserved from the Neo-Assyrian Empire foreground the *r*-series almost to the exclusion of the *p*-series, while the epistolary "*p*-texts" of Old Babylonian Mari attend to the *r*-series only insofar as it is embedded within the *p*-series.

The Hebrew Bible, for its part, contains both *r*-texts and *p*-texts. Although *r*-texts predominate in the Latter Prophets, Jeremiah is one of several books in this collection (along with Isaiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Jonah, Haggai, and Malachi) that include *p*-texts as well. In Chapter 4, I investigated the various combinations of *r*-texts and *p*-texts in these books. The results were definitive: only in Jeremiah do *p*-texts reach a level of structural and mimetic development that is remotely comparable to that of their book's *r*-texts. In fact, Jeremiah's *r*-texts and *p*-texts are both so numerous and so integrally interrelated as to form an "*r*-complex" and a "*p*-complex," which reproduce the respective series of epistemic intermediation in a primarily literary domain. From this new textualized structure, the character "Jeremiah" emerges much like his putative historical model and other prophetic precursors would have, at the asymmetrical intersection of all-knowing divinity and unknowing humanity.

By the end of Chapter 4, however, cracks had begun to appear in my structuralist façade. The resemblance between the biblical Jeremiah and the prophets of Israelite history proved to be superficial and ultimately misleading. The titular humanoid constructed by the text of Jeremiah is less an authentic "persona" than an alien "simulacrum": whatever its origins, mimetic artifice has condensed and contorted this character into a strange non-Euclidean shape that could only exist amid the contrivances of a literary world. Having scaled the structural scaffold for three long chapters, it became necessary at last to set the ladder aside. Chapter 5 thus departed from the orderly tree-lined streets of structuralism and set out toward the uncultivated forests, uneven fields, and uncountable plateaus of the "rhizome" or "assemblage." Theological unities and historiographical binaries exploded into diverse multiplicities enmeshing many disparate beings. I had been reading Jeremiah in *two* dimensions when the book really demands no fewer than "*n* – 1," encompassing everything except for the hegemony of hierarchy in the Janus-faced form of "the One." Looking beyond the academic assembly line of "historical Jeremiahs," each one hardly different from the last, I glimpsed some new possibilities for this prophet: a Jeremiah of the ball cap and the beer glass, the smartphone and the computer screen, the virus and the wildfire.

And then I ran out of time. I had spent so long studying the engine, describing its innermost parts and diagramming their intricate connections, that I left myself no room for the engineering. As complex as the Jeremianic system is, it could turn out to be nothing more than a literary Antikythera mechanism: a striking museum curiosity that showcases the genius of the ancients but fails to find practical application in a modern world whose technologies have long since surpassed it. (Jeremiah continues to function as a book of the Bible, of course, but it is all too easy to "read the Bible" without ever *reading Jeremiah*.) Accordingly, the last and most important question is one that may also be asked by a prospective tech buyer (or, rhetorically, by a pattering tech seller): *so, what else can this thing do?* Although the full answer must await a future study, I can offer two selling points here. The first, already anticipated at the end of the previous chapter, concerns human-caused climate change and other existential crises pitting future catastrophe against present complacency. While I doubt that Jeremiah will give us any definitive answers to such problems, it may allow us to reframe or reformulate them. As our climate deteriorates, for example, we go on telling one another to "amend your ways and your deeds" (Jer 7:3)—reduce, reuse, recycle, repeat—but at what point, if any, do we instead "serve the king of Babylon and live" (29:17)? In other words, when should we accept defeat before the ever more inexorable consequences of our collective actions, so that we might find new ways to live, and perhaps even to thrive, on the less hospitable Earth that we have created?

The book's second "selling point" counts as such only in the most ironic and paradoxical sense, in that it is really a point against the very notion of "selling" itself. In our increasingly computerized late-capitalist world, where all cultural production is homogenized as "content creation" and every desire is algorithmically influenced for the sake of profit generation, I contend that ancient texts like Jeremiah can be used to mount a certain kind of resistance.

Deleuze and Guattari would probably call it “deterritorialization,” or “making yourself a body without organs,” but such jargon may do more to harm than help here. To choose to read a book like Jeremiah in the twenty-first century—and especially to read it as something *other* than sacred scripture, which so often wants to sell us a creed or a worldview or a lifestyle—is to choose momentarily to occupy a space detached from most established channels of money and power. Insofar as Jeremiah, like the broader Hebrew Bible, is the product of long-gone societies from a bygone age, it retains a stubborn indifference to the forces that vex and animate us today. We are usually quick to overcome this indifference with our own inventiveness, and surely few would read a Bible that could not be made to speak to us in a familiar language. When we are constantly bombarded by the fabricated familiarity of a consumerist culture, however, there is virtue in encountering that which is truly and irreducibly *different*. There is value in pausing the debates about who we ARE or what a good life IS in order to sit with texts that stare back at us blankly and mutter AND…AND…AND… in a foreign tongue. There is a non-confessional way to read the famous motto of Joshua: “You may serve your gods of gold and glass and silicon, but as for me, *I will read this old book*” (cf. Josh 24:15).

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ahlström, G. W., and D. Edelman. "Merneptah's Israel." *JNES* 44 (1985): 59-61.

Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. Rev. ed. New York: Basic Books, 2011.

Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Poetry*. Rev. ed. New York: Basic Books, 2011.

Althann, Robert. "Jeremiah (Person)." *ABD* III:684.

Anava, Sarit, et al. "Illuminating Genetic Mysteries of the Dead Sea Scrolls." *Cell* 181 (2020): 1218-1231.

Assis, Elie. "To Build or Not to Build: A Dispute between Haggai and His People (Hag 1)." *ZAW* 119 (2007): 514-527.

Auerbach, Erich. *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*. Translated by Willard R. Trask. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003.

Austin, J. L. *How to Do Things with Words: The William James Lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Edited by Michael Holquist. Translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. University of Texas Press Slavic Series 1. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Edited and translated by Caryl Emerson. Theory and History of Literature 8. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. "Toward a Methodology for the Human Sciences." Pages 159-172 in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Edited by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Translated by Vern W. McGee. University of Texas Press Slavic Series 8. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986.

Barkay, Gabriel, et al. "The Amulets from Ketef Hinnom: A New Edition and Evaluation." *BASOR* 334 (2004): 41-71.

Barré, Michael L. "The Portrait of Balaam in Numbers 22-24." *Int* 51 (1997): 254-266.

Baumgärtel, Friedrich. "Die Formel *n*$^{e}$*'um jahwe*." *ZAW* 73 (1961): 277–290.

Baumgartner, Walter. *Jeremiah's Poems of Lament*. Translated by David E. Orton. Sheffield: Almond Press, 1988. Translation of *Die Klagegedichte des Jeremia*. BZAW 32. Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1917.

Beistegui, Miguel de. "'A Book? What Book?' Or Deleuze and Guattari on the Rhizome." Pages 9-27 in A Thousand Plateaus *and Philosophy*. Edited by Henry Somers-Hall, Jeffrey A. Bell, and James Williams. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018.

Bennett, Jane. *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.

Ben Zvi, Ehud. *A Historical-Critical Study of the Book of Obadiah*. BZAW 242. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1996.

Ben Zvi, Ehud. "Introduction: Writings, Speeches, and the Prophetic Books—Setting an Agenda." Pages 1-29 in *Writings and Speech in Israelite and Ancient Eastern Prophecy*. Edited by Ehud Ben Zvi and Michael H. Floyd. SBLSymS 10. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000.

Ben Zvi, Ehud. *Signs of Jonah: Reading and Rereading in Ancient Yehud*. JSOTSup 367. London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003.

Ben Zvi, Ehud. "The Concept of Prophetic Books and its Historical Setting." Pages 73-97 in *The Production of Prophecy: Constructing Prophecy and Prophets in Yehud*. Edited by Diana V. Edelman and Ehud Ben Zvi. London: Equinox, 2009.

Ben Zvi, Ehud. "Would Ancient Readers of the Books of Hosea or Micah be 'Competent' to Read the Book of Jeremiah?" Pages 80-98 in *Jeremiah (Dis)Placed: New Directions in Writing/Reading Jeremiah*. Edited by A. R. Pete Diamond and Louis Stulman. LHBOTS 529. London: T&T Clark International, 2011.

Berges, Ulrich. "Farewell to Deutero-Isaiah, or Prophecy without a Prophet." Pages 575-595 in *Congress Volume Ljubljana 2007*. Edited by André Lemaire. VTSup 133. Leiden: Brill, 2010.

Berlin, Adele. *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*. BLS. Sheffield: Almond Press, 1983.

Betz, Hans Dieter. "Hellenism." *ABD* III:127-135.

Bezzel, Hannes. "Das Grünen der Frevler – ein Grund zur Klage: Die Baummetapher im Rahmen der 'Konfessionen Jeremias' – Weisheit im prophetischen Mantel?" *WO* 38 (2008): 7-21.

Biddle, Mark. *Polyphony and Symphony in Prophetic Literature: Rereading Jeremiah 7-20*. SOTI 2. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1996.

Birdsong, Shelley L. "The Narratives about Isaiah and Their Relationship with 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles." Pages 95-110 in *The Oxford Handbook of Isaiah*. Edited by Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Blank, Sheldon H. *Jeremiah: Man and Prophet*. Cincinnati, OH: Hebrew Union College Press, 1961.

Blenkinsopp, Joseph. *Sage, Priest, Prophet: Religious and Intellectual Leadership in Ancient Israel*. LAI. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1995.

Boda, Mark J. *Exploring Zechariah, Volume 1: The Development of Zechariah and Its Role within the Twelve*. ANEM 16. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2017.

Boer, Roland. "Between the Goat's Arse and the Face of God: Deleuze and Guattari and Marx and the Bible." *JSOT* 37 (2013): 295-318.

Bos, James M. "The 'Literarization' of the Biblical Prophecy of Doom." Pages 263-280 in *Contextualizing Israel's Sacred Writing: Ancient Literacy, Orality, and Literary Production*. Edited by Brian B. Schmidt. AIL 22. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2015.

Bowden, Sean. *The Priority of Events: Deleuze's* Logic of Sense. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011.

Bracke, John M. "Pashhur." *ABD* V:171-172.

Bradley, Joff. "The Eyes of the Fourth Person Singular." *Deleuze Studies* 9 (2015): 185-207.

Breed, Brennan W. *Nomadic Text: A Theory of Biblical Reception History*. ISBL. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2014.

Briggs, Charles A. "An Inductive Study of Selah." *JBL* 18 (1899): 132-143.

Bright, John. *Jeremiah: A New Translation with Introduction and* Commentary. AB 21. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965.

Broome, Jr., Edwin C. "Ezekiel's Abnormal Personality." *JBL* 65 (1946): 277-292.

Brueggemann, Walter. *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Advocacy, Dispute*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997.

Brummit, Mark, and Yvonne Sherwood. "The Fear of Loss Inherent in Writing: Jeremiah 36 as the Story of a Self-Conscious Scroll." Pages 47-66 in *Jeremiah (Dis)Placed: New Directions in Writing/Reading Jeremiah*. Edited by A. R. Pete Diamond and Louis Stulman. LHBOTS 529. London: T&T Clark International, 2011.

Martin, Buber. *I and Thou*. Translated by Ronald Gregor Smith. 2nd ed. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958.

Bulkeley, Tim. “The Book of Amos as ‘Prophetic Fiction’: Describing the Genre of a Written Work that Reinvigorates Older Oral Speech Forms.” Pages 205-219 in *The Book of the Twelve and the New Form Criticism*. Edited by Mark J. Boda, Michael H. Floyd, and Colin M. Toffelmire. ANEM 10. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015.

Bultmann, Christoph. “A Prophet in Desperation? The Confessions of Jeremiah.” Pages 83-93 in *The Elusive Prophet: The Prophet as a Historical Person, Literary Character, and Anonymous Artist*. Edited by Johannes C. de Moor. OtSt 45. Leiden: Brill, 2001.

Buss, Martin. “An Anthropological Perspective upon Prophetic Call Narratives.” *Semeia* 21 (1981): 9-30.

Callaway, Mary Chilton. “Telling the Truth and Telling Stories: An Analysis of Jeremiah 37-38.” *USQR* 44 (1991): 253-265.

Callaway, Mary Chilton. “Black Fire on White Fire: Historical Context and Literary Subtext in Jeremiah 37-38.” Pages 171-178 in *Troubling Jeremiah*. Edited by A. R. Pete Diamond, Kathleen M. O’Connor, and Louis Stulman. JSOTSup 260. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999.

Callaway, Mary Chilton. “Peering Inside Jeremiah: How Early Modern English Culture Still Influences Our Reading of the Prophet.” Pages 279-289 in *Jeremiah (Dis)Placed: New Directions in Writing/Reading Jeremiah*. Edited by A. R. Pete Diamond and Louis Stulman. LHBOTS 529. London: T&T Clark International, 2011.

Callaway, Mary Chilton. “Seduced by Method: History and Jeremiah 20.” Pages 16-33 in *Jeremiah Invented: Constructions and Deconstructions of Jeremiah*. Edited by Else K. Holt and Carolyn J. Sharp. LHBOTS 595. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015.

Callaway, Mary Chilton. *Jeremiah through the Centuries*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2020.

Caplice, Richard I. “Participants in the Namburbi Rituals.” *CBQ* 29 (1967): 346-352.

Carroll, Claire E. “Another Dodecade: A Dialectic Model of the Decentred Universe of Jeremiah Studies 1996–2008.” *CBR* 8 (2010): 162-182.

Carroll, Robert. P. “The Elijah-Elisha Sagas: Some Remarks on Prophetic Succession in Ancient Israel.” *VT* 19 (1969): 400–415.

Carroll, Robert. P. *From Chaos to Covenant: Prophecy in the Book of Jeremiah*. New York: Crossroad, 1981.

Carroll, Robert. P. *Jeremiah: A Commentary*. OTL. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986.

Childs, Brevard S. *Biblical Theology in Crisis*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970.

Childs, Brevard S. *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979.

Childs, Brevard S. *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985.

Childs, Brevard S. *Isaiah: A Commentary*. OTL. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001.

Clements, Ronald E. "Prophecy Interpreted: Intertextuality and Theodicy—A Case Study of Jeremiah 26:16-24*." Pages 32-44 in *Uprooting and Planting: Essays on Jeremiah for Leslie Allen*. Edited by John Goldingay. LHBOTS 495. New York: T&T Clark, 2007.

Clines, David J. A., and David M. Gunn. "Form, Occasion, and Redaction in Jeremiah 20." *ZAW* 88 (1976): 390-409.

Cloete, Walter Theophilus Woldemar. *Versification and Syntax in Jeremiah 2-25: Syntactical Constraints in Hebrew Colometry*. SBLDS 117. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989.

Cohen, Jeffrey Jerome. *Stone: An Ecology of the Inhuman*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015.

Collins, John J. *The Bible after Babel: Historical Criticism in a Postmodern Age*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005.

Conrad, Edgar W. *Fear Not Warrior: A Study of ʾal tîrāʾ Pericopes in the Hebrew Scriptures*. BJS 75. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985.

Cook, Stephen L. "The Speechless Suppression of Grief in Ezekiel 24:15-27: The Death of Ezekiel's Wife and the Prophet's Abnormal Response." Pages 222-233 in *Thus Says the Lord: Essays on the Former and Latter Prophets in Honor of Robert R. Wilson*. Edited by John J. Ahn and Stephen L. Cook. LHBOTS 502. New York: T&T Clark, 2009.

Cook, Stephen L. "Apocalyptic Prophecy." Pages 19-35 in *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*. Edited by John J. Collins. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Craigie, Peter C. *Psalms 1-50*. WBC 19. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983.

Crenshaw, James L. *Prophetic Conflict: Its Effect upon Israelite Religion*. BZAW 124. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1971.

Crenshaw, James L. *A Whirlpool of Torment: Israelite Traditions of God as an Oppressive Presence*. OBT. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984.

Cross, Frank Moore. *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973.

Cryer, Frederick H. *Divination in Ancient Israel and Its Near Eastern Environment: A Socio-Historical Investigation*. JSOTSup 142. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994.

Davis, Ellen F. *Swallowing the Scroll: Textuality and the Dynamics of Discourse in Ezekiel's Prophecy*. BLS 21. Sheffield: Almond Press, 1989.

Davis, Kipp. *The Cave 4* Apocryphon of Jeremiah *and the Qumran Jeremianic Traditions: Prophetic Persona and the Construction of Community Identity*. STDJ 111. Leiden: Brill, 2014.

Deist, Ferdinand E. "The Prophets: Are We Heading for a Paradigm Switch?" Pages 1-18 in *Prophet und Prophetenbuch: Festschrift für Otto Kaiser zum 65. Geburtstag*. Edited by Volkmar Fritz, Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, and Hans-Christoph Schmitt. BZAW 185. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1989.

Deleuze, Gilles. "Plato and the Simulacrum." Translated by Rosalind Krauss. *October* 27 (1983): 45-56.

Deleuze, Gilles. *The Logic of Sense*. Edited by Constantin V. Boundas. Translated by Mark Lester and Charles Stivale. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990.

Deleuze, Gilles. *Bergsonism*. Translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Hammerjam. New York: Zone Books, 1991.

Deleuze, Gilles. *Difference and Repetition*. Translated by Paul Patton. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

Deleuze, Gilles. *Proust and Signs: The Complete Text*. Translated by Richard Howard. Theory out of Bounds 17. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.

Deleuze, Gilles. "Immanence: A Life." Pages 25-33 in *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life*. Trans. Anne Boyman. New York: Zone Books, 2001.

Deleuze, Gilles. "How Do We Recognize Structuralism?" Pages 170-192 in *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953-1974*. Edited by David Lapoujade. Translated by Michael Taormina. Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e), 2004.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated and with foreword by Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Claire Parnet. *L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze*. Paris: Editions Montparnasse-Regards, 2004.

Dempsey, Carol. *Jeremiah: Preacher of Grace, Poet of Truth*. Interfaces. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007.

Diamond, A. R. Pete. *The Confessions of Jeremiah in Context: Scenes of Prophetic Drama*. JSOTSup 45. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987.

Diamond, A. R. Pete. "Portraying Prophecy: Of Doublet, Variants and Analogies in the Narrative Representation of Jeremiah's Oracles—Reconstructing the Hermeneutics of Prophecy." *JSOT* 57 (1993): 99-119.

Diamond, A. R. Pete. "Interlocutions: The Poetics of Voice in the Figuration of YHWH and His Oracular Agent, Jeremiah." *Int* 62 (2008): 48-65.

Diehl, Catharine. "The Empty Space in Structure: Theories of the Zero from Gauthiot to Deleuze." *Diacritics* 38 (2008): 93-99, 101-109.

Dijkstra, Meindert. "Is Balaam Also among the Prophets?" *JBL* 114 (1995): 43-64.

Dijkstra, Meindert. "'I Am neither a Prophet nor a Prophet's Pupil': Amos 7:9–17 as the Presentation of a Prophet like Moses." Pages 105–128 in *The Elusive Prophet: The Prophet as a Historical Person, Literary Character, and Anonymous Artist*. Edited by Johannes C. de Moor. OtSt 45. Leiden: Brill, 2001.

Domeris, William R. "The Land Claim of Jeremiah—Was Max Weber Right?" Pages 136-149 in *Jeremiah (Dis)Placed: New Directions in Writing/Reading Jeremiah*. Edited by A. R. Pete Diamond and Louis Stulman. LHBOTS 529. London: T&T Clark International, 2011.

Dosse, François. *History of Structuralism, Volume 1: The Rising Sign, 1945-1966*. Translated by Deborah Glassman. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

Dubbink, Joep. "Jeremiah: Hero of Faith or Defeatist? Concerning the Place and Function of Jeremiah 20.14-18." *JSOT* 86 (1999): 67-84.

Duhm, Bernhard. *Das Buch Jeremia*. KHC 11. Tübingen/Leipzig: J. C. B. Mohr, 1901.

Durand, Jean-Marie. *Archives Épistolaires de Mari I/1*. ARM 26. Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1988.

Edelman, Diana V. "From Prophets to Prophetic Books: The Fixing of the Divine Word." Pages 29–54 in *The Production of Prophecy: Constructing Prophecy and Prophets in Yehud*. Edited by Diana V. Edelman and Ehud Ben Zvi. London: Equinox, 2009.

Eidevall, Göran. *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. AB 24G. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017.

Erdinast-Vulcan, Daphna. *Between Philosophy and Literature: Bakhtin and the Question of the Subject*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013.

Eskenazi, Tamara Cohn. *In an Age of Prose: A Literary Approach to Ezra-Nehemiah*. SBLMS 36 Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988.

Exum, J. Cheryl. *Fragmented Women: Feminist (Sub)versions of Biblical Narratives*. 2nd ed. Cornerstones. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016.

Exum, J. Cheryl, and David J. A. Clines, eds. *The New Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible*. JSOTSup 143. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993.

Finsterbusch, Karin. "YHWH as the Speaker of the So-Called 'Messenger Formula' in the Book of Jeremiah." *RB* 124 (2017): 369–380.

Fischer, Georg. "Das Jeremiabuch als Spiegel der Schrift- und Lesekultur in Israel." *ZKT* 132 (2010): 25-46.

Fischer, Georg. "Riddles of Reference: 'I' and 'We' in the Books of Isaiah and Jeremiah: The Relation of the Suffering Characters in the Books of Isaiah and Jeremiah." *OTE* 25/2 (2012): 277-291.

Fischer, Georg. "Jeremiah – 'The Prophet like Moses?'" Pages 45-66 in *The Book of Jeremiah: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation*. Edited by Jack R. Lundbom, Craig A. Evans, and Bradford A. Anderson. VTSup 178. Leiden: Brill, 2018.

Fishbane, Michael. *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985.

Floyd, Michael H. "The Nature of the Narrative and the Evidence of Redaction in Haggai." *VT* 45 (1995): 470-490.

Floyd, Michael H. "'Write the Revelation!' (Hab 2:2): Re-imagining the Cultural History of Prophecy." Pages 103-143 in *Writings and Speech in Israelite and Ancient Eastern Prophecy*. Edited by Ehud Ben Zvi and Michael H. Floyd. SBLSymS 10. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000.

Foucault, Michel. *This Is Not a Pipe*. Edited and translated by James Harkness. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983.

Foucault, Michel. "What Is an Author?" Pages 101-120 in *The Foucault Reader*. Edited by Paul Rabinow. New York: Vintage, 2010.

Frei, Hans W. *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study of Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974.

Fretheim, Terence E. "Word of God." *ABD* VI:961–962.

Friebel, Kelvin G. *Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's Sign-Acts: Rhetorical Nonverbal Communication*. JSOTSup 283. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999.

Friebel, Kelvin G. "Sign Acts." Pages 707-713 in *Dictionary of the Old Testament Prophets*. Edited by Mark J. Boda and J. Gordon McConville. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012.

Fried, Lisbeth S. "Did Second Temple High Priests Possess the *Urim* and *Thummim*?" *JHS* 7 (2007): 1-25. https://doi.org/10.5508/jhs.2007.v7.a3.

Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000.

García-Treto, Francisco O. "A Reader-Response Approach to Prophetic Conflict: The Case of Amos 7.10–17." Pages 114–124 in *The New Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible*. Edited by J. Cheryl Exum and David J. A. Clines. JSOTSup 143. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993.

Genette, Gérard. "Introduction to the Paratext." Translated by Marie Maclean. *New Literary History* 22 (1991): 261–272.

Gerstenberger, Erhard S. "Twelve (and More) Anonyms: A Biblical Book without Authors." Pages 119-136 in *The Book of the Twelve and the New Form Criticism*. Edited by Mark J. Boda, Michael H. Floyd, and Colin M. Toffelmire. ANEM 10. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015.

Giesebrecht, Friedrich. *Das Buch Jeremia*. HKAT. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1894.

Gignilliat, Mark. "Who Is Isaiah's Servant? Narrative Identity and Theological Potentiality." *SJT* 61 (2008): 125-136.

Glazier-McDonald, Beth. *Malachi: The Divine Messenger*. SBLDS 98. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987.

Goldstein, Ronnie. "Jeremiah between Destruction and Exile: From Biblical to Post-Biblical Traditions." *DSD* 20 (2013): 433-451.

Gordon, Robert P. "Prophecy in the Mari and Nineveh Archives." Pages 37–57 in *"Thus Speaks Ishtar of Arbela": Prophecy in Israel, Assyria, and Egypt in the Neo-Assyrian Period*. Edited by Robert P. Gordon and Hans M. Barstad. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013.

Gosse, Bernard. "Le prophète Jérémie en Jer 11,18-12,6 dans le cadre du livre de Jérémie et en rapport avec le Psautier." *ZAW* 118 (2006): 549-557.

Gottwald, Norman K. "Tragedy and Comedy in the Latter Prophets." *Semeia* 32 (1984): 83-96.

Grabbe, Lester L. *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages: A Socio-Historical Study of Religious Specialists in Ancient Israel*. Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1995.

Grabbe, Lester L. *Ezra-Nehemiah*. London: Routledge, 1998.

Grabbe, Lester L. "Jeremiah among the Social Anthropologists." Pages 80-88 in *Prophecy in the Book of Jeremiah*. Edited by Hans M. Barstad and Reinhard G. Kratz. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009.

Grabbe, Lester L. "Shaman, Preacher, or Spirit Medium? The Israelite Prophet in the Light of Anthropological Models." Pages 117–132 in *Prophecy and Prophets in Ancient Israel: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*. Edited by John Day. LHBOTS 531. New York: T&T Clark, 2010.

Graybill, Rhiannon. "Voluptuous, Tortured, and Unmanned: Ezekiel with Daniel Paul Schreber." Pages 137-155 in *The Bible and Posthumanism*. Edited by Jennifer L. Koosed. SemeiaSt 74. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014.

Habel, Norman. "The Form and Significance of the Call Narratives." *ZAW* 77 (1965): 297-323.

Hackett, Jo Ann. *The Balaam Text from Deir ʻAllā*. HSM 31. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1984.

Hagedorn, Anselm C. "Looking at Foreigners in Biblical and Greek Prophecy." *VT* 57 (2007): 432–448.

Halliwell, Stephen. *The Aesthetics of Mimesis: Ancient Texts and Modern Problems*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002.

Hallo, William W., and K. Lawson Younger, eds. *The Context of Scripture*. 3 vols. Leiden: Brill, 2003.

Halperin, David J. *Seeking Ezekiel: Text and Psychology*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993.

Hamori, Esther J. "Gender and the Verification of Prophets at Mari." *WO* 42 (2012): 1–22.

Hamori, Esther J. *Women's Divination in Biblical Literature: Prophecy, Necromancy, and Other Arts of Knowledge*. AYBRL. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015.

Hasel, Michael G. "Israel in the Merneptah Stele." *BASOR* 296 (1994): 45-61.

Hayes, John H. "The Usage of Oracles against Foreign Nations in Ancient Israel." *JBL* 87 (1968): 81–92.

Hayes, Elizabeth R. "Of Branches, Pots and Figs: Jeremiah's Visions from a Cognitive Perspective." Pages 89-102 in *Prophecy in the Book of Jeremiah*. Edited by Hans M. Barstad and Reinhard G. Kratz. BZAW 388. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009.

Hayes, Elizabeth R., and Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, eds. *'I Lifted My Eyes and Saw': Reading Dream and Vision Reports in the Hebrew Bible*. LHBOTS 584. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014.

Heinen, Sandra. "Exegesis without Authorial Intention? On the Role of the 'Author Construct' in Text Interpretation." Pages 7-23 in *Biblical Exegesis without Authorial Intention? Interdisciplinary Approaches to Authorship and Meaning*. Edited by Clarissa Breu. BibInt 172. Leiden: Brill, 2019.

Henderson, Joseph M. "Who Weeps in Jeremiah VIII 23 (IX 1)? Identifying Dramatic Speakers in the Poetry of Jeremiah." *VT* 52 (2002): 191-206.

Henderson, Joseph M. "Duhm and Skinner's Invention of Jeremiah." Pages 1-15 in *Jeremiah Invented: Constructions and Deconstructions of Jeremiah*. Edited by Else K. Holt and Carolyn J. Sharp. LHBOTS 595. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015.

Henderson, Joseph M. *Jeremiah under the Shadow of Duhm: A Critique of the Use of Poetic Form as a Criterion of Authenticity*. London: T&T Clark, 2019.

Heschel, Abraham J. *The Prophets*. Vol. 2. New York: Harper Colophon, 1962.

Hill, Andrew E. *Malachi: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. AB 25D. New York: Doubleday, 1998.

Hoftijzer, J., and G. van der Kooij, eds. *Aramaic Texts from Deir 'Alla*. DMOA 19. Leiden: Brill, 1976.

Holladay, William L. "Prototype and Copies: A New Approach to the Poetry-Prose Problem in the Book of Jeremiah." *JBL* 79 (1960): 351-367.

Holladay, William L. "Jeremiah's Lawsuit with God: A Study in Suffering and Meaning." *Int* 17 (1963): 280-287.

Holladay, William L. "The Background of Jeremiah's Self-Understanding: Moses, Samuel, and Psalm 22." *JBL* 83 (1964): 153-164.

Holladay, William L. "The Covenant with the Patriarchs Overturned: Jeremiah's Intention in 'Terror on Every Side' (Jer 20:1-6)." *JBL* 91 (1972): 305-320.

Holladay, William L. *Jeremiah: Spokesman out of Time*. Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1974.

Holladay, William L. *Jeremiah 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, Chapters 1-25*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1986.

Holladay, William L. *Jeremiah 2: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, Chapters 26-52*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989.

Holt, Else K. "Jeremiah's Temple Sermon and the Deuteronomists: An Investigation of the Redactional Relationship between Jeremiah 7 and 26." *JSOT* 36 (1986): 73-87.

Holt, Else K. "The Potent Word of God: Remarks on the Composition of Jeremiah 37-44." Pages 161-170 in *Troubling Jeremiah*. Edited by A. R. Pete Diamond, Kathleen M. O'Connor, and Louis Stulman. JSOTSup 260. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999.

Holt, Else K. "Word of Jeremiah—Word of God: Structures of Authority in the Book of Jeremiah." Pages 172-189 in *Uprooting and Planting: Essays on Jeremiah for Leslie Allen*. Edited by John Goldingay. LHBOTS 495. New York: T&T Clark, 2007.

Holt, Else K. "King Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon, My Servant, and the Cup of Wrath: Jeremiah's Fantasies and the Hope of Violence." Pages 209-218 in *Jeremiah (Dis)Placed: New Directions in Writing/Reading Jeremiah*. Edited by A. R. Pete Diamond and Louis Stulman. LHBOTS 529. London: T&T Clark International, 2011.

Holt, Else K. "And the Word Became Words: The Inscription of the Divine Word on Jeremiah the Prophet in Jeremiah the Book." Pages 189-200 in *Partners with God: Theological and Critical Readings of the Bible in Honor of Marvin A. Sweeney*. Edited by Shelley L. Birdsong and Serge Frolov. Claremont, CA: Claremont Press, 2017.

House, Paul R. *The Unity of the Twelve*. JSOTSup 97. Sheffield: Almond Press, 1990.

Houtman, Cornelius. "The Urim and Thummim: A New Suggestion." *VT* 40 (1990): 229-232.

Hubmann, Franz D. *Untersuchungen zu den Konfessionen: Jer 11,18-12,6 und Jer 15,10-21*. FB 30. Würzburg: Echter, 1978.

Huffmon, Herbert B. "The Expansion of Prophecy in the Mari Archives: New Readings, New Information." Pages 9-22 in *Prophecy and Prophets: The Diversity of Contemporary Issues in Scholarship*. Edited by Yehoshua Gitay. SemeiaSt 33. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997.

Hyatt, J. Philip. "The Deuteronomic Edition of Jeremiah." Pages 247-267 in *A Prophet to the Nations: Essays in Jeremiah Studies*. Edited by Leo G. Purdue and Brian W. Kovacs. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1984.

Irvine, Stuart A. "The Isaianic *Denkschrift*: Reconsidering an Old Hypothesis." *ZAW* 104 (1992): 216-231.

Isbell, Charles D. “2 Kings 22:3-23:24 and Jeremiah 36: A Stylistic Comparison.” *JSOT* 8 (1978): 33-45.

Janzen, J. Gerald. *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah*. HSM 6. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973.

Job, John Brian. *Jeremiah’s Kings: A Study of the Monarchy in Jeremiah*. SOTSMS. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006.

Jobling, David. “The Quest of the Historical Jeremiah: Hermeneutical Implications of Recent Literature.” Pages 285-297 in *A Prophet to the Nations: Essays in Jeremiah Studies*. Edited by Leo G. Purdue and Brian W. Kovacs. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1984.

Kalaga, Wojciech. “The Trouble with the Virtual.” *symplokē* 11 (2003): 96-103.

Kalmanofsky, Amy. *Terror All Around: The Rhetoric of Horror in the Book of Jeremiah*. LHBOTS 390. New York: T&T Clark, 2008.

Kalmanofsky, Amy. “The Monstrous-Feminine in the Book of Jeremiah.” Pages 190-208 in *Jeremiah (Dis)Placed: New Directions in Writing/Reading Jeremiah*. Edited by A. R. Pete Diamond and Louis Stulman. LHBOTS 529. London: T&T Clark International, 2011.

Kalmanofsky, Amy. “Bare Naked: A Gender Analysis of the Naked Body in Jeremiah 13.” Pages 49-62 in *Jeremiah Invented: Constructions and Deconstructions of Jeremiah*. Edited by Else K. Holt and Carolyn J. Sharp. LHBOTS 595. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015.

Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Edited and translated by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Kelle, Brad E. “The Phenomenon of Israelite Prophecy in Contemporary Scholarship.” *CBR* 12 (2014): 275-320.

Kessler, John. *The Book of Haggai: Prophecy and Society in Early Persian Yehud*. VTSup 91. Leiden: Brill, 2002.

Keynes, John Maynard. *A Tract on Monetary Reform*. London: Macmillan and Co., 1924.

Knight, Douglas A. *Rediscovering the Traditions of Israel*. 3rd ed. SBLStBL 16. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006.

Koch, Klaus. “The Language of Prophecy: Thoughts on the Macrosyntax of the *dĕbar YHWH* and Its Semantic Implications in the Deuteronomistic History.” Pages 210-221 in *Problems in Biblical Theology: Essays in Honor of Rolf Knierim*. Edited by Henry T. C. Sun and Keith L. Eades. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996.

Koch, Klaus. “Profetenbuchüberschriften: Ihre Bedeutung für das hebräische Verständnis von Profetie.” Pages 165–186 in *Verbindungslinien: Festschrift für Werner H. Schmidt zum 65. Geburtstag*. Edited by Axel Graupner, Holger Delkurt, and Alexander B. Ernst. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2000.

Koch-Westenholz, Ulla. *Mesopotamian Astrology: An Introduction to Babylonian and Assyrian Celestial Divination*. CNIP 19. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 1995.

Kratz, Reinhard G. “Why Jeremiah? The Invention of a Prophetic Figure.” Pages 197-212 in *Jeremiah’s Scriptures: Production, Reception, Interaction, and Transformation*. Edited by Hindy Najman and Konrad Schmid. JSJSup 173. Leiden: Brill, 2016.

Krentz, Edgar. *The Historical-Critical Method*. Philadelphia, Fortress, 1975.

Krispenz, Jutta. “Namen im Jeremiabuch: Ein Vergleich zwischen Jer 1-10 und Jer 26-35.” Pages 139-153 in *Sprachen, Bilder, Klänge: Dimensionen der Theologie im Alten Testament und in seinem Umfeld: Festschrift für Rüdiger Bartelmus zu seinem 65. Geburtstag*. Edited by Christiane Karrer-Grube et al. AOAT 359. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2009.

Krispenz, Jutta. “Wortereignisformel/Wortempfangsformel.” *WiBiLex* (2014): 1–14. http://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/stichwort/35010.

Kugel, James L. *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981.

Lange, Armin. *Vom prophetischen Wort zur prophetischen Tradition: Studien zur Traditions- und Redaktionsgeschichte innerprophetischer Konflikte in der Hebräischen Bibel*. FAT 34. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002.

Lange, Armin. “Literary Prophecy and Oracle Collection: A Comparison between Judah and Greece in Persian Times.” Pages 248-275 in *Prophets, Prophecy, and Prophetic Texts in Second Temple Judaism*. Edited by Michael H. Floyd and Robert D. Haak. LHBOTS 427. New York: T&T Clark, 2006.

Lawlor, John I. “Word Event in Jeremiah: A Look at the Composition’s ‘Introductory Formulas.’” Pages 231–243 in *Inspired Speech: Prophecy in the Ancient Near East. Essays in Honour of Herbert B. Huffmon*. Edited by John Kaltner and Louis Stulman. JSOTSup 378. London: T&T Clark International, 2004.

Lecercle, Jean-Jacques. *Deleuze and Language*. Language, Discourse, Society. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.

Legaspi, Michael C. *The Death of Scripture and the Rise of Biblical Studies*. OSHT. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Lemche, Niels Peter. “Will Jeremiah Save the History of Ancient Israel?” Pages 49-59 in *Jeremiah in History and Tradition*. Edited by Jim West and Niels Peter Lemche. Copenhagen International Seminar. New York: Routledge, 2019.

Lenzi, Alan. *Secrecy and the Gods: Secret Knowledge in Ancient Mesopotamia and Biblical Israel*. SAAS 19. Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2008.

Leuchter, Mark. *Josiah's Reform and Jeremiah's Scroll: Historical Calamity and Prophetic Response*. Hebrew Bible Monographs 6. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006.

Leuchter, Mark. “The Pen of Scribes: Writing, Textuality, and the Book of Jeremiah.” Pages 3-25 in *The Book of Jeremiah: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation*. Edited by Jack R. Lundbom, Craig A. Evans, and Bradford A. Anderson. VTSup 178. Leiden: Brill, 2018.

Levenson, Jon D. *The Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, and Historical Criticism: Jews and Christians in Biblical Studies*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993.

Levin, Christoph. “Das Wort Jahwes an Jeremia: Zur ältesten Redaktion der jeremianischen Sammlung.” *ZTK* 101 (2004): 257-280.

Levin, Christoph. “The ‘Word of Yahweh’: A Theological Concept in the Book of Jeremiah.” Translated by Margaret Kohl. Pages 42-62 in *Prophets, Prophecy, and Prophetic Texts in Second Temple Judaism*. Edited by Michael H. Floyd and Robert D. Haak. LHBOTS 427. New York: T&T Clark, 2006.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. “Structural Analysis in Linguistics and Anthropology.” Pages 31-54 in *Structural Anthropology*. Translated by Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf. New York: Basic Books, 1962.

Lewin, Ellen Davis. “Arguing for Authority: A Rhetorical Study of Jeremiah 1:4-19 and 20:7-18.” *JSOT* 32 (1985): 105-119.

Lindenberger, James M. *Ancient Hebrew and Aramaic Letters*. Edited by Kent Harold Richards. WAW 4. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994.

Lohfink, Norbert. “Die Gattung der ‘Historischen Kurzgeschichte’ in den letzten Jahres von Juda und in der Zeit des Babylonischen Exils.” *ZAW* 90 (1978): 319-347.

Long, Burke O. “Reports of Visions among the Prophets.” *JBL* 95 (1976): 353-365.

Lundbom, Jack R. *Jeremiah: A Study in Ancient Hebrew Rhetoric*. 2nd ed. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997.

Lundbom, Jack R. *Jeremiah 21-36: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. AB 21B. New York: Yale University Press, 2004.

Lundbom, Jack R. *Jeremiah 37-52: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. AB 21C New York: Doubleday, 2004.

Lundbom, Jack R. "Baruch, Seraiah, and Expanded Colophons in the Book of Jeremiah." Pages 50-74 in *Writing up Jeremiah: The Prophet and the Book*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013.

Lundbom, Jack R. "'I Brought You into a Garden Land' (Jer 2:7)." Pages 133-136 in *Writing up Jeremiah: The Prophet and the Book*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013.

Lundbom, Jack R. *Theology in Language, Rhetoric, and Beyond: Essays in Old and New Testament*. Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 2015.

Lundbom, Jack R. *Jeremiah 1-20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. AB 21A. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press; London: Bloomsbury, 2021.

Lundy, Craig. "From Structuralism to Poststructuralism." Pages 69-92 in *The Edinburgh Companion to Poststructuralism*. Edited by Benoît Dillet, Iain MacKenzie, and Robert Porter. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013.

Lynch, Matthew J. "The Prophet's *šārtum u sissiktum* 'Hair and Hem' and the Mantic Context of Prophetic Oracles at Mari." *JANER* 13 (2013): 11–29.

Lyon, Ashley E. *Reassessing Selah*. Athens, GA: College & Clayton Press, 2021.

Lyotard, Jean-François. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Translated by Geoff Bennington and Frederic Jameson. Theory and History of Literature 10. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

MacGillivray, Ian M. A. "Prophetic Validation and the Nonregnal Dates in the Superscriptions to Jeremiah and Amos." *JBL* 142 (2023): 289-304.

Maier, Christl M. "Jeremiah as YHWH's Stronghold (Jer 1:18)." *VT* 64 (2014): 640-653.

Marder, Michael. *Plant-Thinking: A Philosophy of Vegetal Life*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2013.

Marder, Michael. "Deleuze's Rhizome (or, in Philosophical Defense of Trees)." Pages 135-138 in *Grafts: Writings on Plants*. Minneapolis: Univocal, 2016.

Martin, Gary D. *Multiple Originals: New Approaches to Hebrew Bible Textual Criticism*. TCSt 7. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010.

Mason, R. A. “The Purpose of the ‘Editorial Framework’ of the Book of Haggai.” *VT* 27 (1977): 413-421.

Massumi, Brian. *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*. Post-Contemporary Interventions. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002.

Mastnjak, Nathan. “Jeremiah as Collection: Scrolls, Sheets, and the Problem of Textual Arrangement.” *CBQ* 80 (2018): 25-44.

May, Herbert Gordon. “Jeremiah’s Biographer.” *JBR* 10 (1942): 195-201.

May, Herbert Gordon. “The Righteous Servant in Second Isaiah’s Songs.” *ZAW* 66 (1954): 236-244.

Mayfield, Tyler D. “A Re-Examination of Ezekiel’s Prophetic Word Formulas.” *HS* 57 (2016): 139-155.

McKane, William. “Relations Between Prose and Poetry in the Book of Jeremiah with Special Reference to Jeremiah iii 6-11 and xii 14-17.” Pages 269-284 in *A Prophet to the Nations: Essays in Jeremiah Studies*. Edited by Leo G. Purdue and Brian W. Kovacs. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1984.

McKane, William. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah*, *Volume II: Commentary on Jeremiah XXVI-LII*. ICC. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996.

McKane, William. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah, Volume I: Introduction and Commentary on Jeremiah I-XXV*. ICC. London: Bloomsbury, 2014.

McNinch, Timothy C. “Who Knows? A Bakhtinian Reading of Carnivalesque Motifs in Jonah.” *VT* (2021): 1-17, doi:10.1163/15685330-bja10073.

Melugin, Roy F. *The Formation of Isaiah 40-55*. BZAW 141. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1976.

Mizrahi, Noam. *Witnessing a Prophetic Text in the Making: The Literary, Textual and Linguistic Development of Jeremiah 10:1-16*. BZAW 502. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017.

Möller, Karl. *A Prophet in Debate: The Rhetoric of Persuasion in the Book of Amos*. JSOTSup 372. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003.

Moore, Stephen D. *Gospel Jesuses and Other Nonhumans: Biblical Criticism Post-Poststructuralism*. SemeiaSt 89. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2017.

Moore, Stephen D. “A Bible That Expresses Everything While Communicating Nothing: Deleuze and Guattari’s Cure for Interpretosis.” Pages 108-125 in *Biblical Exegesis without Authorial Intention? Interdisciplinary Approaches to Authorship and Meaning*. Edited by Clarissa Breu. BibInt 172. Leiden: Brill, 2019.

Moore, Stephen D. *The Bible after Deleuze: Affects, Assemblages, Bodies without Organs*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2023.

Mowinckel, Sigmund. *Zur Komposition des Buches Jeremia*. Videnskapsselskapets Skrifter 2, Hist.-Filos. Klasse 1913, no. 5. Oslo: Dybwad, 1914.

Mroczek, Eva. "Thinking Digitally About the Dead Sea Scrolls: Book History Before and Beyond the Book." *Book History* 14 (2011): 241-269.

Mroczek, Eva. "The Hegemony of the Biblical in the Study of Second Temple Literature." *Journal of Ancient Judaism* 6 (2015): 2-35.

Mroczek, Eva. *The Literary Imagination in Jewish Antiquity*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Mroczek, Eva. "'Without Torah and Scripture': Biblical Absence and the History of Revelation." *HS* 61 (2020): 97-122.

Murray, D. F. "The Rhetoric of Disputation: Re-Examination of a Prophetic Genre." *JSOT* 38 (1987): 95-121.

Nasuti, Harry P. "The Poetics of Biblical Prophecy: Point of View and Point of Standing in Prophetic Books." Pages 99-113 in *Thus Says the Lord: Essays on the Former and Latter Prophets in Honor of Robert R. Wilson*. Edited by John J. Ahn and Stephen L. Cook. LHBOTS 502. New York: T&T Clark, 2009.

Nati, James. "The Rolling Corpus: Materiality and Pluriformity at Qumran, with Special Consideration of the *Serekh ha-Yaḥad*." *DSD* 27 (2020): 161-201.

Nati, James. *Textual Criticism and the Ontology of Literature in Early Judaism: An Analysis of the Serekh ha-Yaḥad*. JSJSup 198. Leiden: Brill, 2022.

Neumann, Peter K. D. "'Das Wort, das Geschehen Ist…' Zum Problem der Wortempfangsterminologie in Jer. I–XXV." *VT* 23 (1973): 171–217.

Newsom, Carol A. "Bakhtin, the Bible, and Dialogic Truth." *JR* 76 (1996): 290-306.

Newsom, Carol A. *The Self as Symbolic Space: Constructing Identity and Community at Qumran*. STDJ 52. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004.

Nicholson, Ernest W. *Preaching to the Exiles: A Study of the Prose Tradition in the Book of Jeremiah*. New York: Schocken Books, 1970.

Nicholson, Ernest W. *The Pentateuch in the Twentieth Century: The Legacy of Julius Wellhausen*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998.

Niditch, Susan. *The Symbolic Vision in Biblical Tradition*. HSM 30. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983.

Niditch, Susan. *Oral World and Written Word: Ancient Israelite Literature*. LAI. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1996.

Nissinen, Martti. "Spoken, Written, Quoted, and Invented: Orality and Writtenness in Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy." Pages 235-271 in *Writings and Speech in Israelite and Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy*. Edited by Ehud Ben Zvi and Michael H. Floyd. SBLSymS 10. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000.

Nissinen, Martti. "The Socioreligious Role of the Neo-Assyrian Prophets." Pages 89-114 in *Prophecy in Its Ancient Near Eastern Context: Mesopotamian, Biblical, and Arabian Perspectives*. Edited by Martti Nissinen. SBLSymS 13. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000.

Nissinen, Martti. "What is Prophecy? An Ancient Near Eastern Perspective." Pages 17-37 in *Inspired Speech: Prophecy in the Ancient Near East. Essays in Honour of Herbert B. Huffmon*. Edited by John Kaltner and Louis Stulman. JSOTSup 378. London: T&T Clark International, 2004.

Nissinen, Martti. "The Dubious Image of Prophecy." Pages 26-41 in *Prophets, Prophecy, and Prophetic Texts in Second Temple Judaism*. Edited by Michael H. Floyd and Robert D. Haak. LHBOTS 427. New York: T&T Clark, 2006.

Nissinen, Martti. "The Historical Dilemma of Biblical Prophetic Studies." Pages 103-120 in *Prophecy in the Book of Jeremiah*. Edited by Hans M. Barstad and Reinhard G. Kratz. BZAW 388. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009.

Nissinen, Martti. "Reflections on the 'Historical-Critical' Method: Historical Criticism and Critical Historicism." Pages 479-504 in *Method Matters: Essays on the Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Honor of David L. Petersen*. Edited by Joel M. LeMon and Kent Harold Richards. SBLRBS 56. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009.

Nissinen, Martti. "Since When Do Prophets Write?" Pages 585-606 in *In the Footsteps of Sherlock Holmes: Studies in the Biblical Text in Honour of Anneli Aejmelaeus*. Edited by Kristin de Troyer, T. Michael Law, and Marketta Liljeström. CBET. Leuven: Peeters, 2014.

Nissinen, Martti. *Ancient Prophecy: Near Eastern, Biblical, and Greek Perspectives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Nissinen, Martti. "Oracles as Artefacts: The Material Aspect of Prophecy." Pages 49-64 in *When Gods Speak to Men: Divine Speech according to Textual Sources in the Ancient*

*Mediterranean Basin*. Edited by Stéphanie Anthonioz, Alice Mouton, and Daniel Petit. OBO 289. Leuven: Peeters, 2019).

Nissinen, Martti. “Comparing Prophetic Sources: Principles and a Test Case.” Pages 377-396 in *Prophetic Divination: Essays in Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy*. BZAW 494. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2019.

Nissinen, Martti. “Das kritische Potential in der altorientalischen Prophetie.” Pages 163-194 in *Prophetic Divination: Essays in Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy*. BZAW 494. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2019.

Nissinen, Martti. “Falsche Prophetie in neuassyrischer und deuteronomistischer Darstellung.” Pages 419-440 in *Prophetic Divination: Essays in Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy*. BZAW 494. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2019.

Nissinen, Martti. “Fear Not: A Study on an Ancient Near Eastern Phrase.” Pages 195–232 in *Prophetic Divination: Essays in Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy*. BZAW 494. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2019.

Nissinen, Martii. “Prophecy and Omen Divination: Two Sides of the Same Coin.” Pages 75–85 in *Prophetic Divination: Essays in Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy*. BZAW 494. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2019.

Nissinen, Martti, C. L. Seow, and Robert K. Ritner. *Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East*. WAW 12. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003.

Nogalski, James D. *Redactional Processes in the Book of the Twelve*. BZAW 218. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1993.

Nogalski, James D. “Where *Are* the Prophets in the Book of the Twelve?” Pages 163-182 in *The Book of the Twelve and the New Form Criticism*. Edited by Mark J. Boda, Michael H. Floyd, and Colin M. Toffelmire. ANEM 10. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015.

Noth, Martin. *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions*. Translated by Bernhard W. Anderson. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981.

Noth, Martin. *The Deuteronomistic History*. 2nd ed. JSOTSup 15. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991.

O’Brien, Julia M. *Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*. AOTC. Nashville: Abingdon, 2004.

O’Connor, Kathleen M. *The Confessions of Jeremiah: Their Interpretation and Role in Chapters 1-25*. SBLDS 94. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988.

O'Connor, Kathleen M. "'Do Not Trim a Word': The Contributions of Chapter 26 to the Book of Jeremiah." *CBQ* 51 (1989): 617-630.

O'Connor, Kathleen M. *Jeremiah: Pain and Promise*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011.

O'Connor, Kathleen M. "Figurations in Jeremiah's Confessions with Questions for Isaiah's Servant." Pages 63-73 in *Jeremiah Invented: Constructions and Deconstructions of Jeremiah*. Edited by Else K. Holt and Carolyn J. Sharp. LHBOTS 595. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015.

Olyan, Saul M., and Jacob L. Wright. "Introduction." Pages xi-xviii in *Supplementation and the Study of the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Saul M. Olyan and Jacob L. Wright. BJS 361. Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 2018.

Overholt, Thomas W. "Jeremiah and the Nature of the Prophetic Process." Pages 129-150 in *Scripture in History & Theology: Essays in Honor of J. Coert Rylaarsdam*. Edited by Arthur L. Merrill and Thomas W. Overholt. PTMS 17. Pittsburgh, PA: Pickwick, 1977.

Overholt, Thomas W. "Jeremiah 2 and the Problem of 'Audience Reaction.'" *CBQ* 41 (1979): 262-273.

Overholt, Thomas W. "Seeing is Believing: The Social Setting of Prophetic Acts of Power." *JSOT* 23 (1982): 3–31.

Overholt, Thomas W. *Channels of Prophecy: The Social Dynamics of Prophetic Activity*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989.

Panov, Lida. "Scribal Experiences of Salvation – Aspects of Formation Processes in the Hezekiah-Isaiah Narratives." *ZAW* 133 (2021): 312-328.

Parke-Taylor, Geoffrey H. *The Formation of the Book of Jeremiah: Doublets and Recurring Phrases*. SBLMS 51. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000.

Parpola, Simo. *Assyrian Prophecies*. SAA 9. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1997.

Parunak, H. Van Dyke. "Some Discourse Functions of Prophetic Quotation Formulas in Jeremiah." Pages 489-519 in *Biblical Hebrew and Discourse Linguistics*. Edited by Robert D. Bergen. Dallas, TX: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1994.

Perdue, Leo G. *The Collapse of History: Reconstructing Old Testament Theology*. OBT. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994.

Perdue, Leo G. *Reconstructing Old Testament Theology: After the Collapse of History*. OBT. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005.

Petersen, David L. *The Roles of Israel's Prophets*. JSOTSup 17. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981.

Petersen, David L. *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8*. OTL. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984.

Petersen, David L. "Rethinking the Nature of Prophetic Literature." Pages 23-35 in *Prophecy and Prophets: The Diversity of Contemporary Issues in Scholarship*. Edited by Yehoshua Gitay. SemeiaSt 33. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997.

Petersen, David L. "Defining Prophecy and Prophetic Literature." Pages 33-44 in *Prophecy in Its Ancient Near Eastern Context: Mesopotamian, Biblical, and Arabian Perspectives*. Edited by Martti Nissinen. SBLSymS 13. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000.

Polk, Timothy. *The Prophetic Persona: Jeremiah and the Language of the Self*. JSOTSup 32. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984.

Pongratz-Leisten, Beate. *Herrschaftswissen in Mesopotamien: Formen der Kommunikation zwischen Gott und König im 2. Und 1. Jahrtausend v.Chr.* SAAS 10. Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1999.

Preus, J. Samuel. *Spinoza and the Irrelevance of Biblical Authority*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Quine, Willard V. *Word and Object*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1960.

Quine, Willard V. "On What There Is." *The Review of Metaphysics* 2 (1948): 21-38.

Rajchman, John. Introduction to *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life*, by Gilles Deleuze. Translated by Anne Boyman. New York: Zone Books, 2001.

Redditt, Paul L. "Form Criticism in Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi: From Oral Sayings to Literature." Pages 265-304 in *The Book of the Twelve and the New Form Criticism*. Edited by Mark J. Boda, Michael H. Floyd, and Colin M. Toffelmire. ANEM 10. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015.

Reed, Walter L. *Dialogues of the Word: The Bible as Literature according to Bakhtin*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Reimer, David J. "The 'Foe' and the 'North' in Jeremiah." *ZAW* 101 (1989): 223-232.

Rendsburg, Gary A. "The Date of the Exodus and the Conquest/Settlement: The Case for the 1100s." *VT* 42 (1992): 510-527.

Rendtorff, Rolf. "Zum Gebrauch der Formel *n$^{e}$'um jahwe* im Jeremiabuch." *ZAW* 66 (1954): 27-37.

Rendtorff, Rolf. "Botenformel und Botenspruch." *ZAW* 74 (1962): 165–177.

Reventlow, Henning Graf. *Liturgie und Prophetisches Ich*. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1963.

Ricoeur, Paul. *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*. Fort Worth, TX: Texas Christian University Press, 1976.

Rochberg, Francesca. *The Heavenly Writing: Divination, Horoscopy, and Astronomy in Mesopotamian Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Rochberg, Francesca. *In the Path of the Moon: Babylonian Celestial Divination and Its Legacy*. SAMD 6. Leiden: Brill, 2010.

Rochberg, Francesca. *Before Nature: Cuneiform Knowledge and the History of Science*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016.

Rogerson, John W. *J.M.L. de Wette, Founder of Modern Biblical Criticism: An Intellectual Biography*. JSOTSup 126. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992.

Rollston, Christopher A. "The Bullae of Baruch ben Neriah the Scribe and the Seal of Maʿadanah Daughter of the King: Epigraphic Forgeries of the 20th Century." *ErIsr* 32 (2016): 79-90.

Römer, Thomas C. "Les 'anciens' pères (Jér 11,10) et la 'nouvelle' alliance (Jér 31,31)." *BN* 59 (1991): 23-27.

Römer, Thomas C. "How Did Jeremiah Become a Convert to Deuteronomistic Ideology?" Pages 189-199 in *Those Elusive Deuteronomists: The Phenomenon of Pan-Deuteronomism*. Edited by Linda S. Schearing and Steven L. McKenzie. JSOTSup 268. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999.

Rom-Shiloni, Dalit. "Facing Destruction and Exile: Inner-Biblical Exegesis in Jeremiah and Ezekiel." *ZAW* 117 (2005): 189-205.

Rom-Shiloni, Dalit. "'On the day I Took Them out of the Land of Egypt': A Non-Deuteronomic Phrase within Jeremiah's Conception of Covenant." *VT* 65 (2015): 621-647.

Roncace, Mark. *Jeremiah, Zedekiah, and the Fall of Jerusalem*. LHBOTS 423. New York: T&T Clark, 2005.

Ross, James F. "The Prophet as Yahweh's Messenger." Pages 98–107 in *Israel's Prophetic Heritage: Essays in honor of James Muilenburg*. Edited by Bernhard W. Anderson and Walter Harrelson. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962.

Rossi, Benedetta. "Do the Prophets Have a Private Life? Women as Literary and Redactional Tools." Pages 293-314 in *Prophecy and Gender in the Hebrew Bible*. Edited by L.

Juliana Claassens and Irmtraud Fischer with Funlola O. Olojede. BW 1.2. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2021.

Rottzoll, Dirk U. “Die kh ʾmr…-Legitimationsformel.” *VT* 39 (1989): 323–340.

Sasson, Jack M. *Jonah: A New Translation with Introduction, Commentary, and Interpretation*. AB 24B. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974.

Sasson, Jack M. *From the Mari Archives: An Anthology of Old Babylonian Letters*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015.

Saussure, Ferdinand de. *Course in General Linguistics*. Translated by Roy Harris. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.

Scalise, Pamela. “Vision beyond the Visions in Jeremiah.” Pages 47-58 in *‘I Lifted My Eyes and Saw’: Reading Dream and Vision Reports in the Hebrew Bible*. Edited by Elizabeth R. Hayes and Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer. LHBOTS 584. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014.

Schaper, Joachim. “Exilic and Post-Exilic Prophecy and the Orality/Literacy Problem.” *VT* 55 (2005): 324-342.

Schaper, Joachim. “The Death of the Prophet: The Transition from the Spoken to the Written Word of God in the Book of Ezekiel,” Pages 63-79 in *Prophets, Prophecy, and Prophetic Texts in Second Temple Judaism*. Edited by Michael H. Floyd and Robert D. Haak. LHBOTS 427. New York: T&T Clark, 2006.

Schmid, Konrad. *Buchgestalten des Jeremiabuches: Untersuchungen zur Redaktions- und Rezeptionsgeschichte von Jer 30-33 im Kontext des Buches*. WMANT 72. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1996.

Schniedewind, William M. *How the Bible Became a Book: The Textualization of Ancient Israel*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Schniedewind, William M. *A Social History of Hebrew: Its Origins through the Rabbinic Period*. AYBRL. New York: Yale University Press, 2013.

Schökel, Luis Alonso. “Jeremiah as an Anti-Moses.” Pages 27-38 in *The Literary Language of the Bible: The Collected Essays of Luis Alonso Schökel*. Edited by Tawny Holm. Translated by Harry Spencer. North Richland Hills, TX: BIBAL Press, 2000.

Schweitzer, Albert. *The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of Its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede*. New York: Macmillan, 1968.

Seidl, Theodor. “Die Wortereignisformel in Jeremia: Beobachtungen zu den Formen der Redeeröffnung in Jeremia, im Anschluß an Jer 27,1.2.” *BZ* 23 (1979): 20–47.

Seitz, Christopher R. "The Prophet Moses and the Canonical Shape of Jeremiah." *ZAW* 101 (1989): 3-27.

Seitz, Christopher R. "The Divine Council: Temporal Transition and New Prophecy in the Book of Isaiah." *JBL* 109 (1990): 229-247.

Seitz, Christopher R. *Zion's Final Destiny: The Development of the Book of Isaiah: A Reassessment of Isaiah 36-39*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991.

Sharp, Carolyn J. "The Call of Jeremiah and Diaspora Politics." *JBL* 119 (2000): 421-438.

Sharp, Carolyn J. *Prophecy and Ideology in Jeremiah: Struggles for Authority in the Deutero-Jeremianic Prose*. OTS. London: T&T Clark, 2003.

Sharp, Carolyn J. Review of *Jeremiah: Preacher of Grace, Poet of Truth*, by Carol Dempsey. *RBL* 10 (2008): 203-206.

Sharp, Carolyn J. *Irony and Meaning in the Hebrew Bible*. ISBL. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009.

Sharp, Carolyn J. "Jeremiah in the Land of Aporia: Reconfiguring Redaction Criticism as Witness to Foreignness." Pages 35-46 in *Jeremiah (Dis)Placed: New Directions in Writing/Reading Jeremiah*. Edited by A. R. Pete Diamond and Louis Stulman. LHBOTS 529. London: T&T Clark International, 2011.

Shead, Andrew G. Review of *Buchgestalten des Jeremiabuches: Untersuchungen zur Redaktions- und Rezeptionsgeschichte von Jer 30-33 im Kontext des Buches*, by Konrad Schmid. *VT* 49 (1999): 558-562.

Shead, Andrew G. *The Open Book and the Sealed Book: Jeremiah 32 in its Hebrew and Greek Recensions*. JSOTSup 347. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002.

Siker, Jeffrey S. "Bible as Book in the Digital Realm." *HS* 61 (2020): 173-196.

Skinner, John. *Prophecy and Religion: Studies in the Life of Jeremiah*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948.

Smith, Mark S. *The Laments of Jeremiah and Their Contexts: A Literary and Redactional Study of Jeremiah 11-20*. SBLMS 42. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990.

Smith, Mark S. *Where the Gods Are: Spatial Dimensions of Anthropomorphism in the Biblical World*. AYBRL. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016.

Snaith, Norman H. "Selah." *VT* 2 (1952): 43-56.

Somers-Hall, Henry. *Deleuze's* Difference and Repetition: *An Edinburgh Philosophical Guide*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013.

Sparks, Kenton L. "*Enūma Elish* and Priestly Mimesis: Elite Emulation in Nascent Judaism." *JBL* 126 (2007): 625-648.

Stamets, Paul. *Mycelium Running: How Mushrooms Can Help Save the World*. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 2005.

Sternberg, Meir. *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading*. ISBL. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985.

Stipp, Hermann-Josef. *Das masoretische und alexandrinische Sondergut des Jeremiabuches: Textgeschichtlicher Rang, Eigenarten, Triebkräfte*. OBO 136. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1994.

Stökl, Jonathan. "Female Prophets in the Ancient Near East." Pages 47–61 in *Prophecy and Prophets in Ancient Israel: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*. Edited by John Day. LHBOTS 531. New York: T&T Clark, 2010.

Stökl, Jonathan. *Prophecy in the Ancient Near East: A Philological and Sociological Comparison*. Leiden: Brill, 2012.

Stone, Ken. *Reading the Hebrew Bible with Animal Studies*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2018.

Strawn, Brent A. "Jeremiah's In/Effective Plea: Another Look at נער in Jeremiah I 6." *VT* 55 (2005): 366-377.

Strawn, Brent A. *The Old Testament Is Dying: A Diagnosis and Recommended Treatment*. Theological Explorations for the Church Catholic. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017.

Stulman, Louis. "The Narrative Tradition in Jeremiah: A Textual and Exegetical Reexamination." *Proceedings* 6 (1986): 188-203.

Stulman, Louis. *The Prose Sermons of the Book of Jeremiah: A Redescription of the Correspondences with the Deuteronomistic Literature in the Light of Recent Text-Critical Research*. SBLDS 83. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986.

Stulman, Louis. "The Prose Sermons as Hermeneutical Guide to Jeremiah 1-25: The Deconstruction of Judah's Symbolic World." Pages 34-63 in *Troubling Jeremiah*. Edited by A. R. Pete Diamond, Kathleen M. O'Connor, and Louis Stulman. JSOTSup 260. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999.

Stulman, Louis. "Jeremiah as a Messenger of Hope in Crisis." *Int* 7 (2008): 5-20.

Sze Wing So, Catherine. “Structure in the Confessions of Jeremiah.” Pages 126-148 in *The Book of Jeremiah: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation*. Edited by Jack R. Lundbom, Craig A. Evans, and Bradford A. Anderson. VTSup 178. Leiden: Brill, 2018.

Thiel, Winfried. *Die deuteronomistische Redaktion von Jeremia 1-25*. WMANT 41. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1973.

Thiel, Winfried. *Die deuteronomistische Redaktion von Jeremia 26-45: mit einer Gesamtbeurteilung der deuteronomistischen Redaktion*. WMANT 52. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1981.

Thoburn, Nicholas. “The Strangest Cult: Material Forms of the Physical Book through Deleuze and Guattari.” *Deleuze Studies* 7 (2013): 53-82.

Tiemeyer, Lena-Sofia. “Ezekiel: A Compromised Prophet in Reduced Circumstances.” Pages 175-195 in *Constructs of Prophecy in the Former and Latter Prophets and Other Texts*. Edited by Lester L. Grabbe and Martti Nissinen. ANEM 4. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011.

Tiemeyer, Lena-Sofia. “The Vision Report Genre between Form-Criticism and Redaction-Criticism: An Investigation of Amos 7-9 and Zechariah 1-6.” Pages 75-96 in *The Book of the Twelve and the New Form Criticism*. Edited by Mark J. Boda, Michael H. Floyd, and Colin M. Toffelmire. ANEM 10. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015.

Toffelmire, Colin M. “*Sitz im* What? Context and the Prophetic Book of Obadiah.” Pages 221-244 in *The Book of the Twelve and the New Form Criticism*. Edited by Mark J. Boda, Michael H. Floyd, and Colin M. Toffelmire. ANEM 10. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015.

Torrey, Charles C. “The Background of Jeremiah 1–10.” *JBL* 56 (1937): 193-216.

Tov, Emanuel. “The Literary History of the Book of Jeremiah in the Light of Its Textual History.” Pages 211-237 in *Empirical Models for Biblical Criticism*. Edited by Jeffrey H. Tigay. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985.

Tov, Emanuel. *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*. 2nd rev. ed. Minneapolis: Fortress; Assen: Royal Van Gorcum, 1992.

Trible, Phyllis. *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives*. OBT. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984.

Tucker, Gene M. “Prophetic Authenticity: A Form-Critical Study of Amos 7:10–17.” *Int* 27 (1973): 423–434.

Tucker, Gene M. “Prophetic Superscriptions and the Growth of a Canon.” Pages 56–70 in *Canon and Authority: Essays in Old Testament Religion and Theology*. Edited by George W. Coats and Burke O. Long. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977.

Tuell, Steven. *Reading Nahum–Malachi: A Literary and Theological Commentary*. Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2016.

Tupamahu, Ekaputra. “The Stubborn Invisibility of Whiteness in Biblical Scholarship.” *Political Theology Network*. 20 November 2020. https://politicaltheology.com/the-stubborn-invisibility-of-whiteness-in-biblical-scholarship/.

Ullendorff, Edward. “Is Biblical Hebrew a Language?” *BSOAS* 34 (1971): 241-255.

Ulrich, Eugene. “Qumran Evidence for the Text and Canon of the Bible.” Pages 7-22 in *Scribal Practice, Text and Canon in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Essays in Memory of Peter W. Flint*. Edited by John J. Collins and Ananda Geyser-Fouché. STDJ 130. Leiden: Brill, 2019.

Van Dam, Cornelis. *The Urim and Thummim: A Means of Revelation in Ancient Israel*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997.

Van der Toorn, Karel. “From the Oral to the Written: The Case of Old Babylonian Prophecy.” Pages 219-234 in *Writings and Speech in Israelite and Ancient Eastern Prophecy*. Edited by Ehud Ben Zvi and Michael H. Floyd. SBLSymS 10. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000.

Van der Toorn, Karel. “Mesopotamian Prophecy between Immanence and Transcendence: A Comparison of Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian Prophecy.” Pages 71–87 in *Prophecy in Its Ancient Near Eastern Context: Mesopotamian, Biblical, and Arabian Perspectives*. Edited by Martti Nissinen. SBLSymS 13. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000.

Van der Toorn, Karel. *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007.

VanDyke, Elizabeth. “Designing the Golden Calf: Pens and Presumption in the Production of a ‘Divine’ Image.” *JBL* 141 (2022): 219-233.

Van Nuys, Kelvin. “Evaluating the Pathological in Prophetic Experience (Particularly in Ezekiel).” *JBR* 21 (1953): 244-251.

Van Seters, John. *Prologue to History: The Yahwist as Historian in Genesis*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1992.

Van Seters, John. *The Life of Moses: The Yahwist as Historian in Exodus–Numbers*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1994.

Van Seters, John. *The Yahwist: A Historian of Israelite Origins*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013.

Vološinov, V. N. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. Translated by Ladislav Matejka and I. R. Titunik. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973.

Von Rad, Gerhard. *Old Testament Theology, Volume II: The Theology of Israel's Prophetic Traditions*. Translated by D. M. G. Stalker. OTL. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1965.

Von Rad, Gerhard. *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*. Translated by E. W. Trueman Dicken. London: SCM Press, 1966.

Wasser, Audrey. "587 BC – AD 70: On Several Regimes of Signs." Pages 83-98 in A Thousand Plateaus *and Philosophy*. Edited by Henry Somers-Hall, Jeffrey A. Bell, and James Williams. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018.

Watts, James W. "Text and Redaction in Jeremiah's Oracles against the Nations." *CBQ* 54 (1992): 432-447.

Watts, John D. W. "Superscriptions and Incipits in the Book of the Twelve." Pages 110–124 in *Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve*. Edited by James D. Nogalski and Marvin A. Sweeney. SBLSymS 15. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2000.

Wazana, Nili. "Amos against Amaziah (Amos 7:10–17): A Case of Mutual Exclusion." *VT* 70 (2020): 209–228.

Weber, Max. *Ancient Judaism*. Edited and translated by Hans H. Gerth and Don Martindale. New York: Free Press, 1952.

Weems, Renita J. "Gomer: Victim of Violence or Victim of Metaphor?" *Semeia* 47 (1989): 87-104.

Weems, Renita J. *Battered Love: Marriage, Sex, and Violence in the Hebrew Prophets*. OBT. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995.

Weippert, Helga. *Die Prosareden des Jeremiabuches*. BZAW 132. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1973.

Weippert, Manfred. "Prophetie im Alten Orient." *Neues Bibel-Lexikon* 3:196–200.

Weis, Richard D. "The Structure of MT Jeremiah, with Special Attention to Chapters 21-45." Pages 201-224 in *Partners with God: Theological and Critical Readings of the Bible in Honor of Marvin A. Sweeney*. Edited by Shelley L. Birdsong and Serge Frolov. Claremont, CA: Claremont Press, 2017.

Weiser, Artur. *The Old Testament: Its Formation and Development*. Translated by D. M. Barton. New York: Association, 1961.

Wells, Roy. "Dislocations in Time and Ideology in the Reconception of Jeremiah's Words: The Encounter with Hananiah in the Septuagint *Vorlage* and the Masoretic Text." Pages 322-350 in *Uprooting and Planting: Essays on Jeremiah for Leslie Allen*. Edited by John Goldingay. LHBOTS 495. New York: T&T Clark, 2007.

Williams, James. *Gilles Deleuze's Logic of Sense: A Critical Introduction and Guide*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008.

Williams, James. "If Not Here, Then Where? On the Location and Individuation of Events in Badiou and Deleuze." *Deleuze Studies* 3 (2009): 97–123.

Williams, James. *Understanding Poststructuralism*. London: Routledge, 2014.

Williamson, H. G. M. "Prophetesses in the Hebrew Bible." Pages 65–80 in *Prophecy and Prophets in Ancient Israel: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*. Edited by John Day. LHBOTS 531. New York: T&T Clark, 2010.

Wilson, Robert R. *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980.

Wilson, Robert R. "Prose and Poetry in the Book of Jeremiah." Pages 413-427 in *Ki Baruch Hu: Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Judaic Studies in Honor of Baruch A. Levine*. Edited by Robert Chazan, William W. Hallo, and Lawrence H. Schiffman. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Translated by D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness. London: Routledge, 1974.

Wolfe, Cary. *Animal Rites: American Culture, the Discourse of Species, and Posthumanist Theory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Wolff, H. W. "Das Kerygma des deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerkes." *ZAW* 73 (1961): 171-186.

Wollenberg, Rebecca Scharbach. *The Closed Book: How the Rabbis Taught the Jews (Not) to Read the Bible*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2023.

Wright, G. Ernest. *The Old Testament Against Its Environment*. SBT 2. London: SCM Press, 1968.

Wright, Jacob L. *Rebuilding Identity: The Nehemiah-Memoir and its Earliest Readers*. BZAW 348. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004.

Wright, Jacob L. “Prolegomena to the Study of Biblical Prophetic Literature.” Pages 78-85 in *Comment devient-on prophète? Actes de colloque organisé par le Collège de France, Paris, les 4-5 avril 2011*. Edited by Jean-Marie Durand, Thomas Römer, and Micaël Bürki. OBO 265. Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014.

Wright, Jacob L. *Why the Bible Began: An Alternative History of Scripture and Its Origins*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023.

Zimmerli, Walther. *Ezekiel 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1-24*. Translated by Ronald E. Clements. Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979.

Yee, Gale. *Poor Banished Children of Eve: Woman as Evil in the Hebrew Bible*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003.

Zourabichvili, François. *Deleuze: A Philosophy of the Event* with *The Vocabulary of Deleuze*. Edited by Gregg Lambert and Daniel W. Smith. Translated by Kieran Aarons. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012.