O Land, Land, Land!

Images of Land in Jeremiah and in New Zealand Poetry:

Ecological Readings from Aotearoa.

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ABSTRACT

In his renowned article published in 1967, Lynn White Jr. argues that a causal relationship exists between Christianity (grounded in the Bible) and the contemporary ecological crisis. (Western) Christianity, insists White, is the world's most anthropocentric religion, and it is this anthropocentrism that underlies human harm of the environment. The cultural significance of Christianity means that – even for non-Christian Westerners – biblical representations of the biosphere play a role in determining our conduct towards the environment. White also suggests that since the roots of the ecological crisis are largely religious, the remedy must also be religious. With White's words in mind, this thesis employs an ecological hermeneutic to assess critically the representations of Land in the book of Jeremiah, asking questions of the text's contribution to the current state of environmental degradation, as well as assessing its potential to assist in alleviating the crisis. This primary analysis is supplemented by an exploration of the role these images play in the formation of individuals and society in Aotearoa New Zealand. A number of New Zealand poems are therefore analysed in an attempt to ascertain the degree to which the biblical depictions of Land continue to shape the social imaginary of this country.

After developing a methodological framework, a selection of Jeremianic texts are critically analysed, focusing on the representation of Land. These representations include: Land as wilderness and garden (Jer 2:1-9; 17:5-8; 31:10-14); as sexually abused woman (6:1-8; 51:25-33); and as an interconnected being (3:1-5; 31:35-37). Intertextual analysis between the Jeremianic texts and New Zealand poetry reveals a number of commonalities with regard to the ways in which Land is imaged. Although at no point is a linear connection identified, the Jeremianic images of Land seem to be present within the broad intertextual matrix of the New Zealand social imaginary. From an ecological perspective, White's critique holds weight. While a high proportion of the images of Land in Jeremiah are anthropocentric, this eco-critical reading suggests that there also exists within these texts an alternative ecological vision of Land which has the capacity to contribute to the transformation of human comportment towards our environment.

Dedication

For my husband, Richard, who has journeyed with me
and has made me endless cups of tea

and

For my daughter, Maika, who arrived mid-thesis
and who fills me with wonder and awe.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations follow the listing given in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th ed. (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

All English citations of the Bible are my own unless specified otherwise.

COMMON ABBREVIATIONS

ASV	American Standard Version
CE	Common Era
CEB	Common English Bible
CEV	Contemporary English Version
ESV	English Standard Version
GNB	Good News Bible
JSB	Jewish Study Bible
KJV	King James Version
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NEB	New English Bible
NET	New English Translation
NIV	New International Version
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
REB	Revised English Bible
RSV	Revised Standard Version

GLOSSARY

Aotearoa	The indigenous (Māori) name for New Zealand.
Māori	The indigenous people of Aotearoa.
Pākehā	Non-Māori New Zealanders. Often used to describe New Zealanders of 'European' descent.
Whenua	The Māori word for Land.

1 – INTRODUCTION

The greatest failure of Christianity in the total course of its history is its inability to deal with the devastation of the planet.[1]

In order to deconstruct the abuses of the present, we must dismantle the oppressive texts, interpretations, and practices of the past.[2]

There are no solutions for the systemic causes of eco-crisis, at least in democratic societies, apart from religious narrative.[3]

In the years since this thesis began taking shape humanity has witnessed an unprecedented increase in extreme weather events. New Zealand, for example, has experienced 'severe' flooding,[4] a 'once-in-a-lifetime' polar blast,[5] unequalled numbers of tornadoes,[6] 'record-breaking' storms[7] and the 'worst' drought in almost a century.[8] Internationally, the picture is much the same, with typhoons, flooding, heat waves, bushfires and melting ice all reaching record levels of severity.[9] This should come as no surprise, however. For more than two decades now, scientific leaders have warned that climate change is real and it is already causing irrevocable damage to the planet. These events are set to become more frequent and more intense.[10] Where questions of human complicity once dominated the climate change

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[1] Thomas Berry, quoted in P. Collins, *God's Earth: Religion as If It Really Mattered* (Melbourne: Dove, 1995), 152.

[2] C. R. Fontaine, *With Eyes of Flesh: The Bible, Gender, and Human Rights* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008), 218.

[3] M. Oelschlaeger, *Caring for Creation: An Ecumenical Approach to the Environmental Crisis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 5.

[4] R. Quilliam, "'Once-in-a-Century' Storm Finally Eases," *The New Zealand Herald*, March 5, 2014, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11214174.

[5] H. Donnell, P. Harper, and A. Wade, "Snow Falls in Auckland for the First Time in Decades," *The New Zealand Herald*, August 15, 2011, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10745187.

[6] S. Harvey, "2011: Year of Weather Extremes," *Stuff,* January 12, 2012, http://www.stuff.co.nz/environment/6246868/2011-year-of-weather-extremes.

[7] "Major Storm Mop-Up Gets Under Way," *Stuff*, June 21, 2013, http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/8823953/Major-storm-mop-up-gets-under-way.

[8] "2013 Drought Was Worst Since 1945 – Study," *The New Zealand Herald*, July 25, 2013, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=10903236.

[9] D. Carrington, "Extreme Weather Becoming More Common, Study Says," *The Guardian*, August 11, 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/aug/11/extreme-weather-common-blocking-patterns, for example, cites the devastating floods in Pakistan (2010), the heat wave in Russia (2010) and the scorching drought in the Western United States (2014) as evidence that extreme weather events are increasingly common. In using newspaper articles to reference these events, I seek to demonstrate that these issues are no longer peripheral to human communities; rather, they are attracting widespread public and political attention.

[10] "Global Warming Probably Irreversible – Report," *The New Zealand Herald*, August 27, 2014, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/droughts/news/article.cfm?c_id=180&objectid=11315019. Although concern for environmental issues grew throughout the 1980s, it was not until the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (also known as the Earth Summit or the Rio Summit) that climate change

discourse, scientific consensus now holds humanity responsible, making links between climate change and human initiatives such as deforestation, fossil fuel emissions, pollution, overpopulation, the destruction of ecosystems and the reduction of biodiversity. Debate no longer centres primarily around whether or not climate change exists, or even whether humanity can avert it; rather, the dialogue has become one of mitigating the potentially catastrophic consequences of this global shift.

Yet despite climate change being acknowledged as among the most critical issues faced by the Earth community, this unprecedented threat to the planet has failed to galvanise humanity, and questions remain as to whether the political will exists to address the situation quickly and effectively.[11] Unwilling to heed the warnings of impending disaster, many continue to proclaim with Qoheleth that generations will come and go but the Earth will remain forever.[12] Scientific fact alone, it seems, is not enough to counter what Thomas Berry calls the 'deep cultural pathology' that enables humanity to cause such damage without thought of long-term consequence.[13] For these warnings to challenge the well-established patterns of human ecology, it seems they must also find a degree of coherence with the religious and philosophical foundations that underlie the way in which human communities perceive themselves and their relationship to the surrounding environment.

In a renowned article published in 1967, Lynn White Jr. made a compelling case arguing that a causal relationship exists between Christianity (grounded in the Bible and its history of interpretation) and the contemporary ecological crisis.[14] Among the accusations levelled against (Western) Christianity in this paper is the charge that it is 'the most anthropocentric religion the world has ever seen'.[15] Grounded in the creation stories of Genesis, Christianity, argues White, gives privilege to the human community as the pinnacle of the created order, thereby diminishing the value of the other-than-human community. Not only does this

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received serious recognition at an international level. For reasons of time and space it is impossible to assess the scientific data concerning climate change here. Suffice to say that the magnitude of the ecological crisis has been meticulously documented in a range of reputable sources and I am convinced that the conclusions they draw are fundamentally correct.

[11] N. Darragh, "Adjusting to the Newcomer: Theology and Ecotheology," *Pacifica* 13, no. 2 (2000): 162, notes that environmental policy almost always takes third place after the undisputed first place of economics and the second place of social policy.

[12] Eccl 1:4.

[13] T. Berry, "Into the Future," in *This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature, Environment*, ed. Roger S. Gottlieb (New York: Routledge, 1996), 410.

[14] L. White Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," *Science* 155 (1967): 1203-1207. This article represents something of a watershed moment in the history of biblical interpretation and has become the most cited piece of work in the eco-theological debate.

[15] White Jr., "The Historical Roots," 1205.

ecological segregation establish humankind as 'master' over the environment, but it also depicts as God's will the exploitation of 'nature' to serve human interests.[16] White suggests that it is this anthropocentric worldview that has enabled the emergence of scientific and technological ideologies, which have had a devastating impact on the environment.[17] The responses to White's article have been many and varied.[18] It is not within the scope of this research to include yet another analysis of this seminal work; suffice to say that I am sympathetic to White's argument. Rather, I wish to pick up on two points made within this article which have largely been overlooked by commentators in their response to White's accusations.

The first point for consideration is White's assertion that 'we… live, as we have lived for about 1700 years… in a context of Christian axioms'.[19] That is, the cultural influence of Christianity is such that its teachings continue to shape the social imaginaries of the West, despite the fact that many Westerners have ceased to identify as 'Christian'.[20] This historic relationship with Christianity means that the Bible's influence also continues to be felt, regardless of whether or not the text itself remains sacred. Its words and images are sewn into the fabric of the English language,[21] and its moral vision underlines many Western judicial systems.[22] Embedded deep within our collective consciousness, the Bible remains intricately and paradoxically alive. Given the cultural significance of this text, it is inevitable that, in the West at least, the Bible – and its history of interpretation – plays an important role in determining human experience of the environment. Indeed, Theodore Hiebert argues that the concrete images of the biblical environment have 'etched themselves into the… minds of

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[16] White Jr., "The Historical Roots," 1205.

[17] White Jr., "The Historical Roots," 1206. I appreciate that this summary – and indeed the article itself – is reductive and somewhat simplistic. It is not my intention to critically analyse the cogency of White's work here; rather, I wish to acknowledge the importance of this article in its forcing biblical scholars to re-examine the biblical depiction of humanity and the environment.

[18] A summary of the initial response to White's article can be found in S. B. Scharper, "The Ecological Crisis," in *The Twentieth Century: A Theological Overview*, ed. G. Baum (New York: Orbis, 1999), 221-224.

[19] White Jr., "The Historical Roots," 1205.

[20] I employ Code's definition of social imaginaries as 'often-implicit but nonetheless effective systems of images, meanings, metaphors, and interlocking explanations-expectations within which people, in specific time periods and geographical-cultural climates, enact their knowledge and subjectivities and craft their self-understandings'. This imaginary, writes Code, is 'an instituted social-epistemic imaginary that holds in place complexes of socially informing beliefs, sustains the authority of institutions, knowledge, patterns of expertise, and perpetuates a hierarchically arranged social order. L. Code, *Ecological Thinking: The Politics of Epistemic Location* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 29, 123.

[21] A. Nicolson, "The Bible of King James," *National Geographic* 220, no. 6 (2011): 36-61.

[22] H. C. Washington, "'Lest He Die in the Battle and Another Man Take Her': Violence and the Construction of Gender in the Laws of Deuteronomy 20-22," in *Gender and Law in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*, eds. Victor H. Matthews, Bernard M. Levinso and Tikva Frymer-Kensky (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 189.

Jews and Christians', and have become a standard feature of the Western imagination.[23] In essence, the biblical representations of the biosphere influence the way we perceive our surroundings, they shape our objectives and interests in the world around us, and they affect our interaction with the other-than-human realm. The ecological crisis is a religious crisis.

The second point of note is closely related to the first. In concluding his article, White insists that since the roots of the ecological crisis are largely religious, the 'remedy must also be essentially religious, whether we call it that or not'.[24] If, as White suggests, it is through the Bible (via Christianity) that human beings have become alienated from the environment, then this same source may also provide the motivation for the transformation of human attitudes towards our planet.[25] It is clear, then, that this situation demands a critical re-examination of the Bible, which takes into account the severity of the ecological crisis as well as the complicity of humanity in the destruction of the Earth. White's charge challenges biblical interpreters to re-evaluate the Bible with an emphasis on recovering those passages in which the other-than-human is present. It exhorts readers to re-examine the anthropocentric assumptions that characterise (parts of) the biblical text and its long history of interpretation, and urges these readers to reflect critically upon the role of these texts in the social construction of reality.[26] In short, White's assertions challenge interpreters to read the Bible in such a way that it might contribute to the emergence of an ecological sensibility that is appropriate to the environmental concerns of the twenty-first century.[27]

White's challenge proved particularly provocative in the area of biblical interpretation, where a number of new hermeneutical approaches have been developed, enabling readers to engage

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[23] T. Hiebert, *The Yahwist's Landscape: Nature and Religion in Early Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 3-4.

[24] White Jr., "The Historical Roots," 1207.

[25] The vast majority of the 2.2 billion Christians in the world, argues Ruether, will only be persuaded of an ecological consciousness if they see that it grows from the soil in which they are planted. R. R. Ruether, *Gaia and God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992), 207. D. J. Moo, "Nature in the New Creation: New Testament Eschatology and the Environment," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 49, no. 3 (2006): 449; and M. Oelschlaeger, "Wilderness, Civilization and Language," in *The Wilderness Condition: Essays on Environment and Civilization* eds. Max Oelschlaeger (Washington: Island Press, 1992), 271-272, echo these sentiments in their work.

[26] Cf. E. Schüssler Fiorenza, *Rhetoric and Ethic: The Politics of Biblical Studies* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 11.

[27] In White's words, 'we must rethink and refeel [sic] our nature and destiny'. White Jr., "The Historical Roots," 1207. I draw here upon Scriven's definition of the term 'sensibility', which is used to suggest 'a complex pattern of perceptions, attitudes, and judgments which, if fully developed, would constitute… appropriate conduct that would make talk of rights and duties unnecessary under normal conditions… [W]hen perception is sufficiently changed, respectful types of conduct seem 'natural', and one does not have to belabor them in the language of rights and duties'. T. Scriven, *Wrongness, Wisdom, and Wilderness: Toward a Libertarian Theory of Ethics and the Environment* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 154.

with the Bible from an ecological perspective.[28] These approaches have equipped interpreters in the newly-formulated task of rediscovering the other-than-human in the Bible, and have provided a range of eco-critical readings of familiar biblical texts. Such interpretations have begun to expose the pervasive presence of the other-than-human in the biblical text, but equally, they highlight the degree to which this presence has been hidden and suppressed in the history of the Bible's interpretation. Still in its infancy, however, eco-critical biblical interpretation is typically focused in one of two ways. In a majority of cases, critics focus on short – yet significant – textual units concerning the other-than-human, but neglect to analyse critically the text's broader literary and ideological contexts.[29] A minority of interpreters, on the other hand, seek to provide an overview of biblical representations of the other-than-human. The expansive nature of these readings, however, leaves little room for detailed textual analysis and fails to account properly for the multiplicity of ecological perspectives contained within the Bible.[30] What is needed, then, is the sustained eco-critical analysis of substantial biblical texts. It is within this context that my thesis is located.

As a response to the state of affairs outlined above, I propose to undertake a sustained reading of a biblical book from an eco-critical perspective. This interpretation will take as its starting point the global environmental crisis. Using an ecological hermeneutic, it will critically

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[28] For an overview of these approaches, see §2.1.1.

[29] Because my research is located in the Hebrew Bible, the select examples I use here will relate to the Hebrew Bible as well. Most of the more recent examples of ecological interpretation of the Bible appear in chapter form as part of collaborative projects. They can be viewed in collections such as V. Balabanski, and N. C. Habel, eds. *The Earth Story in the New Testament* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002); N. C. Habel, ed. *Readings from the Perspective of Earth* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000); N. C. Habel, ed. *The Earth Story in the Psalms and the Prophets* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001); N. C. Habel, and P. Trudinger, eds. *Exploring Ecological Hermeneutics* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008); N. C. Habel, and S. Wurst, eds. *The Earth Story in Genesis* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000); N. C. Habel, and S. Wurst, eds. *The Earth Story in Wisdom Traditions* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001); and D. G. Horrell et al., eds., *Ecological Hermeneutics: Biblical, Historical and Theological Perspectives* (London: T&T Clark, 2010). Of course, there are exceptions to these chapter-length ecological investigations into short biblical texts. These include: N. C. Habel, *The Birth, the Curse and the Greening of Earth: An Ecological Reading of Genesis 1-11* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011); and H. Marlow, *Biblical Prophets and Contemporary Environmental Ethics: Re-Reading Amos, Hosea, and First Isaiah* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[30] See for example R. C. Austin, *Hope for the Land: Nature in the Bible* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1988); J. A. Baker, "Biblical Views of Nature," in *Liberating Life: Contemporary Approaches to Ecological Theology*, eds. Charles Birch, William Eakin and Jay B. McDaniel (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1990), 9-26; J. Barr, "Man and Nature: The Ecological Controversy and the Old Testament," in *Ecology and Religion in History*, eds. David Spring and Eileen Spring (New York: Harper&Row, 1974), 48-75; D. Bergant, "What's Old About New Age: The Bible and Ecotheology," *New Theology Review* 20, no. 2 (2007): 38-46; S. P. Bratton, "Christian Ecotheology and the Old Testament," in *Religion and Environmental Crisis*, ed. Eugene C. Hargrove, (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1986), 53-75; R. J. Clifford, "The Bible and the Environment," in *Preserving the Creation: Environmental Theology and Ethics*, eds. Kevin W. Irwin and Edmund D. Pellegrino (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1994), 1-16; F. G. Downing, "Environment, Beauty and Bible," *Ecotheology* 7, no. 2 (2003): 186-201; R. H. Hiers, "Ecology, Biblical Theology, and Methodology: Biblical Perspectives on the Environment," *Zygon* 19, no. 1 (1984): 43-59; and G. M. Tucker, "Rain on a Land Where No One Lives: The Hebrew Bible on the Environment," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 116, no. 1 (1997): 3-17.

assess the book and ask questions of the text's possible contribution to the current state of environmental degradation, as well as assessing its potential to assist in alleviating this crisis. The primary task, then, will be one of re-reading a biblical book from the perspective of the other-than-human. This task involves identifying the presence of other-than-human characters in the text, critically assessing their literary representations there and then working to recover their voices from within the narrative. An ecological analysis of a substantial text is not an end in itself, however. Because knowledge is materially situated,[31] this initial task will be supplemented by an exploration of the role that this biblical book plays in the discursive formation of individuals and society in Aotearoa New Zealand. In doing this, a number of New Zealand poems will be selected and critically analysed in an effort to ascertain the degree to which the biblical depictions of other-than-human characters continue to shape the social imaginary of this country.[32] More than an abstract or theoretical endeavour, this thesis is born of a practical desire to play a small part in the process of reconfiguring this country's imaginary by contributing to the formation of an ecological sensibility. Motivating this work, then, is the underlying hope that by finding new ways of *thinking* ecologically, we might begin to *behave* in a more ecologically sensitive manner.[33]

In seeking a biblical book for analysis I turn to the prophets who have long been recognised as advocates of justice, denouncing the plight of those without voice who occupy the margins of society.[34] Like those who speak out against the ecological crisis, the biblical prophets use impassioned language and vivid imagery as a means by which to resist injustice and bring about widespread transformation. One such prophet was Jeremiah, and it is the words and images found in the book bearing this prophet's name that I will examine for this research. The past three decades have seen a dramatic increase in scholarship on the book of Jeremiah, with scholars reading this text through a proliferation of hermeneutical lenses.[35] Although historical-critical methods of analysis dominate this scholarship, a number of ideologically

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[31] Code, *Ecological Thinking*, 91; I. Gebara, *Longing for Running Water: Ecofeminism and Liberation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 27.

[32] In delimiting the bounds of this research, I have chosen to focus on New Zealand poetry as the medium through which I gain insight into the perceptions of Land within the social imaginary of Aotearoa. This focus means that – for the most part – I will have to bracket out the insights gleaned from New Zealand art, music and literature in its broader sense.

[33] Cf. S. McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 202.

[34] Those without voice typically include the poor, the widow and the stranger. In the context of this work, however, I include in this group the other-than-human.

[35] C. M. Maier and C. J. Sharp, "Introduction: Feminist and Postcolonial Interventions In and With the Book of Jeremiah," in *Prophecy and Power: Jeremiah in Feminist and Postcolonial Perspective*, eds. Christl M. Maier and Carolyn J. Sharp (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 1-18, explore the development of scholarship on the book of Jeremiah in the past thirty years.

motivated methods of interpretation have begun to emerge.[36] Despite the flourishing of scholarship in this area, however, the book of Jeremiah remains largely unexamined by ecological interpreters.[37] This is all the more perplexing considering the plethora of Jeremianic imagery relating to the other-than-human. From mountains, gardens, deserts and oceans to swallows, snakes, lions and sheep, other-than-human characters pervade the book of Jeremiah. This text, asserts Walter Brueggemann, 'is saturated with images of creation',[38] and more specifically, with images of the Land.[39]

In delimiting the parameters of this ecological reading, then, I have chosen to focus on images of Land as they appear in the book of Jeremiah.[40] By using the term 'Land', I recognise the inherent risk of homogenising what is in fact an incomprehensibly vast and complex phenomena. Indeed, the focus on 'Land' – as opposed to the more comprehensive term 'Earth' – reflects an attempt to reduce such homogenisation. Thus, in the context of this work, 'Land' will be used to refer to the solid surface of the Earth.[41] It will also include flora and, at times, fauna. Although it will not always be possible to articulate the complex diversity of this realm, it will be understood as implied that the term 'Land' encompasses a multitude of distinct ecosystems which constitute terrestrial existence. And so, this analysis

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[36] See, for example, A. Bauer-Levesque, *Gender in the Book of Jeremiah: A Feminist-Literary Reading* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999); S. V. Davidson, *Empire and Exile: Postcolonial Readings of the Book of Jeremiah* (New York: T&T Clark, 2011); A. R. P. Diamond, K. M. O'Connor, and L. Stulman, eds., *Troubling Jeremiah* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999); S. MacWilliam, "Queering Jeremiah," *Biblical Interpretation* 10, no. 4 (2002): 384-404; C. M. Maier and C. J. Sharp, eds., *Prophecy and Power: Jeremiah in Feminist and Postcolonial Perspective* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2013); K. M. O'Connor, *Jeremiah: Pain and Promise* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012); and M. E. Shields, *Circumscribing the Prostitute: The Rhetorics of Intertextuality, Metaphor and Gender in Jeremiah 3.1-4.4* (London: T&T Clark, 2004).

[37] Exceptions to this include V. M. Billingham, "The Earth Mourns/Dries Up in Jeremiah 4:23-28: A Literary Analysis Viewed through the Heuristic Lens of an Ecologically Oriented Symbiotic Relationship" (PhD diss., Melbourne College of Divinity, 2009); T. E. Fretheim, "The Earth Story in Jeremiah 12," in *Readings from the Perspective of Earth*, ed. Norman C. Habel (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 96-110; G. H. Wittenberg, "The Vision of Land in Jeremiah 32," in *The Earth Story in the Psalms and the Prophets*, ed. Norman C. Habel (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 129-142; and S. Wurst, "Retrieving Earth's Voice in Jeremiah: An Annotated Voicing of Jeremiah 4," in *The Earth Story in the Psalms and the Prophets*, ed. Norman C. Habel (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 172-184. In a majority of these cases, however, the author's analysis is restricted to a single pericope within the Jeremianic text. There are also a number of works in which the Earth/Land is explored in the book of Jeremiah, although the hermeneutical lens used is not explicitly ecological. These include W. Brueggemann, "Jeremiah: *Creation in Extremis*," in *God Who Creates: Essays in Honor of W. Sibley Towner*, eds. William P. Brown and S. Dean McBride Jr. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 152-170; *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise, and Challenge in Biblical Faith*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 101-122; N. C. Habel, "The Suffering Land: Ideology in Jeremiah," *Lutheran Theological Journal* 26, no. 1 (1992): 14-26; *The Land Is Mine: Six Biblical Land Ideologies* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 75-96; and K. M. Hayes, *'The Earth Mourns': Prophetic Metaphor and Oral Aesthetic* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 65-127.

[38] Brueggemann, *"Creation in Extremis,"* 154-155.

[39] Indeed, the word אֶרֶץ (Land/Earth) is used over 270 times throughout the book of Jeremiah.

[40] An exception to this appears in §5.3 in the analysis of Jer 31:35-37.

[41] In doing this I bracket out the oceanic and atmospheric domains. Again, §5.3 is an exception to this.

seeks to assess critically the ways in which 'Land' is represented or imaged in the book of Jeremiah. In an attempt to examine the predominant representations of Land in this book, I have selected a range of texts containing Land-based images that are characteristic of those found elsewhere in Jeremiah.[42] In addition to this, I have also tried to ensure that the selected texts have not been the subject of prior ecological investigations.[43] Thus, the seven texts chosen for interpretation include Jer 2:1-9; 3:1-5; 6:1-8; 17:5-8; 31:10-14, 35-37; and 51:25-33. Only after an in-depth analysis of these selected texts has been carried out, will I turn to explore the possibility of a relationship between the Jeremianic representations of Land and the representations of Land in New Zealand poetry.

Land has always had a particular significance within the New Zealand social imaginary. With the relatively late arrival of human beings to these shores,[44] New Zealand's native patterns of ecosystems are considered extraordinary in global terms.[45] Equally extraordinary, however, is the rapidity with which the Land has been – and continues to be – transformed by these new arrivals. Human history in Aotearoa New Zealand is inextricably entwined with the environmental history of this place. The Land, writes David Eggleton, is

> '[O]ur centre of gravity… We inscribe it with our hopes and dreams; the land is our waka, our location beacon, a site of layered history… it is a map of our assumptions, desires [and] projections…'[46]

It is not surprising, therefore, that an ongoing preoccupation with Land is reflected within the New Zealand literary tradition – particularly within this nation's poetry. From the verse of Edward Tregear in the mid-nineteenth century to the poems of Robert Sullivan over 150 years later, Land appears as a unifying thread binding together countless volumes of this country's poetic literature.

While Land is central to the collective identity of New Zealanders, religious affiliation is peripheral. Despite strong historical ties to Christianity through the British colonisation of

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[42] Once again, Jer 31:35-37 is an exception to this.

[43] Refer to note 37.

[44] It is widely believed that prior to about 1200CE there were no mammal inhabitants of Aotearoa (save bats, whales, seals and possibly rats). P. Star, "Humans and the Environment in New Zealand, c. 1800 to 2000," in *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*, ed. Giselle Byrnes (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2009), 48.

[45] G. Park, "Edward Gibbon Wakefield's Dream, Thomas Shepherd's Eye and New Zealand's Spatial Constitution," in *Theatre Country: Essays on Landscape and Whenua*, ed. Geoff Park (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2006), 35.

[46] D. Eggleton, "Introduction," in *Here on Earth: The Landscape in New Zealand Literature*, eds. Craig Potton and David Eggleton (Nelson: Craig Potton Publishing, 1999), 7. 'Waka' is the Māori word for 'canoe'.

this Land in the nineteenth century, New Zealand has no established church and by all objective measures – church membership and census figures – it is one of the most secular nations in the world.[47] And yet a brief survey of New Zealand poetry reveals a plethora of biblically based images in poems that are clearly not conventionally or even intentionally 'Christian'.[48] Just as White claimed in his controversial article, the Bible's influence continues to be felt – even in a 'post-Christian' context such as Aotearoa New Zealand. The often unacknowledged – but nevertheless pervasive – presence of the Bible in the works of these poets immediately raises questions concerning the relationship between the biblical representations of Land and the images of Land found throughout New Zealand poetry. If, as Allen Curnow suggests, the poet's task is not simply to reflect reality but to determine it,[49] one wonders about the role of the Bible in determining human perceptions of Land in this country. In light of the accusations levelled against the Bible for its role in the ecological crisis, it becomes necessary to extend this eco-critical analysis to include a selection of contemporary poetic texts concerning Land. The final task of this research project thus involves listening for echoes of the Jeremianic representations of Land in New Zealand poetry and then critically assessing the reality that is engendered through such imagery.

1.1 OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

The thesis begins in Chapter Two by establishing a methodological framework for reading the selected Jeremianic texts. This chapter opens with a brief overview of a range of ecological perspectives which are variously used to interpret the Bible. Having critically assessed the merits of each hermeneutical perspective, I settle on the ecological hermeneutic outlined by the Earth Bible Team, and set about nuancing this interpretive approach in order that it might respond appropriately to the task at hand. After establishing this hermeneutical stance, I then move to identify the investigative tools that will be used in this ecological analysis, the first of which is a rhetorical critical methodology. Locating this approach within the ever-broadening discipline of biblical rhetorical criticism, I outline five characteristics that will define the scope of this investigation: 1) close attention to the persuasive quality of a text and its presentation of Land; 2) an emphasis on the relationship between the world(s) of the text and the world(s) of the reader; 3) a synchronic analysis of the Jeremianic material; 4)

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[47] P. Morris, H. Ricketts, and M. Grimshaw, "Introduction," in *Spirit in a Strange Land: A Selection of New Zealand Spiritual Verse*, eds. Paul Morris, Harry Ricketts and Mike Grimshaw (Auckland: Godwit, 2002), 9.
[48] Morris, Ricketts, and Grimshaw, "Introduction," 9.
[49] Quoted in M. P. Jackson and E. Caffin, "Poetry," in *The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature in English*, ed. Terry Sturm (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1998), 448.

a detailed analysis of the structure; and 5) the style of a text. In addition to this rhetorical approach, I employ an intertextual methodology to examine the connections between the Jeremianic images of Land and the images of Land in New Zealand poetry. Following a discussion on intertextuality as a general theory, I identify a suitable intertextual approach – that promulgated by Ziva Ben-Porat. Ben-Porat's reading strategy divides the intertextual analysis into four stages: 1) recognition of an intertextual marker; 2) identification of the evoked text; 3) examining the interaction between the alluding text and the evoked text and 4) identifying broader intertextual patterns between the two texts. Having outlined the interpretive strategies that will guide this ecological analysis, I turn to examine the texts themselves.

Chapters Three, Four and Five follow an identical structure. They begin with a brief introduction and then move into a detailed ecological analysis of two or more Jeremianic texts. Each chapter concludes with the texts in question entering into an intertextual dialogue with a poem from the New Zealand context. Chapter Three, 'Land as Wilderness / Land as Garden', opens with a close reading of the dichotomous images of Land in Jer 2:1-9. This preliminary reading examines the representation of Land as garden and as wilderness, noting the value judgments associated with each representation. Using vivid imagery and subtle wordplay, this text depicts the wilderness as a place of fear, hostility and death, and sets it in opposition to the abundance and security of the fertile garden. Having critically analysed these contrasting images, I turn to examine the depictions of wilderness and garden as they appear elsewhere in the book of Jeremiah. In reading Jer 17:5-8, I explore the rhetorical strategies used to portray the wilderness in a negative light, before retrieving an alternative understanding of wilderness as home, a place of nourishment for other-than-human communities. I then move to examine the image of the garden in Jer 31:10-14. While this representation of Land is problematic in that the garden is valued solely in terms of what it provides for humanity, a counter-reading of this text reveals the Land to be an agent – alongside God – of restoration. The chapter ends with an intertextual dialogue between these texts and two New Zealand poems: 'A Colonist in His Garden', by William Pember Reeves, and 'Another Kind of Wilderness (Mount Eden: Summit and Prison)', by Rowley Te Whenua Habib.

In Chapter Four, 'Land as City as Woman Raped', I consider the relationship between Land and women. Both Jer 6:1-8 and 51:25-33 describe in detail the destruction of the feminised Land ('daughter Zion' / 'daughter Babylon') at the hands of a masculine authority. By closely

examining the gendered interaction of the characters in these texts, I argue that the Land is imaged as a woman who is being raped. In both these texts, however, the Land is not without voice and protests its suffering by writhing, shaking and shouting out. Concluding the analysis of these passages, an intertextual dialogue ensues between these texts and a poem by Hone Tuwhare entitled 'Not by Wind Ravaged'.

Chapter Five, 'Land as Interconnected', centres on the relationship among God, Land and people. In a close reading of Jer 3:1-5, I explore the image of Land as polluted and highlight the problems of depicting the Land as a pawn in the relationship between God and humanity. Despite the Land's silence, an alternative reading of this text is retrieved by focusing on the depiction of God and humanity as utterly dependent upon the Land. Jer 31:35-37 develops the image of Land as relational by examining the text's description of the interconnectedness of the entire cosmic realm, of which the Land is a part. This text provides something of a climax to the thesis as it affirms an ecologically sensitive mode of relationality among God, Land and people, and thus has the capacity to contribute positively to the formation of a contemporary ecological sensibility. The chapter concludes with the now familiar intertextual exchange, this time between Jer 31:35-37 and a poem by Ruth Dallas, 'Deep in the Hills'. Having outlined the context for this thesis and detailed the course of its development, I turn now to the methodology and a detailed discussion of the interpretive strategies that will be used in this work.

2 – METHODOLOGY

We cannot afford to ignore the activity of reading, for it is here that literature is realised in praxis. Literature acts on the world by acting on its readers.[1]

Having detailed the investigative interest of this research, it is necessary to establish the methodological framework which will guide my interaction with the selected Jeremianic texts. Given the scope of my analysis, I seek a method of inquiry that is sensitive to the presence of the Land in a variety of texts, is attentive to a range of literary possibilities and their persuasive potential, and is flexible enough to recognise the diverse ways in which texts interact with one another. The primary focus of my investigation – that is, the critical analysis of images of Land in selected Jeremianic texts – will therefore be aided by both an ecological hermeneutic and a rhetorical critical methodology. These tools of interpretation will be retained in the secondary stage of my work – the dialogue between the Jeremianic texts and selected poems from Aotearoa New Zealand – and an intertextual methodology will be added. Because these methodological terms refer to a wide range of practices, this chapter will broadly explore each approach, before outlining my own preference for their application in the context of this research.

2.1 AN ECOLOGICAL HERMENEUTIC

2.1.1 ECOLOGICAL HERMENEUTICS: A BROAD SURVEY

In response to the deepening ecological crisis – and to White's accusations of Christian complicity in this predicament – a number of new hermeneutical approaches have emerged within the broad discipline of theology. In the field of biblical studies, these interpretive strategies seek to provide an investigative framework for reading the Bible in the context of global ecological degradation.[2] Each approach to biblical interpretation varies politically, ethically and theologically, with its own assumptions and initiatives for responding to this crisis. For the purposes of classifying these approaches, I draw upon the broad categories outlined by David Horrell, Cherryl Hunt and Christopher Southgate.[3] The first category

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[1] P. Schweickart, "Reading Ourselves: Toward a Feminist Theory of Reading," in *Gender and Reading: Essays on Readers, Texts, and Contexts*, eds. E. Flynn and P. Schweickart (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 39.

[2] I will not include a comprehensive review of the literature that is available within this discipline as part of this chapter. Rather, I will engage with individual scholars and their scholarship as part of the textual analysis in the chapters that follow.

[3] D. G. Horrell, C. Hunt, and C. Southgate, "Appeals to the Bible in Ecotheology and Environmental Ethics: A

includes those who have adopted what Paul Santmire and Ernst Conradie describe as an 'apologetic' approach, which attempts to defend the Bible against criticisms of legitimising anthropocentrism and ecological degradation.[4] These readings reflect a concern to portray the Bible as 'eco-friendly' and an important guide for ecological ethics.[5] Although this stance is a useful counterbalance to those accusations levelled at the Bible, this hermeneutic neglects to address critically those texts which are ecologically problematic.[6]

The second interpretive strategy is that expounded by Horrell and the Exeter project.[7] This approach is located in the biblical tradition and employs 'doctrinal lenses' to shape an ecological reading of the Bible. That is, the hermeneutical lens that is used to interpret biblical texts is grounded in biblical concepts and their (Christian) interpretation.[8] Although this approach combines the insights of contemporary science with historical study and informed exegesis, its major weakness lies in its underlying commitment to construct an ecological theology which is 'coherent… with a scripturally shaped Christian orthodoxy'.[9] In its commitment to the Christian tradition, this approach risks prioritising coherence and

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Typology of Hermeneutical Stances," *Studies in Christian Ethics* 12, no. 2 (2008): 228-231. Like the authors of this article, I recognize that categorization is always an oversimplification of a huge range of scholarship. Although their classification includes a category termed 'resisting ecologists in the name of the Bible', I have not included it in my discussion. This reading strategy opposes the call for ecological justice because of the conviction that it runs counter to the Bible. Although this approach has gained some popularity in evangelical and fundamentalist circles, I discount it as a potential hermeneutic for this research because of its disinterest in, and at times denial of, the ecological crisis.

[4] H. P. Santmire, *Nature Reborn: The Ecological and Cosmic Promise of Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 7; E. M. Conradie, "Towards an Ecological Biblical Hermeneutics: A Review Essay on the Earth Bible Project," *Scriptura* 85 (2004): 123. See also N. Habel, *An Inconvenient Text* (Adelaide: ATF Press, 2009), 54-56.

[5] This interpretive approach is epitomised in the *Green Bible* (2008), where those texts pertaining to the Earth are highlighted in green, 'clearly' revealing the message that 'We are called to care for all God has made' (I-15). Interestingly, of the forty-three Jeremianic verses concerning Land I have selected to study in this thesis, only eight of them are highlighted in the *Green Bible*. For a survey of this interpretive approach, see Horrell, Hunt, and Southgate, "Appeals to the Bible", 221-225.

[6] While some interpreters acknowledge the validity of such accusations, the underlying conviction of this approach maintains that the biblical text is not problematic in itself; rather, the anthropocentric distortions are the result of human interpreters. Regardless of such claims, I concur with Booth, who insists that there is an ethical demand for the reader to engage with difficult texts, exposing their depiction of injustices, and acknowledging their potential to perpetuate these injustices within the interpreter's own context. W. C. Booth, *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 152-153, 489.

[7] Horrell et al., *Ecological Hermeneutics*, 15-120.

[8] D. G. Horrell, *The Bible and the Environment: Towards a Critical Ecological Biblical Theology* (London: Equinox, 2010), 136, gives an example of a lens centred around the confession that 'God has created all things good' and 'has bound Godself eternally in covenant to the earth'. Horrell emphasizes that such a lens does not necessarily imply that this is simply 'what the Bible says'. Rather, a lens emerges from an interpretation of the Bible, which is informed by the context and concerns of the reader. The lens that arises out of this initial encounter will, in turn, shape subsequent biblical interpretation (128).

[9] D. G. Horrell, "Introduction" in *Ecological Hermeneutics: Biblical, Historical and Theological Perspectives*, eds. D. G. Horrell et al. (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 8-9.

fidelity above critical questions concerning the way in which this tradition (and its biblical foundations) has contributed to the ecological crisis.[10]

The final interpretive strategy is the ecological hermeneutic put forward by Norman Habel and the Earth Bible Team.[11] This approach begins with the suspicion that the Bible is an inherently anthropocentric text and a potential source of ecological degradation. If Horrel's interpretive strategy reflects a commitment to the Christian tradition, Habel's hermeneutic is uncompromisingly committed to the Earth and its other-than-human inhabitants.[12] In reading the biblical text, Earth Bible interpreters take up the cause of justice for Earth, asking questions of its presence in the text. Such readings seek to give voice to the Earth's experience, ascertaining whether or not it is oppressed, silenced, or liberated at any given point within the biblical narrative.[13] By reading from the perspective of Earth, this hermeneutical stance does not deny or ignore those biblical texts that are ecologically problematic, nor does it compel interpreters to tailor their readings so as to be consistent with Christian tradition. Rather, with Earth as the interpretive focus, this approach attempts to explore the ways in which the biblical text might inform the current ecological crisis and the ever-increasing effects of climate change.[14] In its potential for reading a wide variety of biblical texts anew, I have opted to employ the Earth Bible hermeneutic as a tool for critical analysis in this ecological reading of the book of Jeremiah. This hermeneutical perspective will direct my interpretive analysis, enabling particular questions to be put to the selected texts, which will, in turn, guide patterns of meaning and understanding.

2.1.2 AN EARTH BIBLE HERMENEUTIC

A defining characteristic of the Earth Bible approach to the biblical text is that of perspective. This ecological hermeneutic demands a radical reorientation in the way one comes to the text, whereby Earth (or in this case the Land) is placed at the centre of the interpretation and

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[10] E. M. Conradie, "The Road Towards an Ecological Biblical and Theological Hermeneutics." *Scriptura* 93 (2006): 308, underlines the importance of bringing a hermeneutic of suspicion to bear on all heuristic keys (doctrinal lenses). He goes on to note the difficulty of this task, however, due to the fact that these keys/lenses tend to prescribe to their users what they must be suspicious about.

[11] This hermeneutic was initially developed in the five volumes of the Earth Bible Series: Balabanski, and Habel, *Earth Story in the New Testament;* Habel, *Readings from the Perspective of Earth*; Habel, *Earth Story in the Psalms and the Prophets*; Habel, and Wurst, *Earth Story in Genesis*; Habel, and Wurst, *Earth Story in Wisdom Traditions*. See also Habel, and Trudinger, *Exploring Ecological Hermeneutics*.

[12] This is not to say that proponents of this approach are not committed to the Christian tradition. Rather, interpretive privilege is given to Earth over the commitment to this tradition.

[13] N. C. Habel, "Introducing Ecological Hermeneutics," in *Exploring Ecological Hermeneutics*, eds. Norman C. Habel and Peter Trudinger (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 1.

[14] Habel, *Inconvenient Text*, 56.

questions asked of its presence there.[15] To approach the text in this way requires that the reader recognise the Land as a subject to which the reader seeks to relate empathetically, rather than as an object for rational analysis.[16] By extending the concepts of autonomy, agency and creativity to the Land as a living organism, this ecological hermeneutic is attentive to the self-expression of one denied subjectivity under the traditional dualistic divisions of the world.[17] While critics of the hermeneutic, such as Tim Meadowcroft, dismiss the Land as a viable subject in the Bible, I agree with Habel that Land is no less viable as a subject than God, with whom commentators have no difficulty in identifying as an active character throughout the biblical narrative.[18] Indeed, to speak of the Land as subject does not require that it is understood as having consciousness similar to that of humans, anymore than to speak of God as subject implies that God has the same consciousness or character as human beings.[19] The differing levels of consciousness that can be understood as belonging to various elements of the Land, however, make it necessary to relate to this character as subject in the biblical text.

The task of this ecological investigation, then, is one of sensing and attending to the Land's presence within the text. This involves recognising and exposing anthropocentric or theocentric ideologies that silence and oppress this presence, and identifying demonstrable resistance to such perspectives. With the Land no longer being a theme for analysis, but rather a subject in the text, the Earth Bible approach emphasises reflection *with* this subject and attempts to perceive reality from the Land's perspective.[20] Imagining reality from this point of view involves a process that Wendell Berry describes as 'gradually remov[ing] one's

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[15] As noted in the Introduction, I have chosen to limit my interpretive focus to the Land and its other-than-human inhabitants. This is at variance with the majority of Earth Bible readings, where the concern is for Earth in its broadest sense. Thus, in outlining my hermeneutical approach, I use the term Land where other Earth Bible interpreters refer to Earth.

[16] By using a capital letter to begin words like 'Land', 'Earth', 'Sea', 'Sky' and 'Cosmos', I seek to acknowledge this subjectivity.

[17] By understanding an agent as 'an independent centre of value, and an originator of projects that demand my respect', no great stretch is required to apply the concept of agency to Land and the other-than-human community. G. A. Cohen, *Self-Ownership, Freedom, and Equality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 239

[18] Tim Meadowcroft, "Some Questions for the Earth Bible," paper presented at the ANZATS Conference, Christchurch, New Zealand, July 2000, as quoted in The Earth Bible Team, "The Voice of Earth: More Than Metaphor?" in *The Earth Story in the Psalms and the Prophets*, ed. Norman C. Habel (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 23.

[19] In this sense my hermeneutical approach differs from other ecological movements such as the Gaia hypothesis that understands Earth as a divine entity. See, for example, J. E. Lovelock, *The Ages of Gaia: A Biography of Our Living Earth* (New York: Bantam Books, 1990).

[20] N. C. Habel, "Introducing the Earth Bible," in *Readings from the Perspective of Earth*, ed. Norman C. Habel (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 33.

self from one's line of sight',[21] a practice that has incurred criticism as an exercise in creative fantasy.[22] However, as Land is a frequently mentioned subject in Jeremiah and creative imagination is necessary in the interpretation of any biblical character, I suggest that such a reading strategy is appropriate to this subject matter.

Critical attention to the presence of Land within the biblical text enables the recovery and reclamation of lost voices by seeing afresh what has been previously ignored or overlooked by generations of anthropocentric interpreters. Having identified the Land's presence within a text, the interpretive task thus becomes one of giving voice to the experience of this character. In reading against the grain, this ecological hermeneutic does not take a text's intention at face value, but rather, it examines what is repressed or left unsaid, articulating those 'absent' elements that subvert traditional interpretations.[23] It is my hope that with Land as the interpretive 'prism' through which the biblical text is read,[24] the Jeremianic passages selected for this research will acquire new nuances which will, in turn, call into question conventional anthropocentric interpretations.

To privilege the Land's perspective in the Bible is not a neutral act. It is to accord value to relations of power within the text and to question the priorities and hierarchies implicit within its narrative. Avowedly driven by ecological concerns, the approach in this thesis does not pretend to be value-neutral; rather, it unreservedly sides with the character of Land in any given text. This hermeneutic, however, is no more subjective than a liberation or feminist investigation, nor than those traditional approaches that claim objectivity but are rarely innocent and seldom neutral.[25] In this sense my hermeneutic establishes a moral stance that remains at the core of interpretive deliberations. This stance is informed by the six ecojustice principles outlined by the Earth Bible Team:

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[21] W. Berry, *Standing by Words: Essays* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1983), 70.

[22] Davis, for example, implicitly criticises Habel for allowing the creative imaginings of his ecological hermeneutic to override sensible exegetical work. E. F. Davis, *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture: An Agrarian Reading of the Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 43. Habel, however, notes that the prophets provide a precedent when they give voice to the cries of the Earth (cf. Is. 33:9; Jer 4:28; 12:4, 11; 23:10; Hos 4:3; Jl 1:10). Habel, *Inconvenient Text*, 87.

[23] G. Graff, "Determinacy / Indeterminacy," in *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, eds. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 171.

[24] See Brueggemann, *The Land,* 197.

[25] Referring to historical knowledge, for example, Novick perpetuates the myth of scholarly objectivity by claiming that 'the objective historian's role is that of a neutral, or disinterested judge: it must never degenerate into that of an advocate or, even worse, propagandist'. P. Novick, *That Noble Dream: The 'Objectivity Question' And the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 2. Bal argues, however, that 'interpretation is never objective… never free of biases and subjectivity'. M. Bal, *Death and Dissymmetry: The Politics of Coherence in the Book of Judges* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988) 238.

1. The principle of intrinsic worth: The universe, Earth and all its components have intrinsic worth/value.[26]

2. The principle of interconnectedness: Earth is a community of interconnected living things that are mutually dependent on each other for life and survival.

3. The principle of voice: Earth is a subject capable of raising its voice in celebration and against injustice.

4. The principle of purpose: The universe, Earth and all its components are part of a dynamic cosmic design within which each piece has a place in the overall goal of that design.

5. The principle of mutual custodianship: Earth is a balanced and diverse domain where responsible custodians can function as partners with, rather than rulers over, Earth to sustain its balance and a diverse Earth community.

6. The principle of resistance: Earth and its components not only suffer from human injustices but actively resist them in the struggle for justice.[27]

These principles will underline my reading of the selected Jeremianic texts, providing a moral centre against which such texts will be tested and held accountable.[28]

As the most recent category to emerge out of the so-called second-level hermeneutics of inquiry, an ecological hermeneutic joins feminist, liberation, postcolonial, womanist, black and various indigenous approaches in a commitment to investigate the biblical text so as to denaturalise the time-honoured interpretations of the master, which are presented as natural and correct.[29] In reading the book of Jeremiah from an ecological perspective, I do not seek

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[26] Intrinsic worth does not necessarily correspond to intrinsically 'good'. Code describes ecosystems as being as 'cruel as they are kind, as unpredictable and overwhelming as they are orderly and nurturant, as unsentimentally destructive of their less viable members as they are cooperative and mutually sustaining'. Code, *Ecological Thinking,* 6.

[27] Habel, "Introducing Ecological Hermeneutics," 2.

[28] These ecojustice principles are deliberately expressed in non-theological and non-biblical terms so as to facilitate dialogue with those beyond the Christian tradition. H. Eaton, "Guiding Ecojustice Principles: The Earth Bible Team," in *Readings from the Perspective of Earth*, ed. Norman C. Habel (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 38. The fact that these principles are not formulated in relation to the Bible or Christian tradition, however, has led Horrell to accuse the Earth Bible Team of 'measuring the Bible critically against a pre-determined and non-biblical canon of modern values' (Horrell, *The Bible*, 128; "Introduction", 7-8). As noted above, it is this independence from Christian and biblical traditions that gives this hermeneutical approach its appeal. Also, despite his criticism, Horrell notes that the biblical 'theological foundations' of his own hermeneutic bear a close comparison with one or other of the Earth Bible ecojustice principles (Horrell, *The Bible*, 137).

[29] I draw upon Plumwood's use of the term 'master', which refers to the identity at the heart of Western culture, and which has initiated, perpetuated and benefited from the separation of humanity from the environment. The master identity, writes Plumwood, is a 'complex cultural identity… formed in the context of class, race, species and gender domination'. V. Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (London: Routledge, 1993), 5.

biblical formulas to copy and apply in the contemporary context. What this interpretation offers, however, will be more like orientations, models, types, directions and principles, which counter the prevailing anthropocentric discourse of biblical interpretation with the potential to inform emerging ecological imaginaries. In reading the selected texts from the perspective of Land, this hermeneutic is indebted to the excellent work of feminist interpreters who read the Bible from the perspective of women. Like the feminist hermeneutic developed by Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, this ecological reading strategy employs an overarching framework of suspicion, identification and retrieval.[30] What follows, then, is an outline of this framework and the way it will operate within an ecological context.

The degree to which anthropocentrism is embedded within the instituted imaginary of most Western societies requires this ecological hermeneutic to initiate its investigation of a biblical text from a position of suspicion. Any textual analysis, therefore, begins with the suspicion that a text is inherently anthropocentric and that its history of interpretation will reflect a similar bias.[31] That is, most biblical texts will reflect the unique interests of humanity as the centre of all purposeful activity. Similarly, most Western interpreters have inherited a strongly anthropocentric approach to reading the Bible. In the instances where the Land is attributed agency in the biblical text, for example, such activity is typically dismissed as literary convention.[32] Indeed, the fact that the Hebrew Bible is characterised by an abundance of language describing the Land and its other-than-human inhabitants, most of which goes unnoticed in the secondary literature, suggests that the anthropocentric preoccupation of traditional modes of interpretation conceal the presence of these characters.[33] Suspicion will, therefore, be directed at what Lorraine Code refers to as the 'ethos of [human] dominance and mastery',[34] which continues to characterise biblical interpretation in the West.

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[30] See, for example, E. Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (London: SCM Press, 1983), *But She Said: Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), and *Wisdom's Ways: Introducing Feminist Biblical Interpretation* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2001).

[31] Habel, "Introducing Ecological Hermeneutics," 4.

[32] Brueggemann, for example, understands the Land's 'mourning' in Jer 4:28 as a metaphor for drought and the associated brown grass, withered crops and dead trees. W. Brueggemann, *Jeremiah 1-25: To Pick up, to Tear Down* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 57. Likewise, Lundbom understands the Land's role as giving power to the rhetorical imagery of Jer 4:23-26. The Land, writes Lundbom, functions as a 'premonition of doom existing in the prophet's imagination'. The voice of the Land is consequently dismissed as a poetic invention using 'prophetic hyperbole' to describe the destruction of Judah. J. R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 349, 357.

[33] This is Marlow's contention in her reading of the book of Amos. H. Marlow, "The Other Prophet! The Voice of Earth in the Book of Amos," in *Exploring Ecological Hermeneutics*, eds. Norman C. Habel and Peter Trudinger (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 75-83.

[34] Code, *Ecological Thinking*, 8.

From this position of suspicion, I will begin to examine the biblical text, asking questions that are informed by the ecojustice principles. In this way I will critically examine the presentations of Land within the Jeremianic text, analysing the interaction between Land and the text's other characters. Even with these ecocentric intentions, however, the task of sensing the Land within a text can be problematic, as access to this perspective is disclosed through anthropocentric media. In the sense that all biblical texts have been shaped by human beings, an inescapable degree of anthropocentrism will inevitably bind a text to its human origins. As an interpreter, the limits of transcending human language in interpretation also reinforce this background level of anthropocentrism.[35] Thus, my questions do not focus upon whether or not a text is anthropocentric, but rather upon the implications of this anthropocentrism and the strategies that might be employed to counter such a perspective.[36] One such strategy is to attempt a reading of the text from the point of view of the Land. To know reality from the point of view of another – much less the Land – is beyond the abilities of most interpreters, however. An empathetic imagination and identification with this subject, therefore, is needed in bridging the interpretative gap. Thus, I turn to address the task of identification.

In the context of this work, the task of identification will be primarily concerned with the orientation of the reader in approaching a dialogue with the biblical text. Habel describes this step as coming to terms with one's 'deep ecological connections',[37] whereby an interpreter is able to reposition him or herself as self-consciously part of the Land. By becoming progressively aware of one's position as a member of the Land community, a renewed understanding of humanity's cosmic relatedness becomes possible, negating the anthropocentric notion that humanity is only minimally and accidentally connected to the Land.[38] Such awareness also emphasises humanity's dependence upon the Land and the fundamental interconnectedness that characterises the Land's other-than-human

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[35] Page notes that this has long been recognised in relation to God, the 'wholly Other'. She suggests that the recognition of the human constraints present in any discussion about God must also be recognised in relation to discussions about the Earth and Earth community. R. Page, *God and the Web of Creation* (London: SCM Press, 1996), 111.

[36] Plumwood, *Feminism*, 58.

[37] Habel, "Introducing Ecological Hermeneutics," 3. A. Elvey, "Earthing the Text? On the Status of the Biblical Text in Ecological Perspective," *Australian Biblical Review* 52 (2004): 66, reminds eco-critical readers that the text's producers and its readers are part of the Earth community. Even the text itself, she notes, is formed from the matter of Earth.

[38] V. Plumwood, "Plato and the Bush: Philosophy and the Environment in Australia," *Meanjin* 49, no. 3 (1990): 526, convincingly argues that European philosophy continues to emphasize human discontinuity from nature and attributes unique value to human beings and human culture.

community.[39] Read from the perspective of an interconnected member of this community, a new level of sensitivity emerges. Such sensitivity encourages particular attention to the presence of Land and compels a response to injustices perpetrated against this subject as they appear in the text. From a position of identification with the Land, the interpreter is implored to take sides and stand in solidarity with this subject, binding him or herself to the Land community and joining the struggle for justice.[40] It is important to note, however, that the process of identification does not involve denying human reason or difference in the manner of some forms of deep ecology, which seek to overcome the distinctions between humanity and the other-than-human community.[41] Rather, this interconnectedness challenges reason as the basis for superiority, domination and exploitation. Thus, within this hermeneutic, the hierarchical understanding of the relationship between Land and humanity is reconceived in terms of non-hierarchical concepts of difference: humanity is *of* the soil but also separate from it.

Identification is vital if the reader is to reflect *with* the Land, perceive reality from its perspective, and become its advocate. In taking up the cause of the Land, interpretation involves being open to this Other, representing, arguing for and supporting the presence of this character within the biblical text.[42] To be effective, this advocacy will operate in the second or third person and, to use Martin Buber's terminology, the relationship between interpreter and Land will become an 'I-Thou' relationship.[43] In the context of this analysis, identifying and engaging with Land will involve imagining my way into the reality of an/Other who is differently-situated, and articulating its experience.[44] An uneasy task, speaking on behalf of an/Other risks the presumption of assuming to know the thoughts,

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[39] Aldo Leopold depicts human beings as 'plain member[s] and citizen[s]' of a community consisting of soil, water, air, and animate creatures. The lives of all, he writes, are intertwined in countless complex ways, most still unknown. A. Leopold, *A Sand Country Almanac* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1968), 240.

[40] This understanding of solidarity is informed by the work of Kwok Pui-lan who explores the use of the term in Oriental languages, where it has come to mean 'gathering together into one', connecting with one another and 'binding one another into a circle'. K. Pui-lan, "Ecology and the Recycling of Christianity," in *Ecotheology: Voices from South and North*, ed. David G. Hallman (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1994), 111.

[41] See V. Plumwood, "Nature, Self, and Gender: Feminism, Environmental Philosophy, and the Critique of Rationalism," *Hypatia* 6, no. 1 (1991): 12-18, for a survey and critique of 'identification' as it appears in Deep Ecology.

[42] Code notes that the autonomy of the master casts advocacy as a weakness as it falls beneath the threshold of rational respectability. Indeed, the master has no reason to perceive reality through the eyes of another, as this would concede diverse interpretations and admit the legitimacy of differing perspectives. Code, *Ecological Thinking*, 169, 175.

[43] M. Buber, *I and Thou* (London: Routledge, 2004).

[44] J. B. McDaniel, *Earth, Sky, Gods & Mortals: Developing an Ecological Spirituality* (Mystic: Twenty-Third Publications, 1990), 117-119, argues that ecological sensitivity depends on the capacity to 'put oneself in the shoes of another'. He calls this 'imaginative ego-transcendence'.

feelings and aspirations of that Other. In this sense, advocacy can be dangerous in its potential to identify the interests of the interpreter, rather than those of the Land. That is, advocacy risks diminishing the Land to a modified version of the reader. The interpreter's capacity to adopt the experience of the Land as his or her own thus threatens to serve the interests of an anthropocentric agenda, confirming the projections of the master imaginary. In an attempt to avoid such pitfalls, this hermeneutic recognises the partial and inadequate nature of identification, and emphasises 'the distinctiveness of the [Land] other'.[45] Guided by the ecojustice principles, this advocacy will not claim to fully understand or *be* the Land; rather it will seek to listen to, see, or speak *with* and in support of the Land.

There is more to an ecological hermeneutic, however, than sensing the Land's presence or recognising its subjective status. The task of retrieval acknowledges that the Land is already speaking and acting within a text. It is about reclaiming the narrative space of Land. Thus, this final task seeks to listen to and learn from the silenced or ignored voice of Land, recovering the 'underside' of the biblical narrative. In recognising the communicative capabilities of the other-than-human, the key component of this process is retrieving the Land's voice from the margins of the text. Habel stipulates that this 'voice' need not correspond to the language of words associated with the human voice; rather, this term refers to a multiplicity of communicative forms including gesture, sign, image, and sound that convey a message.[46] In allowing space for expression, the Land becomes both narrator and interpreter of the biblical text, a character central to the narrative drama and indispensible to its unfolding.[47]

As this voice points to the dynamic, responsive, and reactive involvement of the Land in the text, so also does it alert the reader to the possibilities of the Land's resistance. By paying particular attention to the Land's agency, the task of retrieval additionally seeks to identify and articulate instances where the Land demonstrates resistance to anthropocentric or theocentric perspectives that exclude or oppress its presence in the text. At times this task entails entering into the silence of a text where this presence is suppressed, and looking for subtle interruptions of the master narrative – signs of sabotage, or instances of resistance. Sensitivity to these textual nuances enables discernment of suffering and protest, hearing the

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[45] M. La Caze, *The Analytic Imaginary* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 138.
[46] Habel, "Introducing Ecological Hermeneutics," 5. The Earth Bible Team also suggests that the term 'voice' be used as a way of recognizing Earth as communicating as an equal but different 'Thou'. The Earth Bible Team, "The Voice of Earth: More Than Metaphor?" 23-24.
[47] Habel, *Inconvenient Text*, 59.

Land 'quake with rage' and struggling for justice.[48] Some ecological interpreters seek to articulate the experience of the Land in a literal sense by re-writing the text to include the Land's voice.[49] Rather than re-formulating the text, however, the task of retrieval here will involve exploring the ways in which the Land's perspective is re-told through New Zealand poetry.

As with the steps of suspicion and identification, the process of retrieval has received criticism for being irrational, romantic, unscientific and anthropocentric in making the Land into a human subject.[50] Although these claims seem to stem primarily from an objection to that which deviates from the master's 'rationality',[51] the accusation of anthropocentrism reveals, once again, the weakness inherent in the necessity for human language. Such anthropocentrism, however, does not invalidate the voice of the Land; rather, the use of metaphor becomes vitally important in assisting the human interpreter to appreciate the reality of this communication.[52] By pointing to the experiences of the Land, metaphors are able to convey insights that most Western interpreters cannot comprehend – the inconceivable becomes conceivable. As in many indigenous communities, these metaphors are understood as being more than a simple rhetorical device. Instead they function to enable a relationship between the Land and its human inhabitants, many of whom have become desensitised to the Land's presence.[53] The metaphor of voice thus allows a heightened sensitivity towards the presence of the Land, opening a new domain of reality and inviting ecological interpreters to explore the different dimensions of this world.

Because the identity of the Land is consistently fused with the identity of women in the book of Jeremiah, I will, at times, draw upon an ecofeminist epistemology for insight. Ecofeminism is a broad and diverse movement, which critically investigates the connection between the oppression of women and the domination of Land (Earth).[54] Despite the diversity

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[48] A. Powell, *Firesong* (Wellington: Steele Roberts, 1999), 20.

[49] See, for example, Habel, *An Inconvenient Text*, 68, 70, 81, 83; Wurst, "Retrieving Earth's Voice in Jeremiah," 172-184.

[50] Meadowcroft insists that the 'voice' of Earth is itself a 'thoroughly anthropocentric device', and that 'at the end of the exercise the voice of Earth continues to look suspiciously like a human creation'. Meadowcroft, "Some Questions for the Earth Bible", 23.

[51] Plumwood argues that a time-tested strategy for projects of mastery is the normalisation and enforcement of impoverishing, pacifying and deadening vocabularies for what is to be reduced and consumed. V. Plumwood, *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason* (London: Routledge, 2002), 56.

[52] See the discussion on metaphor in §4.2.

[53] Thomas Berry insists that sensitivity to the presence of Earth has been 'lost to large segments of the human community in recent centuries, not because the phenomena do not surround us constantly… [but because] large segments of the human mind have become paralysed'. Berry, "Into the Future," 411.

[54] H. Eaton, "Ecofeminist Contributions to an Ecojustice Hermeneutics," in *Readings from the Perspective of*

of perspectives, most ecofeminist critics share the desire to make visible and to dismantle the conceptual basis of domination for the sake of social and ecological justice.[55] Perhaps the most significant contribution of an ecofeminist epistemology is the critique of the hierarchical dualisms that underline the 'logic of domination' and connect the oppression of women and Land. Heather Eaton describes dualistic frameworks as structures of thought that conceive reality in pairs or opposites, with the superior side of the pair (men/spiritual/ human/ mind) having priority over the inferior other (women/material/'nature'/body respectively).[56] The privileged term of the binary is considered the norm against which all else is (negatively) measured.[57] From these hierarchically separated categories emerges the logic of domination, which holds that superiority bestows the right to rule. Domination is both justified and natural. These structures of thought combine to form implicit systems of belief (social imaginaries), which are reflected – amongst other things – in literature.[58] In analysing images of Land as they appear in the book of Jeremiah and in New Zealand poetry, these ecofeminist insights will be an invaluable addition to the ecological hermeneutic outlined above.

Finally, the ecological world-order is comprised of particularities. By acknowledging the local context, and recognising that knowledge is itself contextual, this ecological hermeneutic will be nuanced by the Land of Aotearoa New Zealand. That is, this specific geographical location will become the centre of interpretive 'knowing'.[59] As a materially situated ecological subject, the Land of Aotearoa, located in the south of the Pacific, thus provides the eco-location of my research.[60] The Land's history, its distinctive geographical features, its myths and stories, and its intricate layers of associated meaning unlike any other, will

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Earth, ed. Norman C. Habel (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 56, notes that ecofeminist perspectives embrace a range of ecological paradigms including social ecology, deep ecology and cosmology. These variations differ in their critique of the connection between women and Earth/Land, and diverge on matters such as the origin and solution to dominance and oppression. A. Case-Winters, *Reconstructing a Christian Theology of Nature: Down to Earth* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2007), provides a succinct overview of these perspectives.

[55] Case-Winters, *Reconstructing*, 63.

[56] H. Eaton, *Introducing Ecofeminist Theologies* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 38-39.

[57] A multiplicity of oppressions and exclusions are legitimised on these grounds and they are mutually reinforcing. This system of thought is configured so that the superior term of each pair comes to be associated with the superior term of other pairs. Such association is also true for the inferior terms of each pair. The interconnected nature of these dualistic designations hints at the complex and pervasive web of interlocking modes of oppression.

[58] Plumwood, *Feminism*, 84-93, traces the dualistic connection between women and 'nature' from Plato's environmental philosophy in the *Timaeus*, to its elaboration in the works of Aristotle, Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Plotinus, Augustine, Aquinus and Descartes.

[59] Code, *Ecological Thinking*, 40, 232. See also C. Pearson, "Constructing a Local Ecotheology," *Ecotheology* 3 (1997): 23-38.

[60] For the term 'eco-location' I am indebted to L. Rasmussen, "Introduction: Eco-Justice: Church and Community Together," in *Earth Habitat: Eco-Injustice and the Church's Response*, eds. Dieter Hessel and Larry Rasmussen (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 9.

dialogue with the representations of Land in the Jeremianic text. While biblical language – in various guises – has been employed to articulate the human experience of Land in New Zealand, it is the particularities of this Land that have informed the terms of encounter. Not only is this specific location significant in terms of responsible knowledge and action, but this situated reading also challenges 'objective' or 'contextless' interpretations, which produce universal readings in support of the anthropocentric agenda.

The importance of particularity reveals that in Aotearoa New Zealand, Land is inseparably connected to questions of identity, race and gender. In particular, British colonisation of this country's ecological terrain and its indigenous inhabitants – despite promises of privilege and partnership guaranteed in the Treaty of Waitangi – has resulted in a somewhat conflicted perception of Land as a symbol of oppression and alienation, of power and domination, and of hope and transformation.[61] In reading with the Land of Aotearoa, then, I also read with the colonised, with women, with other-than-human members of the Earth community, and with those whose socio-economic, ethnic and cultural contexts render them invisible within the master imaginary.[62] Although the restraints of this project require interpretive energy to be focused primarily on Land in the selected texts, the opportunity for multidimensional analysis in this ecological hermeneutic will ensure that this reading keeps in sight the multiple forms of oppression outside those relating to this primary subject. Having summarised the hermeneutical perspective that will guide this project by shaping the questions that will be put to the various texts, I turn now to outline a methodological approach that will supply the investigative tools for such analysis.

2.2 A RHETORICAL CRITICAL METHODOLOGY

2.2.1 THE WORLD-CREATING POWER OF LANGUAGE

In identifying a potential connection between the biblical text and the contemporary ecological crisis, I seek a methodological approach that takes seriously the 'world-creating power' of literature.[63] By this I refer to the notion that reality is known and constructed through the shared symbols of the particular language that is used to describe it.[64] That is,

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[61] The Treaty of Waitangi – Te Tiriti o Waitangi – was signed on February 6, 1840, by representatives of the British Crown and a number of Māori rangatira (chiefs) from the North Island of New Zealand.
[62] E. M. Wainwright, *Bringing out the New and the Old: Ongoing Development of a Reading Paradigm* (Unpublished Paper, 2008), 2.
[63] D. Patrick and A. Scult, *Rhetoric and Biblical Interpretation* (Decatur: Almond Press, 1990), 19.
[64] Such symbols include those of speech, art, maths and music – to name but a few. Scholars who have written on this topic include: A. Hastings, "Metaphor in Rhetoric," *Western Speech* 34, no. 3 (1970): 187, who suggests

language is the means by which humanity views reality, as phenomena in the world are made accessible to human understanding through symbols. Through the process of description and naming, language determines both attitudes toward and knowledge about a particular thing.[65] In this way, literary texts shape ideologies, which, in turn, determine behaviour and action. There can be no lived reality or praxis, argues Paul Ricœur, which is not already symbolically structured in some way. Human action, he insists, is always prefigured in signs.[66] Thus, consumers of any given symbolic world are encouraged to embrace the projected reality to which those symbols point, in order that they might *dwell* in that world, embodying and enacting its reality. Whether those projected realities support a society's dominant symbolic world or reject it, each new reality attempts to silence or deny the reality of other symbolic worlds, demanding the consumer inhabit the particular world being presented.

This connection between language and reality, however, extends well beyond the initial appearance of a text in its original historical context. With each and every reading, a literary text continues to determine reality for readers throughout that text's history. As well as reflecting the ideologies of the community in which it was written, a text also has the potential to affirm those same ideologies within the subsequent communities of reception.[67] This is particularly true of the biblical text, which has been read and continues to be read in countless communities across the globe. The symbolic realities that appear in the Bible serve to shape individual and societal perceptions of that reality. In recognising the determinative quality of language, then, this research seeks to take seriously the notion that the symbolic worlds of the Bible have a qualitative impact on the social reality of those who participate in its rhetorical vision(s) regarding Land.

Like YHWH, whose words called creation into being in Genesis 1, so the symbolic systems of human language 'create' and 're-create' the world, embodying ever-expanding visions of

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that any culture's view of reality is always connected to language patterns; J. D. H. Amador, "The Word Made Flesh: Epistemology, Ontology and Postmodern Rhetorics," in *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture: Essays from the 1995 London Conference*, eds. Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H. Olbricht (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 53-65, and "Where Could Rhetorical Criticism (Still) Take Us?" *Currents in Research* 7 (1999): 195-222, who insists upon the determinative quality of a society's symbolic world; and R. L. Scott, "On Viewing Rhetoric as Epistemic," *Central States Speech Journal* 18 (1967): 8-16, who argues that language is fundamental to all understanding, even to the existence of life itself. For the purposes of this work, I will use 'symbols' to refer to those of written language, particularly the written language of the Bible and of New Zealand poetry.

[65] K. Burke, *Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose,* 2nd ed. (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1954), 176-177.

[66] P. Ricœur, "The Creativity of Language," in *A Ricœur Reader: Reflection and Imagination*, ed. Mario J. Valdés (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), 469-470.

[67] C. Blyth, *The Narrative of Rape in Genesis 34: Interpreting Dinah's Silence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 7.

reality.[68] Not only do these systems attempt to exclude the potential for alternative (other-than-human) symbolic worlds, they enhance the anthropocentric dualism that upholds the divine/human (creator) over and against the Land and its other-than-human inhabitants (created). Vernon Robbins persuasively argues that humanity's use of language makes us co-creators of life and death, advantaging some and destroying others.[69] Similarly, Jim Kuypers insists that with language and the ability to say 'no' to the world as it is experienced, comes the capacity to change radically our environment to satisfy human desires.[70] Thus, the construction of a language system that affirms anthropocentric domination has enabled humanity to harness, exploit and reconfigure the Land, while at the same time normalising this reality. It is the intention of this thesis to explore the degree to which the Bible – in particular the book of Jeremiah – has contributed to the construction of this linguistic system.

2.2.2 RHETORICAL CRITICISM

In its recognition of the world-creating power of literary texts, a rhetorical methodology will provide the appropriate analytical tools for examining the symbolic representations of Land in the book of Jeremiah. Through the meticulous investigation of a text's inner workings – that is, the construction of its symbolic world – a rhetorical analysis will offer insight into the symbolic strategies at work in the texts selected for analysis. By paying particular attention to a text's rhetoric, this methodology not only facilitates an analysis of a text's symbolic reality, it also explores the impact of these symbols upon readers. In providing the interpretive means for the critical evaluation of biblical texts, this rhetorical methodology will be guided by the aims and priorities of the ecological hermeneutic outlined above.

Biblical rhetorical criticism exists in an ever-broadening context stretching from ancient times to the present,[71] with the discipline flourishing in Old Testament studies following James Muilenburg's programmatic appeal to reform the methodology in 1968.[72] The proliferation of perspectives that accompanied this development, however, reveals a plethora

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[68] The notion of 'making' and 're-making' of the world through language is explored in N. Goodman, *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols,* 2nd ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1976).

[69] V. K. Robbins, "The Present and Future of Rhetorical Analysis," in *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture: Essays from the 1995 London Conference*, eds. Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H. Olbricht (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 24.

[70] J. A. Kuypers, *The Art of Rhetorical Criticism* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2004), 164.

[71] J. R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah: A Study in Ancient Hebrew Rhetoric,* 2nd ed. (Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1997), P. Trible, *Rhetorical Criticism: Context, Method, and the Book of Jonah* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), and R. Meynet, *Rhetorical Analysis: An Introduction to Biblical Rhetoric* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), each offer useful overviews on the historical development of rhetorical criticism in the Hebrew Bible.

[72] This appeal was made to the annual SBL gathering in 1968 and published the following year: J. Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88, no. 1 (1969): 1-18.

of ideas that compete and overlap, leading Bernard Brock and Robert Scott, among others, to label contemporary rhetorical critical methods as 'non-paradigmatic'.[73] While recognising the diverse forms of this methodology within Old Testament biblical criticism, I seek to articulate a rhetorical critical approach that will complement an ecological hermeneutic and respond appropriately to its investigative demands. Although an infinite number of concepts and strategies are available for the study of any rhetorical act, I will draw upon five broad categories that will define the scope of this critical investigation. These include: 1) close attention to the persuasive quality of a text and its presentation of Land; 2) an emphasis on the relationship between the world(s) of the text and the world(s) of the reader; 3) a synchronic analysis of the Jeremianic material; 4) a detailed analysis of the structure; and 5) the style of a text.

2.2.3 RHETORIC AND THE ART OF PERSUASION

Given the potential of biblical texts to assist in determining reality for readers, this rhetorical methodology will focus on the ways in which a text functions to persuade a reader of its particular representation of Land. An emphasis on the persuasive quality of language was strongly present among neo-Aristotelian rhetorical critics whose work flourished during the first half of the twentieth century,[74] and who, to varying degrees, followed Aristotle's definition of rhetoric as 'the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion'.[75] The emergence of Old Testament rhetorical criticism in the mid-twentieth century – an area of study previously neglected in modern biblical criticism – saw a shift away from this emphasis on persuasion with the Muilenburg school of rhetorical criticism.[76] As an extension of form critical analysis, Muilenburg's definition of rhetoric as 'understanding the nature of Hebrew literary composition' clearly reflects this shift.[77] The move away from traditional Old Testament analytical approaches, such as source and historical criticism, saw a new interest in the style and artistry of a text under the new label of 'rhetorical criticism'. A focus on the formal rather than the functional aspects of a text,

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[73] B. L. Brock and R. L. Scott, *Methods of Rhetorical Criticism: A Twentieth-Century Perspective,* 2nd ed. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1980), 502-514.

[74] Prior to the twentieth century rhetoric was primarily an academic discipline, prescriptive in nature, the aim of which was to produce skilled public speakers. Lundbom, *Hebrew Rhetoric*, xix-xxv, offers a fine evaluation of the work of prominent neo-Aristotelian rhetorical critics in the early twentieth century.

[75] Quoted in Brock and Scott, *Methods,* 21.

[76] Brock and Scott, *Methods*, 133-388.

[77] Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," 8. For Muilenburg this was a move away from the generalizing tendencies of form criticism towards an encounter with the text in its concrete particularity. The close association between form and rhetorical criticism in biblical studies has been retained by some, such as Lundbom, who integrates the latter into his rhetorical work.

however, meant that a majority of the early 'rhetorical' analysis of Old Testament texts was virtually indistinguishable from other literary investigations. While some freely admit this was, and indeed is still, the case,[78] calls for greater differentiation between the two approaches have grown louder since the late 1980s.

For the purposes of this approach, the term 'rhetoric' will refer to the use of language by human agents to form attitudes or to induce actions in other human beings. Rhetorical criticism will, therefore, refer to the critical analysis of the ways in which language establishes and manages its relationship to an audience in order to achieve a particular effect.[79] The emphasis that is given to the analysis of a text's persuasive function thus becomes the primary point of difference that separates this methodology from other literary approaches. This position is consistent with an increasing number of rhetorical theorists who build upon the broad classical tradition in their understanding of rhetoric as having to do with a text's persuasive potential.[80] Although this shift is evident at a theoretical level, it has yet to be fully utilised in biblical analysis,[81] particularly in conjunction with an ecological hermeneutic. The potential for rhetorical analysis to offer insight into the use of persuasion as a means of legitimising structures of domination, however, makes this methodology an ideal supplement to the ecological reading.

While other aids to analysis – such as study of style and structure – comprise a central role in the overall investigation of a text, such aids are understood as informing or supporting the way in which a text acts upon or affects an audience. In this sense my approach goes beyond stylistic literary analysis – which is concerned with the rhetoric *in* a text – to an investigation of what J. D. H. Amador refers to as the rhetoric *of* a text, that is, its persuasive effects upon readers.[82] Dale Patrick and Allen Scult seem somewhat naïve as they disparage the position of suspicion taken by 'ideological critics' towards persuasive discourses, arguing in favour of

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[78] A. J. Hauser and D. F. Watson, *Rhetorical Criticism of the Bible: A Comprehensive Bibliography with Notes on History and Method* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 4, argue that 'it is often difficult to draw a sharp line between rhetorical criticism and other forms of Old Testament criticism… [and that] there also seems little point in attempting to do so'.

[79] I am informed here by the work of K. Burke, *A Grammar of Motives, and a Rhetoric of Motives* (Cleveland: World Publications, 1962), 41, and Patrick and Scult, *Rhetoric and Biblical Interpretation*, 12.

[80] Such theorists include Amador, "Word Made Flesh"; Lundbom, *Hebrew Rhetoric*; Patrick and Scult, *Rhetoric*; and Trible, *Rhetorical Criticism*.

[81] Notable exceptions to this in Jeremianic investigation include C. Dempsey, *The Prophets: A Liberation-Critical Reading* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000); Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*; *Jeremiah 21-36: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2004); and *Jeremiah 37-52: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2004).

[82] Amador, "The Word Made Flesh," 65.

a 'hermeneutic of affirmation' instead.[83] Their insistence that the power of rhetoric to persuade ultimately serves the 'purpose of leading the audience to good judgment',[84] fails to take into account the potential justification of oppression within rhetorical discourse, which is then perpetuated through each new encounter with that text. The potentially harmful anthropocentric nature of biblical texts underlines the importance of critically examining the rhetoric of dominance inherent within a text, which tacitly shapes a culture's social imaginary. Not only does this approach offer opportunities to explore this rhetoric of domination, it also provides space to encounter alternative discourses, which are also persuasive, but which have been overlooked in prior interpretations.

If rhetoric refers to the use of language to inform attitudes or induce action, questions will ultimately arise as to the evaluation of a text's persuasive success in imparting a particular reality to a reader. While an obvious criterion for assessment would be that of result, uncertainties inevitably emerge with attempts to connect cause with effect, or with efforts to focus on a selected effect among the countless possible effects of any single rhetorical act. An intertextual methodology will, therefore, function as an evaluative tool, and will be employed to assess the qualitative impact of the biblical texts selected for analysis. This supplementary methodology – outlined in §2.3 – will enable investigation into the way in which the Jeremianic representations of Land have been absorbed into the New Zealand social imaginary, as reflected through the poetry of this country.

2.2.4 THE TEXT AND THE READER

Rhetorical criticism assumes an interrelationship among an authorial agent, a textual phenomena and the response of a reader. An initial question of interpretive analysis, then, asks about the location of authority and the weight of preference that is to be allocated to each of these three distinct worlds. Traditionally, Old Testament rhetorical criticism devoted attention primarily to the role of the author and to the world of the original rhetorical situation. This perspective is famously summed up by Muilenburg, who equated meaning with authorial intent, claiming that 'responsible' rhetorical analysis 'will reveal to us the texture and fabric of the writer's thought… what he thinks… as he thinks it'.[85] Such methodical analysis was based on the assumption that an author designed a text in order that

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[83] They go as far as to accuse ideological critics of 'aspir[ing] to be revolutionaries in academic garb', Patrick and Scult, *Rhetoric*, 67-70.
[84] Patrick and Scult, *Rhetoric*, 77.
[85] Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," 7.

it might affect readers in a specific way. While this may be the case, it is not my intention to investigate these authorial objectives, nor their intended effects. Indeed, the extra-biblical accounts concerning the author(s) of the book of Jeremiah and 'his' intended audience(s) are all but non-existent. By focusing on Jeremianic images of Land, and on their influence upon contemporary New Zealanders' perception of reality, my interpretive outcome will diverge significantly from the meaning intended by the original 'author(s)' – whatever that might have been. Thus, while I do not rigidly exclude the role of the author or the original rhetorical context, the interpretive authority in this rhetorical analysis will lie at the boundary between the text and the reader, with an emphasis on the former.

'Reading is, first and foremost, a struggle with the text'.[86] Ricœur's claim accurately perceives the meaning-making process as a dynamic recursive relationship of conflict and negotiation between text and reader. As the primary generator of data and one of two principal players in the production of meaning, the text will be the normative centre and the starting point of my interpretive analysis. I use the term 'text' to refer to anything from a single word to multiple lines of poetry, and to larger bodies of language such as oracles and psalms, all of which may be subjected to rhetorical analysis. While significantly more information is known about the life and context of New Zealand poets, my focus on the text will be retained for the sake of consistency while exploring the relationship between the Jeremianic texts and New Zealand poems.

It must be emphasised, however, that meaning is not inherent in the linguistic configuration of a text. Instead, the location of meaning resides in the encounter or interchange between reader and text.[87] This understanding of the production of meaning demands that a reader is no longer passive, but active, creative and responsible for articulating the outcome of this encounter. For the purposes of this analysis I use the term 'reader' to mean the contemporary flesh and blood reader,[88] whose hermeneutical perspective will shape such an encounter. As the flesh and blood reader in this analysis, I recognise that my interpretation is not a

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[86] P. Ricœur, "World of the Text, World of the Reader," in *A Ricœur Reader: Reflection and Imagination*, ed. Mario J. Valdés (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), 494.
[87] F. F. Segovia, "Cultural Studies and Contemporary Biblical Criticism: Ideological Criticism as Mode of Discourse," in *Reading from This Place: Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in Global Perspective*, eds. Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert (Minneapolis: Augsberg Fortress, 1995). 1-17.
[88] J. Phelan, "Narrative as Rhetoric and Edith Wharton's *Roman Fever*: Progression, Configuration, and the Ethic of Surprise," in *A Companion to Rhetoric and Rhetorical Criticism*, ed. Walter Jost and Wendy Olmsted (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2004), 341, outlines four primary possible audiences: the flesh and blood reader, the authorial audience (the author's ideal reader), the narrative audience (the observer position within the narrative world), and the narratee (the audience addressed by the narrator).

disembodied search for meaning; rather, as critic, I am subject to, and a product of, my life context. While my selected reading strategies will dictate the terms of encounter with the text most strongly, I acknowledge that being a Pākehā woman living in Aotearoa in the twenty-first century, will inform my interpretive position. I also recognise that interpretation is an act of persuasion in itself, and that my own communication will inevitably display rhetorical characteristics. Like any flesh and blood reader, I wish to convince other readers of a particular point of view among many. Unlike many of these readers, however, my perspective does not claim to be objective; rather I acknowledge that this interpretation is part of a larger task, which involves encouraging commitment to an ecological sensibility. Although the limits of this investigation do not allow for in-depth analysis of persuasive techniques employed by commentators in their interpretation of my selected Jeremianic passages, it will be included where possible.

2.2.5 A SYNCHRONIC APPROACH

A synchronic approach to analysis examines a text in its final form, seeking to do 'justice to the integrity of the text itself apart from diachronistic reconstruction'.[89] While recognising that any biblical text has an extensive history of formation, development and transmission, the synchronic outlook of this method will examine a text as it has been received. A focus on the communicative unity of the biblical text is exemplified in the work of Phyllis Trible, who stresses the integration of a composition's form and content, arguing that there is an indissoluble connection between the way in which a text speaks and what it says.[90] In light of this claim, the traditional historical-critical preoccupation with identifying the 'original' voice of the prophet, Jeremiah, seems inadequate in its neglect of textual additions and redactions, which are dismissed as inauthentic and consequently are of less value. These features, which were once considered evidence of disunity, will therefore be taken as part of a text's overall communicative intent. This focus will moderate the traditional preoccupation with the authorship and development of a composition, allowing the reader to attend to what Wilhelm Wuellner calls 'the practical, the political, the powerful, the playful, and the delightful aspects of religious texts'.[91]

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[89] B. S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1979), 74.
[90] Trible, *Rhetorical Criticism,* 91. In the last thirty years, this shift towards synchronic analysis has become increasingly pronounced, although it is a shift that has produced a division between the English- and German-speaking worlds of biblical studies.
[91] W. Wuellner, "Where Is Rhetorical Criticism Taking Us?" *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 49, no. 3 (1987): 462-463.

In recent years the tendency for scholars to take the synchronic approach to an extreme by excluding all factors lying beyond the immediate text, has come under attack. Roy Melugin and Clifton Black fault this approach for showing too little interest in a text's growth,[92] and for placing biblical literature in a vacuum, producing ahistorical studies on ahistorical texts.[93] In taking these critiques seriously, my synchronic analysis will, at times, allow for diachronic reflection and I will not bracket out the insights of disciplines and methodologies other than my own. Where appropriate, this rhetorical approach will dialogue with textual criticism and with historical disciplines like source criticism, tradition history and redaction criticism. As a prophet is informed by, and responds to, his or her historical location, so insights from sociological investigations and archaeological data will also inevitably play a role in the reading of texts selected for analysis. The weight assigned to these extrinsic factors, however, will ensure that this analysis is not concerned with anything approaching a reconstruction of the socio-cultural and historical settings of a text.[94] They will be employed not as a means to an end in themselves, but as a vehicle to aid in unlocking the rhetorical potential of a text.

2.2.6 STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

All literary works comprise systems of structures. Structural patterns are employed for the fashioning of a literary unit, combining particular words to create sentences and larger sense units. A text not only imparts meaning through its words and grammar, but also through the patterns and relationships within and between the various parts of the work. In tension with the synchronic emphasis on form-content unity, then, methodological integrity demands – for analytical purposes at least – an investigation into the relationships residing within the words, phrases, sentences, and larger literary units of a text. The rhetorical analysis employed here will, therefore, attend to the shape, structure and flow of the texts selected for analysis.

By isolating and delineating particular structural units of discourse, the reader is able to enter more fully into the meaning-making process. Once a biblical text has been delimited and identified in relation to the canons of ancient Hebrew rhetoric, its structure becomes crucial

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[92] R. Melugin, "Muilenburg, Form Criticism, and Theological Exegesis," in *Encounter with the Text: Form and History in the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Martin J. Buss (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 92-96.

[93] C. C. Black, "Keeping Up with Recent Studies: Rhetorical Criticism and Biblical Interpretation," *Expository Times* 100 (1989): 252-258.

[94] In doing this, I will focus my research on the MT, due to its wide usage as the basis for translating the Hebrew Bible into English. While I will not bracket out the insights from other sources – such as the LXX – these will not be of primary concern.

in guiding interpretation.[95] If a text's structure resembles that of an oracle, for example, this will inform the way in which it is read. Various kinds of discourse provide the reader with different types of information. In this sense, structure is understood as an aid in the construction of a text's particular reality, as discourse 'type' is instructive to meaning. Although this process is reminiscent of form criticism, and indeed can benefit from dialogue with this discipline, the process of identification and delineation is not an end in itself; once again, it is an investigative tool for examining a text's persuasive techniques.

2.2.7 STYLISTIC ANALYSIS

If analysis of a text's external structure is the initial step in the meaning-making process, analysis of the internal structure completes the endeavour. A central undertaking of this rhetorical analysis will, therefore, involve the close reading of the internal structure of a delineated unit. This task will explore the language features that reside in the text itself and will involve a detailed line-by-line, if not word-by-word investigation of this means of communication.[96] Attention to the use of keywords that underlie the composition of the book of Jeremiah will provide a strong basis for this stylistic analysis, offering insight into the ways in which language is employed to suggest meaning. Syntactic analysis and observation of particle behaviour similarly reveal techniques that indicate movement toward a particular presentation of reality. Close attention will also be paid to the presentation of metaphors, images and themes, as well as to the tone of voice through which the words of a text speak. Exploration into the portrayal of characters, their interaction, how they address and are addressed will additionally be considered at length. In addition to these literary appeals that operate on cognitive levels, the stylistic techniques revealed in the internal workings of a text may function persuasively at the sensory-aesthetic level as well.[97] The way in which the senses – emotion, sight, sound, touch, smell – are evoked or embodied in language will also thus be taken into account.

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[95] Delineation of Jeremianic discourse units has been relatively successful, as the text contains a number of *setumah* and *petuhah* section markers. There are also a variety of messenger formulae, as well as inclusio and chiastic structures. The book of Jeremiah presents many genres, including oracles of doom and oracles of salvation, short prose comments on poetic passages, and lengthy biographical narratives.

[96] This approach to a text's stylistics is more closely associated with the Muilenburg school of rhetorical criticism, and differs from the more general study of a text's persuasive techniques that characterises the work of scholars such as Patrick and Scult.

[97] V. K. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 1996), 29-30.

Lest this analysis fall victim to Wuellner's well-founded critique of the 'fateful reduction of rhetoric to stylistics',[98] I must reiterate that the purpose of stylistic investigation here is as a means to identify a text's function or effect. Through close attention to the linguistic devices within a text, I seek to analyse the ways in which a composition persuades the reader of a particular vision of reality in relation to Land. The tools of stylistic analysis will assist in identifying the multiple internal reasonings that support such a vision. Once these rhetorical features have been identified and articulated, they will be analysed and evaluated based on their persuasive effect in relation to the questions and criteria established by the ecological hermeneutic. While the use of this rhetorical critical method will join my ecological hermeneutic in providing the investigative tools for the primary analysis of the Jeremianic texts, this approach will be supplemented by an intertextual one, as my research moves into its secondary phase: examining the connections between this biblical material and New Zealand poetry.

2.3 AN INTERTEXTUAL METHODOLOGY

Inherent in the rhetoric of the selected Jeremianic texts is a dialogical quality that invites investigation into these passages as intertexts that have informed subsequent literature. Intertextual analysis thus thrusts the reader into an interconnected web of textual relationships, and the interpretive task becomes one of moving between texts and tracing connections. As an approach that attends to that which lies beyond the immediate bounds of biblical texts, an intertextual methodology will be necessary in exploring the relationship between the Jeremianic passages and poetry that has been selected from the context of Aotearoa New Zealand. Despite the increasing acceptance of intertextuality as a legitimate approach to biblical interpretation, questions regarding its application remain. The following discussion will, therefore, include a brief exploration of intertextuality as a general theory, before addressing the question of how this methodology will apply to this project.

2.3.1 INTERTEXTUALITY AS A GENERAL THEORY

Intertextuality refers to the interconnectedness that underlies all texts.[99] On the most basic level, this fundamental relatedness emphasises the importance of prior literature, refuting the so-called autonomy of texts and the notion of literary creation *ex nihilo*. Intertextual theory

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[98] Wuellner, "Where Is Rhetorical Criticism Taking Us?" 451.
[99] The term was introduced by Julia Kristeva and was developed in J. Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue and Novel," in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 34-61.

claims that no written text can be composed without words constructed from the building blocks of previous texts. By selecting words and images from a language system which pre-exists any author, all texts are understood to be reflections of prior texts, which contribute to the production of meaning in new texts.[100] Every text encountered, therefore, becomes intelligible only by means of association with words and images that have already been heard or read. To this end, Laurent Jenny suggests that without some appeal to other texts, a new text is incomprehensible: 'outside of intertextuality, [a] literary work would be quite simply imperceptible, in the same way as an utterance in an… unknown language'.[101]

By foregrounding the notion of literary relationality and interdependence, texts can be understood as 'mosaic[s] of quotation',[102] whose connections to prior literature might be as indirect as common words, letters or even a shared language, or as specific as a footnoted quote. Like the weave of a garment, Roland Barthes argues, a text is knit from encounters with prior literature.[103] 'No text is an island', notes Peter Miscall, in a phrase that encapsulates this relational quality of language.[104] Intertextuality establishes, then, a perpetual process of deferral from one text to another, in an infinite fabric of texts that constitutes the linguistic universe. Texts spill over into other texts, shattering notions of direct, linear communication, as each word (text) becomes an intersection of a word (text) where at least one other word (text) can be read.[105] While intertextuality at this abstract level is more interested in the linguistic systems that enable meaning-making than in discerning relationships between particular texts, it is necessary to proceed briefly with the theoretical foundations of the methodology, particularly its dialogical and transformational dimensions.

If a dialogical quality characterises all discourse, as Mikhail Bakhtin suggests, it is also the vehicle through which meaning is produced.[106] An initial locale of dialogical exchange is the multi-dimensional space into which a text enters, where a plethora of other utterances is already present. Before a text exists, then, it is already overwhelmed by competing words,

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[100] In maintaining consistency with my earlier claims regarding the nature of texts, I define 'text' narrowly in the literary sense of written and preserved communication.

[101] L. Jenny, "The Strategy of Forms," in *French Literary Theory Today: A Reader*, ed. Tzvetan Todorov, trans. R. Carter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 34.

[102] Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue and Novel," 37.

[103] R. Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image, Music, Text,* trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press, 1978), 159.

[104] P. D. Miscall, "Isaiah: New Heavens, New Earth, New Book," in *Reading between Texts: Intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Danna Nolan Fewell (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 45.

[105] Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue and Novel," 37.

[106] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 248, 294-294.

simultaneously expressing support for, opposition to, or apathy towards a multitude of earlier voices. By entering this site of struggle, an emerging text must engage with this web of words, navigating its way through what Bakhtin refers to as 'a dialogically agitated and tension-filled environment of alien words', where it must 'weave in and out of complex interrelationships, merg[ing] with some, recoil[ing] from others, [and] intersect[ing] with yet a third group…'[107] In addition to this, an internal dialogue also operates within an emerging text as a result of its ability to contain a number of differing voices. Dialogic relationships can permeate an utterance, even a single word, as long as two voices collide within it dialogically.[108] A network of possible discourses emanating from numerous perspectives therefore constitutes the text with which an interpreter seeks to engage. Indeed, the introduction of an audience adds yet another layer of complexity to this dialogism as the active – and at times competing – response of an interpreter, joins in the melee of other voices.

Recognition of textual dialogism suggests that all language contains multiple meanings. Indeed, the permeation of pre-existing systems and codes within a text means that a word becomes one's own only through appropriation, and is therefore always 'half someone else's'.[109] In this sense a text is shot through with traces of 'otherness'. This otherness, argues Anne Elvey, resides in the spaces between the interwoven threads of a text, and 'calls' to the reader.[110] Acknowledging the presence of this 'otherness' within a text is significant in enabling an analytical focus that is capable of retrieving the voices of those who have been silenced by a monologic interpretive tradition. Without the univocal consciousness of this tradition, an underlying multiplicity can be discerned, giving way to a plurality of voices and exposing alternative discourses.

By entering into and engaging with this intertextual space of prior utterances, each emerging text becomes the absorption, transgression and transformation of other texts. Julia Kristeva insists that any pre-existing text is not swallowed whole but is changed – added to, subtracted from, or rearranged – promoting, and seeking to promote further dialogue.[111] In this sense the

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[107] Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination,* 276.
[108] This is what Bakhtin refers to as 'double-voiced discourse'. M. M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,* trans. and ed. Caryl Emerson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 184.
[109] Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination,* 276, 293.
[110] A. Elvey, "Earthing the Text," 72.
[111] Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue and Novel," 39. 'The term *intertextuality*', she writes, 'denotes [the] transposition of one (or several) sign system(s) into another'. J. Kristeva, "Revolution in Poetic Language," in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 111.

task of interpretation is always partial and incomplete as texts are perpetually absorbed and transformed with each new dialogical encounter. The transformation of texts is thus a process of distortion and decentering, as an emergent text both recognises and denies, supports and undermines a plethora of prior utterances. Indeed, this equivocal relationship between texts suggests that an intertextual citation is never innocent, but rather points to dialogical transformation as a rupture of that which precedes it.

Celebrating the radical plurality and transformational quality of a text strongly challenges historical-critical scholarship where the task of interpretation involves identifying the 'original meaning' of a text, and where uncertainties or variations are highly problematic. In fact, the dialogical ambiguity of a word possessing simultaneously both a meaning (A), and multiple alternative meanings (not-A), defies Aristotelian logic and subverts Western systems of reasoning. The univocal logic of the master that argues for a 0-1 sequence (true-false, authority, singularity) is interrupted by an intertextual plurality (0-x), which cannot be confined by reason.[112] As such, intertextual dialogism disrupts notions of stable meaning, unquestionable authority and objective interpretation by insisting that the multiple voices be re-interpreted in light of each other. It struggles against perspectives that would uphold an 'official' point of view, and in this sense, threatens the authoritarian and hierarchical domination of the master.[113]

As a general theory that governs all texts, however, intertextuality has been criticised for being a difficult concept to use practically, because of the vast and undefined discursive space it designates.[114] If, as Barthes claims, the quotations from which a text is constructed are 'anonymous [and] irrecoverable… quotations without quotation marks',[115] then pinpointing a subject is at best highly problematic, as texts prove increasingly evasive the more one attempts to grasp them. While this theoretical level highlights the uncontainable and unstable fluidity of biblical texts as they permeate the Western social imaginary, the reader is faced with an immeasurable network of intertextual relations without a specific point of entry and lacks effective tools for analysis.

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[112] Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue and Novel," 41-42.

[113] For Bakhtin the notion of dialogism relates closely to his idea of the carnival, which disrupts the monological order promoted by dominant power groups. Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue and Novel," 48-51.

[114] J. Culler, "Presupposition and Intertextuality," in *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction*, ed. Jonathan D. Culler (London: Routledge, 2001), 114.

[115] R. Barthes, "From Work to Text," in *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*, ed. J. V. Harari (New York: Cornell University Press, 1979), 77.

2.3.2 STRATEGIES OF CONTAINMENT

Since the question is no longer *whether* a text is intertextually loaded, but *with which* texts it is loaded, and how it appropriates these texts, my approach must set about restricting the field of inquiry to the relationships between selected Jeremianic passages and New Zealand poetry. In order to establish coherent meaning within the infinite relational possibilities of these texts, a process of delimitation – or a 'strategy of containment' – will be outlined so that interpretation becomes possible.[116] In recognising that interpretive perspective controls the production of meaning, my primary strategy of containment will be ideological. The boundaries I draw will, therefore, be determined by the norms of the ecological hermeneutic established above. Within the polyvocal intertextual field of Jeremiah, particular representations of Land will be a powerful means of shaping relationships between texts and foregrounding previously neglected voices. Delimitation of this nature will also allow for the analysis of those strategies of containment which have established coherence out of Jeremiah's intertextual possibilities in a way that muffles the voice of the Land under the uproar of anthropocentric demands.

As I use this approach to navigate my investigation through the expansive middle ground that lies between the infinite universe of the text and specifically identifiable quotations, I seek to further contain the intertextual relationship between texts, asking how this general theory might relate to individual texts. I am informed here by the work of Ziva Ben-Porat, who offers a description of allusion as a literary device within intertextuality that shifts the focus from an ontological reflection on reality to identifiable connections between texts.[117] While intertextuality is attentive to a broad range of correspondences among texts, allusion limits this by focusing on a narrower range of correspondences, and becomes the verifiable cross-section where text and intertext meet. In this way, intertextuality becomes a methodological tool for the ecological hermeneutic, and aids in the search for the interconnected voice of the Land. Encouraged by Ben-Porat's description, I will develop the notion of intertextual allusion as a tool for identifying tangible points of possible contact between the Jeremianic passages and selected New Zealand poetry.

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[116] F. Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 52-53. Beal also explores this in depth, "Ideology," 27-39.
[117] Z. Ben-Porat, "The Poetics of Literary Allusion." *PTL: A Journal for Descriptive Poetics and Theory of Literature* 1 (1976): 105-128.

2.3.3 ALLUSION

As a literary device, allusion has traditionally been placed alongside that of influence and the textual connections created by these devices have been understood in a linear sense, where an earlier text acts upon a later receptive text. This linear understanding is fraught with issues of power and powerlessness, as emergent texts are seen as being 'under the influence of' prior texts whose pre-existence denotes authority.[118] These assumptions are particularly evident in the intertextual theory of Harold Bloom, who argues that all emergent texts are an assault on a dominant literary forebear, whose language transcends history.[119] Bloom's somewhat one-dimensional argument suggests that by perceiving the imperfections of their literary 'fathers', poets are driven by an oedipal anxiety to kill off these forebears. Understanding allusion in this way is problematic, however, as it unreasonably assumes competitive intention on the part of each new text, a linear relationship between a text and a single precursor, and a specific corpus of previous work, which typically does not include the voices of those who are other than educated, Western men. By situating allusion within the broader context of the intertextual matrix, however, an opportunity for exploring the dynamics between texts in numerous different ways becomes possible.

As a literary tool within an equivocal 'mosaic of quotations', hierarchical understandings of allusion that hinder concepts of intertextual relations are diminished, and this device simply implies that a connection between texts exists. Questions as to the nature of such connections are then left open to the interpreter. As a form of literary recognition, allusion thus enables larger textual fields to be evoked in the process of reading. By recalling for the reader that which is already known, allusions bring to light connections between an alluding text (the text being read), and an evoked text (the text to which the alluding text refers), allowing the alluding text to participate in the richness of prior literature. Instead of relativising textual relations, allusion is used to listen for 'that which flows into'.[120] It becomes a tool for identifying the singular in a stream that comprises many contributors.

Vital in determining the relationship between an alluding text and an evoked text is the discernment of what Ben-Porat refers to as 'markers' within a text.[121] A marker is an

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[118] J. Clayton and E. Rothstein, "Figures in the Corpus: Theories of Influence and Intertextuality," in *Influence and Intertextuality in Literary History*, eds. Jay Clayton and Eric Rothstein (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 3-5, critiques this hierarchical understanding of intertextuality.
[119] H. Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 25.
[120] M. Orr, *Intertextuality: Debates and Contexts* (Cambridge: Polity, 2003), 84.
[121] Ben-Porat, "The Poetics of Literary Allusion," 110.

identifiable element that has been 'borrowed' from an independent text, and which now acts as a signpost in the alluding text, indicating an intertextual connection. Markers range from explicit quotations to images, metaphors, themes and even individual words. The foreign nature of these markers signals a deficiency in the alluding text that can only be remedied by the evoked intertext. In this sense, Michael Riffaterre argues, a marker always contains a dual function in that it simultaneously presents a problem and points to where the solution is to be found.[122] While an alluding text is usually comprehensible without the recognition of a marker and its intertextual connections, new depths of meaning become possible with a marker's activation. Indeed, an entirely new entity is generated as the reader perceives the alluding text in light of that which it evokes.

By depending on the pre-existence of an intertext, allusive interplay assumes a diachronic component, as an alluding text necessarily postdates its intertext. In order to avoid potential before-after hierarchies, however, the alluding text is understood as no less a presence, and one that carries meaning forward and differently. The diachronic component to intertextual allusion has been particularly problematic for many biblical scholars, especially those examining the relationship between Old Testament texts where dates are notoriously difficult to establish. Michael Fishbane's insightful scholarship on inner-biblical exegesis,[123] for example, has been criticised for relying heavily on the diachronic assumptions of historical-critical literary history, and for presuming an historical precedent when examining the connections between separate texts.[124] The ascertaining of historical priority will not be necessary for this work, however, as the vector of allusion between the Jeremianic texts and New Zealand poetry is obvious.

Discovering intertextual relations, then, is a reader-oriented enterprise, as it is the reader who perceives and interprets textual interplay. Because it is the interpreter who must recognise the existence of a marker, allusion depends for its full significance on the activity of this interpreter. 'The reader is the very space', insists Barthes, 'in which are inscribed … all the citations out of which writing is made'.[125] Meaning exists, therefore, *in potentia* in the patterns between the alluding text and its intertext, but is only ever realized through the

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[122] M. Riffaterre, "Compulsory Reader Response: The Intertextual Drive," in *Intertextuality: Theories and Practices*, eds. Michael Worton and Judith Still (New York: Manchester University Press, 1990), 58. See also Ben-Porat, "The Poetics of Literary Allusion," 107-108.
[123] M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985).
[124] L. Eslinger, "Inner-Biblical Exegesis and Inner-Biblical Allusion: The Question of Category," *Vetus Testamentum* 42, no. 1 (1992): 47-58.
[125] Barthes, "The Death of the Author," 54.

activity of the reader. Since each interpreter carries with him or her different viewpoints and prior reading experience, no two interpretations will ever be identical and the generated reading cannot be anticipated. Meaning, then, cannot be limited to the author's purpose, and the question of whether or not a built-in guidance marker was authorially intended need not be raised in determining what it is that qualifies as an intertextual allusion. No longer the product of an author's original thought, a text is understood as a space in which 'potentially vast numbers of relations coalesce', which are only worked into a coherent whole through the activity of the interpreter.[126]

If the key to the interpretation of a text lies beyond its margins, knowledge of the intertext(s) alluded to is important for a deeper appreciation of the work. My investigation is somewhat unusual in the fact that having already selected the Jeremianic intertext(s), my research seeks to identify its presence in New Zealand poetry.[127] After examining a number of Jeremianic representations of Land, I seek to identify a selection of poems from New Zealand which include allusions to those Jeremianic images. It is only by exploring these intertexual relationships that I will be able to gain a sense of the degree to which these biblical representations have shaped, and continue to shape, perceptions of Land in Aotearoa.

2.3.4 AN INTERTEXTUAL PROCESS

Having outlined the primary intertextual strategies of containment, I seek a model of inquiry that is attentive to literary possibilities, and is accommodating of the various forms of textual interaction amidst the methodological uncertainties that continue to prevail in this area. Again I am informed by Ben-Porat, whose intertextual approach foregrounds both the alluding text and its evoked intertext.[128] She divides her intertextual methodology into four stages, which I will incorporate and adapt appropriately for this research. The initial stage of this approach is the recognition of a marker in the alluding text. Because of the obvious discrepancies between the Jeremianic Hebrew and the English – and at times Māori – used in New Zealand poetry, lexical analogies become difficult, restricting my search to markers that relate to the 'thematic' connections between texts.[129] Instead of markers that correspond to particular words, thematic markers incorporate images and ideas as well as their associated devices. My

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[126] G. Allen, *Intertextuality* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 12.
[127] It is also unusual in the sense that the intertextual dialogue I am exploring lies outside the biblical canon, whereas the vast majority of intertextual scholarship works within this corpus.
[128] Ben-Porat, "The Poetics of Literary Allusion," 105-128.
[129] I will not, however, bracket out lexical analogies between English translations of the Bible and poems that are written in English.

investigation at this stage will therefore involve searching for markers that reflect similarities in the imaging of Land.

The second phase of this intertextual methodology involves the identification of the evoked text. While this stage may appear to be an important prerequisite of the initial step, the marker will often refer to only a part of a larger text. Identification of an intertext will be established through an assessment of the plausibility of an intertextual connection with the Jeremianic material. Questions will therefore be asked as to the availability of the intertext to the author of the alluding text. In addition to this, the strength of connection between the texts will be analysed based upon multiple or repeated allusions. The consistent appearance of distinctive or rare imagery, for example, suggests that a tenable relationship is more likely. The third phase of Ben-Porat's method involves focusing on the interaction between the texts in question, looking for 'the formation of at least one intertextual pattern'.[130] This stage relates to the transformation of the evoked text by the alluding text, and consequently the interpretive emphasis returns to the marker as a trigger for this intertextual pattern. In exploring the transformation of the intertextual marker, I seek to analyse the reinterpretation of Jeremianic imagery in a new context. Inquiry into the ways in which the alluding texts reformulate this imagery will provide insight into how these new meanings might contribute to the continuation of the Jeremianic representation of Land in the contemporary New Zealand social imaginary.

The final stage of this intertextual methodology is closely associated with the previous step as it explores the greater intertextual patterns that are established as the evoked text is read as a literary whole. Here, the interpretive focus moves beyond the allusional marker, enabling a dialogue between the alluding and evoked texts in their respective entireties. In the context of the overall methodological approach, each of these four strands of intertextual analysis will weave in and out of my readings, encouraging dialogue. Although each step will be included in the secondary analysis of the Jeremianic interplay with New Zealand poetry, for reasons of time and space not all stages will be allocated equal weighting. Allocation of this nature will be assigned on a case-by-case basis, responding appropriately to the texts at hand. Having identified the hermeneutical and methodological approaches that complement the aims of this research, I turn now to their practical application in facilitating an interpretation of the texts selected for analysis.

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[130] Ben-Porat, "The Poetics of Literary Allusion," 110.

3 – LAND AS WILDERNESS / LAND AS GARDEN

We will not live differently unless we first see differently, acknowledging the relationships we have with the natural world…ours is a time in which perception is critical to any kind of human future'.[1]

3.1 A DICHOTOMOUS LAND: JEREMIAH 2:1-9

Land features prominently as the book of Jeremiah opens and the prophet begins his polemic against the 'house of Israel'.[2] Nowhere is this more evident than in the initial verses of Jeremiah 2 where, even at a superficial level, two distinct images of Land are established: Land as abundant garden, and Land as barren wilderness. In exploring these contrasting representations, I begin this preliminary reading by focusing my investigation on the initial appearance of this imagery in Jer 2:1-9. Having critically analysed the depiction of Land in these verses, I seek to identify other instances within the book of Jeremiah where this imagery has formed the basis for representation. Once the analysis of Jeremianic texts is complete, I will turn to listen for their intertextual echoes in New Zealand poetry.

Commentators disagree on the delineation of units that comprise the initial chapters of Jeremiah. Some argue for a collection of material spanning from Jer 2:1-6:30,[3] while others suggest the unit extends from 2:1-10:25.[4] What is more widely agreed upon, however, is the establishment of two distinct thematic cycles, the first of which includes 2:1-4:4, and has traditionally been understood as focusing primarily on Israel's apostasy.[5] It is within this unit that Jer 2:1-9 is located. Although there is some debate as to the inclusion of vv 1-3 within

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[1] P. J. Wadell, "Taming an Unruly Family Member: Ethics and the Ecological Crisis," in *The Ecological Challenge: Ethical, Liturgical, and Spiritual Responses*, eds. R.N. Fragomeni and J.T. Pawlikowski (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1994), 57.

[2] Jer 2:4.

[3] See R. Abma, *Bonds of Love: Methodic Studies of Prophetic Texts with Marriage Imagery (Isaiah 50:1-3 and 54:1-10, Hosea 1-3, Jeremiah 2-3)* (Assen: Von Gorcum, 1999); L. C. Allen, *Jeremiah: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008); R. P. Carroll, *Jeremiah: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986); W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapters 1-25* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986); M. A. Sweeney, "Structure and Redaction in Jeremiah 2-6," in *Troubling Jeremiah*, eds A. R. Pete Diamond, Kathleen M. O'Connor and Louis Stulman (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 200-218. I favour this demarcation on the basis of the divine word transmission formulae in Jer 2:1 and 7:1.

[4] Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20,* 94, suggests an inclusio is created using the phrase 'foe to the north' in Jer 4:6 and 10:22, demarcating this section. J. M. Henderson, "Jeremiah 2-10 as a Unified Literary Composition: Evidence of Dramatic Portrayal and Narrative Progression," in *Uprooting and Planting: Essays on Jeremiah for Leslie Allen*, ed. John Goldingay (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 116-152, also insists on the compositional unity of Jeremiah 2-10.

[5] Most scholars agree that the second cycle focuses on the consequences of Israel's apostasy and the 'foe from the north'. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1,* 30, refers to these cycles as the 'harlotry cycle' and the 'foe cycle'.

this cycle,[6] I have opted to retain this passage due to its close relationship with vv 5-9.[7] In acknowledging the rhetorical distinctions that exist between vv 1-3 and vv 4-9, however, I will analyse these passages separately.

3.1.1 JEREMIAH 2:1-3

Jer 2:1-3 is clearly recognisable as the opening sub-unit of Jeremiah 2, and the presence of paragraph markers in the Hebrew text identify these verses as an independent passage. A *petuhah* prior to v 1 functions to conclude the previous chapter and signals the opening of this new sub-unit. The lower limit of these verses is also demarcated by a second *petuhah*. In addition to such markings, these verses are bound together by the conventional formulae of oracular speech, which introduces the pericope in v 1 (word of YHWH), and concludes the passage in v 3 with a balancing claim (utterance of YHWH). The verses themselves are mostly poetry and the unit is separated into two double-lined stanzas (vv 2b-3). Each line is a bicolon with the exception of v 2, the first line of which is a tricolon. Within these lines, the Land features three times, appearing initially in the first colon of the second line of the first stanza (v 2c), where the word מִדְבָּר (wilderness) is used to designate the place where Israel, the young bride, lovingly pursues YHWH. The next reference occurs in the second colon of the same line, where the wilderness is qualified as being אֶרֶץ לֹא זְרוּעָה (a Land not sown). The final reference in the second colon of the first line of the second stanza is an indirect reference to Land as a place of רֵאשִׁית (first fruits) and תְּבוּאָה (harvest).

At first glance there is an obvious contrast between the images of Land in the second line of the first stanza and the first line of the second stanza. While one describes a 'wilderness', a land without crops or vegetation, the other suggests a Land that has been carefully tended and which produces an abundance of food for harvest. This contrast, however, appears to go much deeper, assigning value judgments to the images, which are reinforced on both structural and stylistic levels. Symmetrical word clusters and images in each tri/bicolon establish a framework for this poetry, and endow the constituent colons with a value that is either positive or negative:

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[6] Allen, *Jeremiah*, 33, for example, suggests this oracle rounds off Jeremiah 1 and introduces Jer 2:4-6:30.
[7] Jer 2:1-3 is connected to the following oracle in vv 4-9 through the structured repetition of key words and phrases. The use of the verb הָלַךְ (to go after), in v 2, for example, is repeated in vv 5 and 7. References to both מִדְבָּר (wilderness) and אֶרֶץ (Land) also connect v 2 with vv 6 and 7. In addition to this, a chiasm is formed between vv 2:2a and 4:3a in the repetition of the terms 'Jerusalem' and 'thus said YHWH', thereby connecting 2:1-3 to the broader thematic cycle.

v 2

I	a	I remember		the devotion (masc.)
				of your youth (masc.)
	b			the love (fem.)
				of your betrothal (fem.)
	c			your following me
				in the wilderness (masc.)
	d			in an unsown land (fem.)

v 3

II	a'	holy (masc.)
		was Israel (masc.) to YHWH
	b'	the first fruits (fem.)
		of the harvest (fem.)
	c'	all who ate
		were guilty (masc.)
	d'	evil (fem.) came upon them

The balance that is achieved through the establishment of these symmetrical pairs functions to connect the value judgments associated with the images of one pair with that of its corresponding pair. Through these couplings relative value is assigned to the words describing Land. In this way, the masculine pair labelled 'a' can be identified as a positive image, as can the feminine pair labelled 'b'. The masculine pair in 'c' and the feminine pair in 'd', on the other hand, create a negative image. While this structure is reiterated by symmetrical gender-patterning and by the balanced use of nouns and verbs,[8] it is not sufficient to assume that dualistic hierarchies underlie these images, and thus further analysis of the pairs relating to the Land is necessary.

The expression of Israel's אַהֲבָה (love) as YHWH's כְּלוּלֹת (betrothed) is the first metaphor to be coupled with an image of Land (corresponding pair 'b'). The initial keyword, אַהֲבָה, has obvious positive overtones and is used variously throughout the Hebrew Bible to refer to the

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[8] W. G. E. Watson, "Symmetry of Stanza in Jeremiah 2, 2b-3," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 19 (1981): 107-110, notes the symmetrical gender-patterning exhibited here.

intimacy of marriage,[9] the faithful devotion of friends,[10] a moral ideal,[11] and the loyal compassion of YHWH.[12] These connotations overlay the term as it is used in relation to YHWH's young bride, Israel. Regardless of whether כְּלוּלֹת refers to a time of betrothal or a honeymoon period as some commentators debate,[13] the underlying rhetoric alludes to an idealised innocence associated with the early days of marriage, where the virginal purity of a young woman holds hope of fertility and the promise of happiness and security. Indeed, the various cognates of the term כלל translate to mean 'complete' or 'whole',[14] upholding this state as the pinnacle of female aspiration and societal expectation. It is interesting to note that these root letters also refer to a basket full of fruit in Am 8:1.[15] Not only does this image reiterate the fertility and abundance associated with the bridal ideal, it also makes a connection with the fruitfulness of the Land, an image that appears in the corresponding pair to this bicolon.

Positive imagery continues in the image of Israel as the רֵאשִׁית (first fruits) of YHWH's תְּבוּאָה (harvest). On the one hand, this metaphor reiterates the favour of Israel in days gone by, as the text compares this people to the first fruits of each harvest. Stipulated by Hebrew law to be sacrosanct, these fruits were debarred from secular use and used as a gift of thanks to YHWH as an acknowledgment of YHWH's gracious giving.[16] On the other hand, these images and connections assign particular value to the type of Land that produces these fruits, Land that is worked by human hands and produces crops for human consumption. This rhetoric gives value to Land that is 'useful' to humanity. רֵאשִׁית translates literally as 'beginning' or 'first', making an immediate connection with the early days of bridal contentment in the matching colon. In other contexts, the root of this term, ראשׁ, translates to mean 'best' or 'choicest', adding positive association to this fruit and the Land from which it is grown.[17] Although the term תְּבוּאָה is used in this context with a third masculine singular suffix (תְּבוּאָתֹה), the root word itself is feminine and, like the promise of the virgin bride's

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[9] Sg 2:4, 7.

[10] 1Sm 18:3; 20:17.

[11] Prv 15:17; 17:9.

[12] Dt 7:13; 1Kgs 10:9; Hos 11:4.

[13] W. McKane, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah: Introduction and Commentary on Jeremiah 1-25* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986), 28, argues this term refers to a 'honeymoon' period, while W. L. Holladay, ed. *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 158, on the other hand, suggests the term refers to a betrothal or engagement.

[14] Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, 159.

[15] In Jer 5:27 the same root refers to a basket full of birds.

[16] Cf. Ex 23:19; Lv 23:10-14; Num 18:12-13; Dt 26:1-11.

[17] Cf. Gn 49:3; Ex 30:23. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, 330.

fertility, the image of harvest offers a similar assurance of abundance after the initial first sacred yield.

When viewed side by side, the parallels between the image of the female bride and that of the plentiful Land become clear. Their shared purity and potential are implicitly affirmed as being highly attractive qualities – objects of desire for their (male) husband/owner.[18] Both are valued for their fertility and their ability to provide and sustain new life, holding future security within. Thus, the rhetoric surrounding these images appears to be positive, evoking a sense of hope of abundance and pleasure. The symmetry of text ensures that the meaning of each bicolon is enhanced by its alternate pair, leaving no doubt as to the positive value assigned to the type of Land implied in the image of first fruits and harvest. As the bridal state was upheld as an ideal, so here the optimistic rhetoric implies an ideal of Land as arable, providing abundantly for human consumption.

Aside from the reader's preconceived notions of מִדְבָּר (wilderness), the text, as it stands in Jer 2:2c, only hints at the value judgments assigned to this image of Land. The first clue lies in the verb הָלַךְ (to 'go after' or 'follow'), a term that describes Israel's actions in the wilderness with YHWH.[19] Referring, in other contexts, to a woman who walks after the man with whom she is associated,[20] הָלַךְ calls to mind again the devotion of the idealised bride in the previous line, emphasising Israel's 'following' as an act of love and loyalty.[21] Here, then, the wilderness serves to foreground Israel's unerring devotion by providing the 'admirable foil' against which such fidelity is upheld.[22] It is a place of adversity where Israel's identity as YHWH's people is forged.[23] Indeed, the emphasis on 'leading' and 'following' implies a depiction of wilderness as a trackless waste in which one quickly becomes disoriented.

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[18] Bauer-Levesque, *Gender*, 23, suggests that the connection between these images lies in the notion of property. She picks up on the idea of female subordination to her husband in legal contexts (Ex 20:17; 21:3; Lv 20:10; Num 30:3-8; Dt 22:13-21), but regrettably does not pursue this connection any further in relation to her reading of Jeremiah. The image of Land as possession will be explored in greater depth in Chapters Four and Five.

[19] Commentators disagree as to whether this verb refers to Israel's following YHWH (M. DeRoche, "Jeremiah 2:2-3 and Israel's Love for God During the Wilderness Wanderings," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 45, no. 3 (1983): 364-376), or whether it is YHWH leading Israel (M. V. Fox, "Jeremiah 2:2 and the Desert Ideal," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 35, no. 4 (1973): 441-450). I have opted to adhere to the more common translation employed by DeRoche.

[20] Gn 24:5; 1Sm 25:42.

[21] Of course, this term also foreshadows the accusation of Israel 'going after' other gods.

[22] Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 250.

[23] Some commentators have idealised the notion of wilderness, suggesting that it is a place of refuge and a location for divine revelation. This understanding of wilderness can be observed in the work of S. P. Bratton, *Christianity, Wilderness, and Wildlife* (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, 1993). In light of the negative associations that accompany the images of wilderness in Jeremiah, however, I maintain that the wilderness is portrayed as a desolate and threatening region, which makes human habitation undesirable and impossible.

Israel's commitment as YHWH's bride is made all the more exceptional in light of the apparent hostility of the surrounding environment.

A second hint as to the value assigned to this image is found by examining the word מִדְבָּר itself. Whether one translates מִדְבָּר as 'wilderness', 'desert' or 'pasture',[24] the term refers to an area of agriculturally-unexploited Land. This in itself creates a contrast to the image of the fertile, arable Land identified in symmetrical pair 'b'. Elsewhere, the root letters of מִדְבָּר are used to describe, among other things, a place of thorns or the occurrence of pestilence,[25] both unfavourable terms whose association with מִדְבָּר supports the mounting evidence of wilderness as a negative image. Confirmation of this suspicion, however, must be sought in the imagery of the corresponding bicolon ('c').

The symmetrical pair to the wilderness depiction signals an unexpectedly harsh turn in the text to a bicolon dominated by the verb אָשֵׁם (to be guilty).[26] אָשֵׁם refers here to the consequences incurred for consuming the sacrosanct first fruits that were dedicated to YHWH. The metaphor works on multiple levels, referring to both the literal eating of the first fruits and to the destruction of those who attempt to 'consume' Israel,[27] but it is with the former that I am primarily concerned. To consume the first fruits was to pervert their proper use, violating YHWH's law and distorting the relationship between Israel and its deity. The rhetoric around this legal infringement and its corresponding punishment is undeniably negative, endorsing the negative standing of its parallel pair depicting the wilderness. Through this symmetry, the rhetoric also establishes at this early stage an important connection between the wilderness and punishment for breaking YHWH's law. Such an association suggests that violation of this law results in the decline of the Land's ability to produce, reducing it to a wilderness state.[28] Once again, the contrast between the arable and the non-arable is underlined. The arable Land, with its positive associations, is valued over

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[24] R. B. Leal, "Negativity Towards Wilderness in the Biblical Record," *Ecotheology* 10, no. 3 (2005): 368, and *Wilderness in the Bible: Toward a Theology of Wilderness* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), 37, argues that מִדְבָּר refers to Land that was unexploited for agricultural purposes, but used for grazing animals. See also D. Hillel, *The Natural History of the Bible: An Environmental Exploration of the Hebrew Scriptures* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 118. The ASV, KJV, NET and NRSV Bibles translate מִדְבָּר to mean 'wilderness'. The NIV and NJB have 'desert'.

[25] 1Kgs 8:37; Ps 91:3; Hos 13:14.

[26] McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 28, notes that although the root אשם appears in the qal imperfect, it is easier if past tenses are assumed. Biblical translations vary: The KJV and ASV stay faithful to the qal imperfect, while the NRSV, NET, NEB and NIV assume the past tense.

[27] Cf. Num 24:8.

[28] See Jer 48:32-33, where the Land's lack of productivity is a sign of Moab's defeat.

and against the penalty of wilderness, and with this division comes a new understanding of these images in terms of divine reward and punishment.

This negative assessment of the wilderness is endorsed by its qualifying statement in the first bicolon of the final pair ('d'). Here, the text states that this wilderness is a אֶרֶץ לֹא זְרוּעָה (Land not sown), a description that suggests a place that is unable to be planted (זָרַע, lit. 'sown') and is thus without vegetation.[29] A second layer of meaning is additionally revealed when one examines the other primary meaning of זָרַע: to be pregnant or to produce descendants.[30] Once again, the language recalls the hopeful image of Israel as a young and fertile bride, but the resounding לֹא reminds the reader that this is a barren Land where no new growth is possible. In being without seed, the wilderness is defined as 'lacking', and is thus set in opposition to its fertile counterpart. A defining characteristic of wilderness that emerges from this observation, then, is that this is a space of minimal human occupation. Without human or crop 'seed', the wilderness is devoid of human presence. It is an unknown, a place beyond the boundaries of civilized society and thus the antithesis of the arable Land.

The corresponding bicolon to the image of the unsown Land is an announcement of verdict upon those who violated divine property by eating the first fruits: רָעָה (disaster) came upon them (Jer 2:3b). Although רָעָה literally means 'evil', like many translators I prefer to render it here as disaster.[31] The consequence of defying YHWH's law is disaster. As punishment was hinted at in the image of wilderness in the previous matching pair ('c'), this connection is reiterated as disaster is combined with the image of the unsown Land. A climax is achieved at this point as the accumulation of wilderness imagery builds to bestow one last association: the unsown wilderness is a place of disaster, a place of death. A final sense of contrast and separation is achieved here, as the abundant life that was associated with the arable Land is set against this image of death that is found in the wilderness. In this comparison, a balanced set of dualistic images is completed:

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[29] The GNB translates this passage as 'a land that had not been cultivated'.
[30] Lv 12:2; 1Sm 2:20.
[31] Cf. CEB, ESV, GNB, NET, NIV AND NRSV. See also Ex 32:14; Jgs 20:34, 41; 2Sm 15:14; and Jer 1:14.

Positive	Negative
(Devotion)	Wilderness
(Youth)	Unsown Land
Love	Guilty
Bride	Disaster/death
(Holy)	
First fruits	
Harvest	

In these two short stanzas, the text's rhetoric achieves a positive portrayal of the arable Land, and a contrasting negative depiction of the unsown wilderness. Both these representations will be reiterated and expanded in the following six verses.

3.1.2 JEREMIAH 2:4-9

As in the previous oracle, Jer 2:4-9 is framed by two messenger formulae which introduce the unit in v 5 (thus says YHWH), and signal its conclusion in v 9 (utterance of YHWH). In spite of the legal language, which has led some form critics to unsuccessfully identify these verses as a covenantal lawsuit,[32] the passage fails to display the typical characteristics of this genre.[33] Like Jer 2:1-3, the oracular formulae suggest that this passage derives its structure from the canons of Hebrew rhetoric. It is an example of a prophetic oracle that at times uses the terminology of a covenantal lawsuit.[34]

While the upper limit of the oracle is demarcated by a *petuhah* prior to v 4, delimitation of the unit's lower limit relies on formulaic and rhetorical criteria, as a section marker does not appear until the *setumah* in v 28. Verses 4-9 are well developed, however, by the balancing of words and themes, and by speaker alternation. In addition to this, a chiasmus gives this passage structure, making clear the unit's upper and lower limits, and its primary thematic concerns:

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[32] See H. B. Huffmon, "Covenant Lawsuits in the Prophets," *Journal for Biblical Literature* 78, no. 4 (1959): 285-295; and P. H. Williams Jr., "The Fatal and Foolish Exchange: Living Water for 'Nothing'," *Austin Seminary Bulletin* 81 (1965): 3-59.

[33] For an extended discussion on the form of Jer 2:4-9, see Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 257-258.

[34] In this identification, I agree with Carroll, *Jeremiah,* 117-123; Holladay, *Jeremiah 1,* 73-74; and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 257-258.

v 5	a	Oracular formula
	b	Authority figures: your fathers
		Going after הָלַךְ
v 6	c	Where is YHWH? אַיֵּה יהוה
	d	In a Land בְּאֶרֶץ (three times)
v 7	d'	Land אֶרֶץ (two times)
v 8	c'	Where is YHWH? אַיֵּה יהוה
	b'	Authority figures: the priests, rulers, prophets
		Went after הָלַךְ
v 9	a'	Oracular formula

Appearing at the centre of the chiasm, Land creates something of a climax, demanding that the ecological reader pay particular analytical attention to these central verses.

A glance at Jer 2:6-7 is enough to reveal the striking dominance of the word אֶרֶץ (Land) within the central verses of this text:

v 6   They did not say, 'Where is the Lord
              Who brought us out of the אֶרֶץ of Egypt,
        Who led us in the מִדְבָּר,
              In a אֶרֶץ of deserts and pits
        In a אֶרֶץ of drought and deep darkness
              In a אֶרֶץ that no one passes through,
          Where no one lives?'
v 7   I brought you into a plentiful אֶרֶץ
              to eat its fruits and its good things.
        But when you entered you defiled my אֶרֶץ
              And made my heritage an abomination.

Well-balanced and seemingly selected for their rhetorical power, the terms describing the אֶרֶץ in these verses create two distinct images of Land that echo those images established in Jer 2:1-3. The first of these depictions appears in v 6 where the negative associations of wilderness from the previous oracle are developed and expanded. Following the identification of the wilderness in the third colon of this verse are four identically constructed qualifying cola. Each qualifier begins with בְּאֶרֶץ (in a Land of), the repetition of which gives

a sense of foreboding, as the descriptions become increasingly ominous. This phrase is then followed by two evocative terms that define the appearance and condition of this wilderness, constructing a detailed illustration of the image that first appeared in 2:2.

The first synonymous pair following the initial reference to the wilderness describes this as a place of עֲרָבָה (deserts) and שׁוּחָה (pits). One can surmise that on a physical level, this desert area is a waterless region, supporting the depiction of the wilderness as a place without life, unable to sustain crops or human occupation. As a fissure in the desert terrain, the word שׁוּחָה offers new insight into the appearance of the wilderness, suggesting an irregular and difficult landscape, over which travel would be arduous and fraught with danger.[35] A more metaphorical interpretation of this term sees the desert itself as a pit, or trap, out of which it is difficult to emerge.[36] Closely associated with this idea is an understanding of the desert as שְׁאוֹל (Sheol), a place of death whose root letters are connected to that of שׁוּחָה used here.[37] Once again a connection is made between the desert and death, adding weight to the notion of wilderness as a hostile and dangerous place.

Elaborating further on this emerging image of wilderness, the synonyms in the fifth colon mirror those in the previous line by portraying this Land as one of צִיָּה (drought) and צַלְמָוֶת (deep darkness). Alliteration of the *Tsade* in these descriptive terms reinforces the menacing tone of the verse, which makes almost tangible to the reader the imminent threat of this wilderness. The inhospitable hostility of the desert noted in the fourth colon is reiterated by the word צִיָּה, but it is the second synonym that nuances this image of drought and sheds light on the conjectures initially made concerning the meaning of שׁוּחָה (pits). Traditionally, צַלְמָוֶת has been translated to mean 'shadow of death',[38] although recently there has been a shift towards understanding the term to mean 'deep darkness'.[39] This shift reflects a change in

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[35] This interpretation is supported by Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 87; Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 259; McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 31-32, who understand the term in the sense of 'ravine'. The NJB also translates this term as 'ravine'.

[36] שׁוּחָה is used in two other places in Jeremiah, both with negative connotations. In 18:20, where the speaker uses שׁוּחָה metaphorically to mean a 'pit for my life', the term is used in connection with evil. It is used again in 18:22 in what could be either a geographical description or metaphorical phrase: 'they have dug a pit to catch me'. The blurring of meaning in this context suggests that such ambiguity should be kept in mind in the interpretation of 2:6.

[37] N. J. Tromp, *Primitive Conceptions of Death and the Nether World in the Old Testament* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969), 21, 23-24, argues that as well as referring to the surface of the ground, אֶרֶץ denotes the depths of the Earth and, by extension, can represent the realm of death.

[38] This is consistent with the ASV, KJV and NJB translations of the Bible.

[39] See the NRSV, NET, NIV and RSV. It is interesting to note that the LXX translates this term to mean 'barren', creating a contrast between the infertile Land in this verse and the fertile bride in Jer 2:2. Although unfaithful to the text, the GNB translates this term as 'dangerous'.

interpretive preference for one of two verbal roots present in the term צַלְמָוֶת: צלל, meaning 'to grow dark' or 'to cast shadow', and מות, meaning 'to die'. Regardless of one's interpretive preference, the term connotes negative imagery of extreme danger,[40] distress,[41] gloom,[42] eyes that are heavy with weeping[43] and the world of the dead.[44] Darkness is also seen here in its metaphorical sense of utter despair, the polar opposite to the hope associated with the world of light.[45] By combining the negative image of darkness with the representation of wilderness, this Land's position on the subordinate side of the dualistic couplings is underlined. These descriptive terms thus serve to nuance the image of wilderness and support the now unquestionable association of this Land with danger and death. It is a place of impenetrable darkness, a Land devoid of hope.

Jer 2:6 concludes with the final details of this wilderness description: it is a place where לֹא־עָבַר (none pass through), and where וְלֹא־יָשַׁב (no one dwells). As if to emphasise the reason for this emptiness, the linguistic play on the similarities between עָבַר (pass through) and עֲרָבָה (desert) in the fourth colon call to mind the ever-increasing list of negative associations with this place. Lack of agricultural opportunities, the dangerous terrain and drought ensure that this is a lonely and isolated place without human presence, a point underlined by the pounding reiteration of לֹא. No longer a description of the Land's geographical appearance, these final cola assert the ontological conviction that this is the realm farthest from history, from human existence and, by implication, a place at the very edge of YHWH's reach. By completing the description on this note of deathly isolation the terror of the wilderness reaches mythic proportions, functioning as a model for the absolute antithesis to that which is positive, familiar and safe – an image to which the text now turns.

Jer 2:7 opens with the image of a fertile Land, which is then set in antithetical parallel with the image of a polluted Land:

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[40] Ps 23:4.
[41] Ps 44:19.
[42] Jer 13:16; Ps 107:10.
[43] Jb 16:16.
[44] Jb 10:21-22; 38:17.
[45] This contrast between light and dark is seen also in Is 9:2; Jer 13:16; Am 5:8.

v 7   I <u>brought you</u> into a *plentiful* **LAND**

to eat its fruits and its good things.

But when <u>you entered</u> you *defiled* my **LAND**,

and made my heritage an abomination.[46]

כַּרְמֶל translates literally to mean 'fertile field', but typically refers to a garden, orchard or vineyard,[47] all places of rich produce.[48] כַּרְמֶל can also specify newly ripened grain,[49] and in contrast to the barren dryness of the wilderness, the כַּרְמֶל points to the possibility of bountiful growth in this arable environment. In confirmation of the ongoing wealth of this plentiful Land, the כַּרְמֶל is qualified as being full of פְּרִי (fruit), calling to mind the first fruits of Jer 2:3. Where once this produce was reserved exclusively for the deity, however, the Israelite's faithfulness to YHWH that brought them into this Land now allows them to reap the benefits of its fertility. According to this subtext, then, abundant yield is closely related to faithfulness.

These fruits are further qualified by the more generic טוּבָה (good things) of the fertile Land. Not only does the vagueness of this concluding phrase imply that there is no end to the abundance of this Land, it also gives concrete expression to the apparent goodness of this arable region, which has previously only been implied. If the barrenness of the wilderness makes it inherently bad, the fertility of this garden Land makes it inherently good. This goodness is finally evidenced by the repeated emphasis on YHWH's presence in this Land, a presence that is made even more obvious by the divine absence in the previous verse.[50] The first line of v 7 hints at this presence in its opening phrase, וָאָבִיא ([and] *I* brought), emphasising that it was YHWH who brought the Israelites to this plentiful Land. This is confirmed in the antithetical parallel of v 7, where YHWH describes this place as אַרְצִי (*my* Land) and נַחֲלָתִי (*my* heritage).[51] Thus, a connection is established between the 'quality' of the Land and YHWH's presence, or favour. It is a connection that will be drawn upon repeatedly throughout Jeremiah, and which carries implications for understanding both the

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[46] For the purposes of this chapter I will focus on the image of the fertile field. The image of the polluted Land will be addressed in a §5.2.

[47] Is 10:18; 16:10; 29:17; Jer 4:26; Mi 7:14.

[48] Biblical translations of the term in Jer 2:7 range from 'fertile land' (GNB, NET, NIV), and 'plentiful land' (ASV, NRSV, RSV), to 'plentiful country' (KJV) and 'country of plenty' (NJB).

[49] Lv 2:14; 23:14; 2Kgs 4:42.

[50] Although Jer 2:6 depicts YHWH as being present with the Israelites in the wilderness, YHWH does not seem to be present in the wilderness itself.

[51] Habel, *The Land Is Mine*, 76-80, provides an insightful analysis of Land as YHWH's נַחֲלָה.

wilderness and the garden.

When read uncritically, the dichotomy between the fertile field and the barren wilderness might pass as a simple description of two distinct types of Land.[52] From an eco-critical perspective, however, these nine short verses establish two polarised images of Land, with clear value judgements associated with each image. Inherent in these dualistic depictions are a number of rhetorical strategies which enhance the relationship of opposition and exclusion that underlines these images of Land. These strategies include – but are not limited to – the backgrounding of wilderness as the stage upon which the divine/human action is played out; the utilisation of Land as an instrument of reward and punishment; and the valuation of women and Land based upon their purity and reproductive ability. As the initial depictions of Land in the book of Jeremiah, these representations set a precedent for the way in which Land is imagined in the chapters that ensue. Having identified the dualistic divisions inherent in this imagery, my investigation shifts to examine instances in Jeremiah where the representations of Land seem to reinforce these foundational depictions. It is in this vein that I turn to engage in a comprehensive ecological reading of Jer 17:5-8, working to identify and retrieve the experience of the Land from within this literary context.

3.2 LAND AS CURSE / LAND AS BLESSING: JEREMIAH 17:5-8

Jer 17:5-8 mirrors the dualistic contrast between the barren wilderness and the fertile garden of 2:1-9 more closely than any other passage in the book. Most commentators agree that these verses comprise a psalm with a distinctive wisdom orientation, contrasting the righteous and the wicked.[53] While it is clear that Jeremiah is speaking, the messenger formula in v 5 suggests the divine endorsement of this imagery, which draws parallels between the curse of a tree in a wilderness and those who trust in mortals, and the blessings of a tree beside water and those who trust in YHWH. Reflecting typical sapiential instruction, these verses have drawn comparison with Psalm 1 and the extracanonical psalms of ancient Near Eastern texts.[54] Rather than explore the moral implications emerging from the polarities of approved-

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[52] Hiebert, *Yahwist's Landscape,* 19-22, argues that the dichotomy drawn between what he calls the 'desert and the sown' is an oversimplification and does not reflect the environmental reality of ancient Israel. Regardless of archaeological and anthropological evidence, however, my focus will remain upon the text's rhetoric, where this polarity is undeniable.

[53] See W. Brueggemann, *A Commentary on Jeremiah: Exile and Homecoming* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 158; Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 491; Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 780; L. Stulman, *Jeremiah* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 166.

[54] H. Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), 27, notes a relationship between these verses and Ps 1, which contrasts one who is blessed by conforming to YHWH's

of and disapproved-of behaviour in this literature, however, I remain within the confines of Jer 17:5-8, focusing on the way in which the Land becomes a metaphor for these ideas.

An independent and artistically well-rounded unit, Jer 17:5-8 does not seem to be intrinsically connected to the surrounding material.[55] The upper limit of the poem is indicated by a *setumah* prior to v 5, and while there is no such delimitation after v 8, the shift in tone, content and sentence structure in v 9 indicates the beginning of a separate unit. It is also interesting to note a *setumah* at the end of v 6, dividing the curse portion from the blessing portion of the poem. Given the complementary nature of these verses, however, it seems unlikely that they were once separate units; rather, the *setumah* seems to function to highlight the difference between curse and blessing.

A poem of four one-verse stanzas comprises this unit, forming two unequal and contrasting sections.[56] Stanzas one and three focus on the relationship between the mortal individual and YHWH, and the typical curse / blessing formula creates a neat symmetry in the opening cola of the respective stanzas. While the curse formula of the first stanza contains three cola compared to the two of the third stanza, the parallelism between the verses clearly establishes the curse associated with rejecting YHWH and the blessing that emerges from faithfulness:

Stanza I   v 5   Thus says the LORD:

Cursed are those who trust in

mere mortals

and make mere flesh their

strength,

whose hearts turn away from

the LORD.

Stanza III   v 7   **Blessed are those who trust**

in *the LORD*,

whose trust is the LORD.

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righteous ways, with one who is cursed as a sinner. Parallels have also been drawn between Jer 17:5-8 and the ancient Egyptian 'Instruction of Amen-em-opet', where the 'heated man of a temple' is presented as a 'tree growing in the open' and experiencing a 'loss of foliage'. This image is then compared with a 'truly silent man' who is 'like a tree growing in a garden' that 'flourishes and doubles its yield'. See Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 781. Similar sentiments are found in Ps 118:8; and Is 31:3.

[55] Although the repetition of the key words לֵב (heart) and פְּרִי (fruit) connect Jer 17:5-8 to the broader literary unit of Jer 17:1-10, these verses are clearly intended to stand alone.

[56] Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 782, assumes a missing colon in the second stanza (v 6b), while Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 490, suggests that the author deliberately skewed the poem, further emphasizing the disparity between curse and blessing. While I favour Holladay's reading, the conjectures are immaterial.

It is, however, stanzas two and four that require closer inspection, as Land-based imagery is drawn upon to describe these contrasting human individuals. As in the previous stanzas, the first colon of v 6 matches the first of v 8, introducing the image of a tree and its surrounding environment. By way of compensation for the uneven number of cola in the first and third stanzas, the second stanza describing the cursed wilderness contains only four cola, while the fourth stanza, denoting blessing, contains six. As the parallel imagery between these stanzas unfolds, so the trees and their environmental contexts are contrasted – the parched and barren wilderness is portrayed as an instrument of divine curse, while the implied abundance of the fertile Land reflects YHWH's blessing:

Stanza II   v 6   **They shall be like** *a shrub* in

                                           the desert,

                                  and ~~shall not see when relief~~

                                  ~~comes~~.

                                  They shall live in the PARCHED

                                           PLACES of the wilderness,

                                  in an uninhabited ~~salt land~~.

Stanza IV   v 8   **They shall be like** *a tree* planted

                                           by water,

                                  sending out its roots by

                                           the stream.

                                  ~~It shall not fear when heat comes~~,

                                  and its leaves shall STAY GREEN;

                                  in the year of drought it is

                                           not anxious,

                                  and it does not cease to ~~bear~~

                                           ~~fruit~~.

Central to the metaphor that illustrates the contrast between curse and blessing, then, are images of the עַרְעָר (shrub) in v 6 and the עֵץ (tree) in v 8, who represent the cursed individual and the blessed individual respectively.[57] Although these analogies rely on the

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[57] The primary focus of this textual analysis will be on the poem's second stanza and its representation of wilderness. Although I will make references to the fertile Land implied in the fourth stanza, these references will be in relation to the depiction of wilderness. A comprehensive analysis of Land as garden will be carried out in §3.3.

figures of the shrub and the tree, these plants cannot be separated from their respective environs, which enable life or death / blessing or curse. A connection between the עַרְעָר (shrub), the desert, and the notion of curse, for example, is immediately evident in the assonance of these three terms. The repetition of the *Resh* sound associates with these words a sense of dread that will come to define the first half of the poem:

> v 5 אָרוּר (to curse)
>
> v 6 כְּעַרְעָר בָּעֲרָבָה (like a shrub in the desert)

Nuancing this description is the ambiguity of עַרְעָר, a rare word in Hebrew whose pattern of use here allows for a range of interpretations.[58] Not only does this term denote the small tamarisk or juniper bush, it is also used to mean 'destitute',[59] 'stripped' or 'laid bare'[60] and 'childless'.[61] By exploiting the multiple meanings of a single word, this phrase not only introduces the metaphorical subject of stanzas two and four, but it hints at the plight of those who are cursed. Through this wordplay, the text also indirectly depicts the Land upon which the shrub depends. It introduces an association between the desert and infertility, which connects this Land with ideas of hopelessness and death.[62] Symmetrical juxtaposition is achieved in v 8, as the image of the shrub is contrasted with that of the tree that 'does not cease to bear fruit'. If the Land associated with the shrub is barren and empty, then the Land of the fruitful tree is lush and fecund. Underlining this sapiential teaching, then, are the dualistic divisions identified in Jer 2:1-9.

In a pattern that is becoming almost predictable, the image of the עֲרָבָה (desert) and its negative connotations in Jer 17:6 is contrasted with a Land of מַיִם (water) and יוּבַל (streams) in v 8. Heightened separation is achieved between these two types of Land as the heat of the desert and its associated drought (cf. 2:6) is set against the cool moisture of a Land blessed by precipitation. This distinction is developed in the third colon of the second stanza as further insight into the nature of this עֲרָבָה is offered in the description of this place as a מִדְבָּר

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[58] The LXX for example, has *agriomyrikē* (wild tamarisk). Other translations include 'bush' (NIV), 'scrub' (NJB) and 'heath' (ASV, KJV). I prefer the NRSV translation of 'shrub'.

[59] Ps 102:18 [Eng 17]. McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 390, does not find any shrub imagery in Jer 17:6. Instead he argues that עַרְעָר be translated as 'destitute'. For McKane, the image thus refers to a destitute person who knows nothing of the good life and suffers a solitary existence in wasteland. Given the symmetry of the poem in so many regards, and the clear reference to a tree in v 8, I retain the balancing image of the shrub in v 6.

[60] Is 23:13; 32:11.

[61] Gn 15:2; Lv 20:20-21.

[62] The alternative meanings that appear as part of the semantic field of the word עַרְעָר – 'stripped' and 'laid bare' – also make an important connection between this text and Jer 6:6 (§4.2), where the Land is stripped as part of an act of rape.

(wilderness). Although the assonant potential of עֲרָבָה makes this term an understandable rhetorical choice for the description of the cursed Land, the use of מִדְבָּר in the same verse suggests these words are being used synonymously, a phenomenon that is not inconsistent with images of wilderness elsewhere.[63] Confirming this suspicion is a reference to the חֲרֵרִים (parched places) that characterise the wilderness but could easily pertain to the desert. A *hapax legomenon*, חֲרֵרִים is a source of much uncertainty, but is typically translated as 'parched places' due to the understanding that the term is derived from the verb חָרַר, meaning 'to burn'.[64] The suggestion of heat in the desert now becomes explicit as the wilderness is imagined being burned or scorched by the sun. Unsurprisingly, this image is balanced by one of moisture implied in the עָלֵהוּ רַעֲנָן (green leaves) of the blessed tree in v 8 that 'does not fear' when חֹם (heat) comes. In the same way that the fertile soil enables fruitful abundance and is a source of blessing, so the parched Land of the desert/wilderness is a place of scorching heat and death, making it the means by which YHWH's curse is implemented.

Definitive confirmation of the connection between the wilderness and the notion of curse is evident in the wordplay of the final designation of this wilderness as a אֶרֶץ מְלֵחָה (salt Land, v 6). מְלֵחָה translates to mean both 'salt' and 'to be barren', reiterating the infertility associated with the image of the עַרְעָר (shrub), but now extending this association to the greater wilderness. As an indication of the unsuitability of soil for cultivation, the presence of salt in the Land emphasises again the inhospitable nature of the wilderness, an impression that is underlined in the claim that this Land is לֹא תֵשֵׁב (without inhabitant).[65] Reminiscent of Jer 2:1-9, here too it is the lack of productive potential in the saline Land that ensures a negative designation is incurred, a point emphasised by the abundance of fruit associated with its blessed counterpart in v 8. Like a barren woman unable to conform to the expectations of patriarchal social norms through reproduction, so this Land does not adhere to the anthropocentric demand that it be of cultivable use. In this sense, the Land itself becomes the curse. As it is without seed, salt gives symbolic expression to the notion of infertility, representing a Land that has been relegated to perpetual desolation in that it is both

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[63] 1Sm 23:24; Is 35:6; 41:19; 51:3.
[64] Cf. Jb 30:30; Jer 6:29; Ezek 15:4-5; 24:11. Slight variations in translation include 'scorched places' (Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 784), and 'stony (lava) fields' (Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 489).
[65] Variations on this phrase are used frequently throughout Jeremiah to express a similar sentiment. Without exception, the lack of inhabitants is linked with the Land's desolation and destruction: Jer 2:6, 15; 4:7; 9:9 [Eng 10], 10 [Eng 11]; 26:9; 34:22; 44:22; 46:19; 51:29, 37.

the subject and object of divine curse. Indeed, this concept is not without precedent, recalling particularly the Land that was made barren by salt in the tradition of Sodom and Gomorrah.[66]

As the symbolic amalgam of curse, punishment, drought, infertility and death, the wilderness epitomises the subordinate term of the dualistic hierarchies and typifies that which the dominant consciousness finds abhorrent. It is the 'Other' against which the human identity has traditionally been defined. By virtue of its otherness, the wilderness is a threatening presence, requiring humanity to recognise their inherent vulnerability and to acknowledge their dependence upon the Land for survival. The association of wilderness with drought, infertility and death forces human beings to confront their lack of authority and control in the world, and to face their own finitude in death. Given the rhetorical power of this symbol to induce fear and panic, it is hardly surprising that the image of the wilderness is synonymous with divine displeasure, nor is it any wonder that this Land is understood as an instrument of curse upon those who neglect their deity.

By being depicted as the means by which God communicates displeasure, the wilderness appears as an instrument or 'tool' within this text. If the wilderness conditions described represent the instruments of YHWH's curse, it follows that these conditions must in themselves be considered inherently undesirable. The characteristics of wilderness, then, reflect for humanity an outward expression of the divine curse upon those whose 'hearts turn away from YHWH' (Jer 17:5). The wilderness is a place of punishment and as a symbol of judgment it becomes synonymous with the wrath of YHWH. To assign agency to the wilderness in carrying out such judgment implies the willingness or cooperation of both parties involved. The subjectivity required for such agency, however, is denied to the wilderness in this passage and the Land seems little more than a vassal whose environs are the vehicle for divine retribution. Wilderness, then, has no inherent value in and of itself; rather, its value lies in its use to YHWH as a communicative device.

Through its association with concepts of disobedience and judgment, the wilderness becomes a moral category conceived in itself to be 'a punishment and a necessary transitory stage in

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[66] Gn 19:24-26; Dt 29:22-23; and Zep 2:9. See also Ps 107:34. F. C. Fensham, "Salt as a Curse in the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 25, no. 2 (1962): 48-50; and A. M. Honeyman, "The Salting of Shechem," *Vetus Testamentum* 3, no. 2 (1953): 192-95, both explore the notion of salt and curse in relation to the account of Abimelech who sowed salt on a razed city in Jgs 9:45. While Honeyman acknowledges the sprinkling of salt as a symbolic act denoting the Land's desolation, Fensham explicitly argues for a connection between salt and curse.

the restoration of Israel to its ideal setting'.[67] In other words, the wilderness represents a state of temporary incompletion and as such, it awaits its transformation into the idealised garden.[68] In addition to the physical distinctions between the garden and the wilderness, these two types of Land are further differentiated by their moral and spiritual nuances. As in Jer 2:1-9, the connection between wilderness and punishment is underscored by the absence of YHWH in the 'cursed' stanzas (vv 5-6). This absence is made all the more conspicuous by the repetition of יהוה (YHWH) and בָּטַח (to trust) in a chiasmus that introduces the stanzas concerning the Land of abundant fruit (vv 7-8):

v 7   (in YHWH) בַּיהוה (to trust) יִבְטַח אֲשֶׁר הַגֶּבֶר בָּרוּךְ

(to trust) מִבְטַחוֹ (in YHWH) יהוה וְהָיָה

If the wilderness is not an ultimate symbol or goal in itself, but rather a liminal place that presents a barrier to both God and garden, transformation of this space becomes a moral imperative. Without subjectivity or inherent worth, the wilderness is vulnerable to manipulation and exploitation in the name of transformation and betterment.[69]

One of the inherent difficulties in the representation of both wilderness and garden in Jer 17:5-8 is the way in which Land is assigned value on the basis of its conformity to anthropocentric norms and ideals. On the one hand, as Seddon notes, these norms and ideals are inescapable as the concept of wilderness is itself anthropocentric – a way of positioning the human individual in relation to the external environment.[70] On the other hand, such language limits alternative perceptions of wilderness as it is defined exclusively in terms of its relation to humanity. Understanding the wilderness as infertile, for example, refers to soil that does not grow desirable produce for *human* communities. To say that the desert is uninhabited (v 6) means that it is without *human* inhabitants. In the same way, when wilderness is seen as a parched and uninhabited place of fear and desolation, it is a *human*

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[67] S. Talmon, "The 'Desert Motif' in the Bible and in Qumran Literature," in *Biblical Motifs: Origins and Transformations*, ed. Alexander Altmann (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), 37. He goes on to suggest that 'disobedience and punishment' is of much greater impact on the formation of the wilderness motif in biblical literature than is the concept of the wilderness as the locale of divine revelation and YHWH's love for Israel (48).

[68] W. P. Brown, *The Ethos of the Cosmos: The Genesis of Moral Imagination* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 263, refers to the wilderness as 'terra reformanda', a Land poised for transformation. He suggests the Garden of Eden as a model of Land to which the wilderness must return.

[69] E. C. Beisner, *Where Garden Meets Wilderness: Evangelical Entry into the Environmental Debate* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 13, 127, argues that the task of humanity is to 'transform wilderness into garden', bringing the world from primordial to eschatological glory.

[70] G. Seddon, *Landprints: Reflections on Place and Landscape* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 16.

perception of this reality, which is then set against the perceived abundance and security of a garden that ministers to the desires of humanity. By moving beyond the binary opposites that determine meaning in this text, the wilderness can be perceived in an entirely new light: as the ultimate end, as home.

Free of the proverbial polarity that constrains understandings of wilderness, this Land becomes the habitat of the עַרְעָר (shrub) and, by extension, the dwelling place of additional, other-than-human communities. Although the wilderness is 'the home of the curse' to the anthropocentric identity,[71] it is simply a home to these other-than-human communities.[72] This slight shift in interpretive perspective sheds new light on the shrub, as it becomes a symbol of the strength and resilience of wilderness life. As a symbol, the shrub challenges the anthropocentric assumption that because the wilderness is unfit for human habitation it is utterly 'uninhabited'. Far from being withered and lifeless, this shrub *lives* (שָׁכַן lit. 'to dwell') in the wilderness (v 6).[73] Rather than reflecting the worst punishment imaginable, it could equally stand for the tenacity and capacity to thrive that is characteristic of all life that finds its home in this wilderness.[74] Indeed, as a place where other-than-human ecosystems flourish according to their own order, the wilderness can be seen as a place of wholeness and life.

With this shift in understanding comes an acknowledgement of the authority and autonomy of these wilderness communities and the Land that sustains them. They exhibit complete independence from humanity, maintaining themselves for immensely long periods of time and comfortably adapt to the climatic conditions outlined in vv 6 and 8.[75] While the anthropocentric eye may perceive the wilderness as a motionless monotony of endless 'waste', this Land is, in fact, the domain of 'other nations',[76] ecosystems that are nourished

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[71] J. Pedersen, *Israel: Its Life and Culture* (Copenhagen and London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 455.

[72] U. K. LeGuin, "Women/Wilderness," in *Healing the Wounds: The Promise of Ecofeminism*, ed. Judith Plant (Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1989), 45, comments that 'where I live as a woman is to some men a wilderness. But to me it is home'. Here she makes a connection between women and the wilderness as 'Others'. She reflects the way in which the 'master' works to deny the legitimacy of the subordinate experience by alienating that which is normal to this Other – like the notion of home. G. Gaard, "Ecofeminism and Wilderness," *Environmental Ethics* 19 (1997): 9, argues that wilderness will be experienced differently in relation to where each human's identity is located in terms of the dualistic pairs. She suggests that women and indigenous minorities, located on the subordinate side of the dualistic sets, will feel a closer affiliation with the wilderness.

[73] The CEB, NASB and NRSV versions translate שָׁכַן to mean 'live'.

[74] If the 'shrub' does in fact refer to the tamarisk as the LXX suggests, this plant actually *thrives* in the saline soil that is described as plaguing the wilderness.

[75] Leopold, *Sand County Almanac*, 274, notes with awe the way in which the component species of the wilderness are rarely lost, nor do they get out of hand.

[76] H. Beston, *The Outermost House* (New York: Ballantine, 1928), 20.

by their surroundings, thriving in the 'parched places' of human suffering. Despite conditions considered highly hostile by human standards, the shrub is testament to the Land's ongoing nurture of its other-than-human communities. Without denying the harsh realities of the competition for survival within these communities, wilderness-as-home affirms this Land as a place of familiarity and belonging for those who dwell there. Instead of being perceived as empty due to the *absence* of human inhabitants, the wilderness is understood as being full with the *presence* of long-evolving biotic communities and animal species that know this place as home.[77]

By acknowledging the self-determining patterns evident in this Land, the wilderness is able to be conceived as an autonomous 'Other' who is recognised and valued as independent. As Other, the temptation to insist on conformity to anthropocentric norms and ideals is resisted. A distinction is thus maintained between humanity and wilderness, but rather than a hyper-separated distinction between dualistic opposites, this separation is one of awe-felt respect for the sovereign Other that is the wilderness. As an autonomous agent capable of sustaining life and responding to external variants like drought (Jer 17:6), the Land demands the reader recognise its subjectivity and intrinsic value. This, in turn, shifts the perception of wilderness from that of object, and a means to an end, to that of subject, and an end in itself.[78] To deny the inherent goodness of the wilderness and imagine this Land as an instrument of punishment thus becomes an act of violation, of disregard for the legitimacy of its autonomy. Once identified as the domain of the Other, however, human subjects are able to move toward relationship with this complex and many-sided subject, entering the wilderness space as guests, and being privileged to new insights into another kind of home. This alternative perspective demands the humility of humanity. It insists upon respect for the Land as host and provides opportunities for humanity to be transformed by an encounter with the expansive unknown that is the wilderness.[79]

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[77] This point is touched upon briefly by V. Plumwood, "Wilderness Skepticism and Wilderness Dualism," in *The Great New Wilderness Debate: An Expansive Collection of Writings Defining Wilderness from John Muir to Gary Snyder*, eds. J. Baird Callicott and Michael P. Nelson (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1998), 681-682.

[78] Scriven, *Wrongness,* 151-153, suggests that it is in fact the ability to adapt and respond to external circumstances without reference to the well-being of other organisms that endows all living things with '*some good of their own*' (author's emphasis).

[79] M. Zimmerman, "The Blessing of Otherness: Wilderness and the Human Condition," in *The Wilderness Condition: Essays on Environment and Civilization*, ed. Max Oelschlaeger (Washington: Island Press, 1992), 269, describes this interaction as the 'blessing' of encountering 'otherness' in the wilderness.

At the risk of privileging an anthropocentric perspective, it is worth touching on the ways in which the wilderness is able to inform an ecological sensibility. Far from being an uninhabited chaotic void that 'offers' nothing to humanity, this Land, by its very nature, enables opportunities for an alternative anthropology – a different way of locating the human self in relation to the surrounding environment. As a reality that is in no way conditioned by human concerns, the wilderness is a reminder that the Land's nourishment is not exclusive to human beings; rather, humanity belongs to a vast, encompassing order that is created and sustained by this Other. Such knowledge diminishes the human sense of self-importance and destabilises the long-held understanding of humanity as being at the centre of the universe.[80] In what David Jasper describes as a 'decentring of being',[81] the wilderness requires a redrawing of the parameters of humanity's self-identification to acknowledge the intrinsic worth and autonomy of the Land regardless of its instrumental value. From this decentred location, humans are better able to envision a new relationship with this Land and its other-than-human inhabitants, which would, as David Tacey suggests, mean recognising and respecting the uncertainty, confusion and difference of the wilderness.[82] This alternative orientation does not seek to negate or transcend the fearful response of humanity to wilderness; rather, this response is set in a broader conceptual context and is seen as just that: a *human* response. What is negated, however, is the malevolence understood as being inherent in this space and the consequent imperative for redemption through transformation.

Like the text of Jer 17:5-8 itself then, this reading offers two distinct images of Land, although in this analysis, both images pertain to the wilderness. In taking the Jeremianic text at face value, the first interpretation analyzes these verses as a sapiential psalm, which depends for its rhetorical force on the unfavourable comparison of the wilderness to the Land of fruit and fertility. The symbolic representation of the wilderness here depicts this Land as an instrument of judgment, a cursed place of punishment and death, unsuitable for divine and human beings alike. In the negative portrayal of this Land, the text implicitly affirms a symbolic reality in which the transformational return of wilderness to fertile garden is desirable. By reading these same verses from an ecological perspective, however, an alternative depiction emerges of wilderness as a rich and complex source of life that is capable of sustaining other-than-human communities. This interpretation argues that the

[80] B. C. Lane, "Fierce Landscapes and the Indifference of God," *Christian Century* 106, no. 29 (1989): 907-910, argues that wilderness spaces remind humanity of the smallness of self and the majesty of Being.
[81] D. Jasper, *The Sacred Desert: Religion, Literature, Art and Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 143.
[82] D. J. Tacey, *Edge of the Sacred: Transformation in Australia* (North Blackburn: Harper Collins, 1995), 119.

negative representation of wilderness is a projection of human fears and vulnerabilities, which expose the inherent anthropocentrism of the Jeremianic text. In retrieving the intrinsic value of the wilderness, this Land becomes a symbol of autonomy and independence where other-than-human communities are able to flourish free of human interference. This reading of the text thus affirms a symbolic reality where humanity is no longer at the centre of all meaningful existence, and where the Land has worth irrespective of its value to human or divine endeavour. Bearing these readings in mind, my investigation turns to focus on the binary opposite of wilderness: the image of Land as garden as seen in Jer 31:10-14.

3.3 LAND AS BLESSING: JEREMIAH 31:10-14

In Jer 1:10, the prophet is given a two-fold task to 'pluck up and pull down' and to 'build and to plant'.[83] While the negative command dominates the book of Jeremiah, the presence of a counter-theme depicting future hope is scattered throughout the book in general,[84] and governs chapters 30-33 in particular. Offering what Becking describes as a 'dissonant voice of hope',[85] the lyrical language of these chapters combines hope and judgment with lament and promise of restoration, providing a welcome interruption to the despair that characterises the surrounding tone of suffering. If the Land is presented as reflecting this mode of despair through the image of the wilderness, then, as in 2:7, the prophet's vision of hope is represented by the image of Land as fertile garden. This idealised representation is projected in time and space as a future event of YHWH's reconciliation with Israel. Nowhere is this more clearly illustrated than in 31:10-14.[86]

Situated amidst an anthology of poetry and prose pieces that comprise Jeremiah 30-33, 31:10-14 is an oracle of hope that lies at the poetic core of these chapters. Although this unit is often understood to include vv 7-9,[87] delineation markings in the text suggest that vv 10-14

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[83] See also Jer 31:28.
[84] Jer 3:14-18; 12:14-17; 16:14-15; 17:24-26; 22:2-4; 23:5-6, 7-8; 24:4-7; 29:10-14; 42:7-12.
[85] B. Becking, *Between Fear and Freedom: Essays on the Interpretation of Jeremiah 30-31* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 3. This positive tone has earned these chapters the more common titles of 'The Book of Restoration', 'The Book of Comfort', or 'The Book of Consolation'.
[86] While Jer 2:7 uses the word כַּרְמֶל (fertile field) to describe this Land in contrast to גַּן (garden), which is employed here in 31:12, the image as a whole is the same. It is also important to note that the image of Land as garden occurs with much less frequency than its wilderness opposite. Indeed, גַּן appears in only two other places in Jeremiah, and both of these refer to 'the king's garden' (39:4; 52:7). This seems to reflect the relative infrequency of the prophet's message of hope compared to the judgments of doom and destruction. While Jer 31:10-14 illustrates the garden most clearly, the image is also hinted at in 17:7-8; 31:2-6; 32:36-41, 42-44; 33:6-11, 12-16.
[87] See Brueggemann, *Exile and Homecoming*, 284; W. McKane, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah: Commentary on Jeremiah, 26-52* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 787-795; and Stulman, *Jeremiah*, 267.

should be treated alone. These verses are delimited by two *setumah*, which appear in the text before v 10 and after v 14. Reiterating this demarcation is a call to 'hear the word of YHWH' in v 10, which is balanced by a concluding messenger formula in v 14. Like its surrounding literary context, this oracle envisions a future point of restoration and is centred around the themes of YHWH's goodness and return to the Land. Dividing easily into nine bicola, the unit consists of three stanzas each made up of three bicola:

Stanza I	v 10	*two bicola*
	v 11	*one bicolon*
Stanza II	v 12	*three bicola*
Stanza III	v 13	*two bicola*
	v 14	*one bicolon.*[88]

Sitting at the heart of Jer 31:10-14, the second stanza brings together the themes of restoration in a climax that articulates YHWH's goodness in terms of the Land's fertility. It is around this verse that my investigation will centre.

As a symbol of divine goodness, Land as garden becomes the dominant image in this unit, carrying with it associated notions of new life, security, abundance and blessing. The first reference to the profusion of this garden is in the second bicolon of v 12, where the text enumerates a wealth of agricultural supplies and pastoral animals. A sense of plenty is achieved in the repetition of עַל (over), which appears four times before each new feature of the Land's productivity:

v 12a		(… over the goodness of YHWH)
v 12b	עַל־דָּגָן	over the grain
	וְעַל־תִּירֹשׁ	and over the new wine
	וְעַל־יִצְהָר	and over the (olive) oil
	וְעַל־בְּנֵי־צֹאן וּבָקָר	and over the young sheep and cattle

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[88] W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 2: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapters 26-52* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 153, breaks this unit into eight bicola by deleting v 12b as a 'prosaic' and 'unauthentic' gloss. While I recognize the close connections between this verse and passages such as Is 58:11 and Hos 2:10, 24 [Eng 2:8, 22], the synchronic nature of this analysis necessitates its inclusion.

Aside from being three of the principle food crops of Palestine,[89] this triad of grain, wine and oil reflects a variety of Land types, the fertile conditions of which are fundamental to the yield of such products. Likewise, the expansion of both flock and herd that is implied in the youthfulness of these animals, demands a Land with sufficient access to water and fresh vegetation to cultivate pasture for their survival.[90]

Building upon this notion of the fertile Land, the image of the garden becomes explicit in the third bicolon of v 12 in which the lives (נֶפֶשׁ) of YHWH's people are described as being like a watered garden (כְּגַן רָוֶה) in want of nothing. Again, a sense of plenty is evoked in the adjective רָוֶה, which literally translates as 'saturated' (Jer 31:14, 25) and implies a well-watered soil of exceptional quality. Importantly, this association between garden and water is not uncommon,[91] and typically the connection refers specifically to an irrigated field as opposed to any other type of Land watered by rain.[92] While the Land provides richly, this association with irrigation systems suggests that it must be worked extensively to yield such results. But yield it will, as is evidenced in v 14, where the people receive their fill.

The connection between the Land's abundance in v 12 and the people's satisfaction in v 14 is seen in the inversion of keywords:

Stanza II

v 12   נַפְשָׁם … רָוֶה …   *their lives… saturated…*

Stanza III

v 14   …וְרִוֵּיתִי נֶפֶשׁ   *and I will saturate their lives*

Where the Land was saturated with water, the priests are now saturated with דֶּשֶׁן (fat). Closely linked to agricultural and pastoral produce, דֶּשֶׁן is a term that may be used of either olive oil or animal fat,[93] and in each case it promises prosperity and excess. The parallel between this term and שָׂבַע (to satisfy) in the final hemistich completes the image of the bountifully fertile garden as both priests and people are able to eat their fill in contentment. As a well-watered Land where human individuals flourish and animals thrive, the garden of

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[89] Dt 7:13; 11:14; 12:17; 14:23; 18:4; 28:51.
[90] E. Levine, "The Land of Milk and Honey," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 87 (2000): 44-45, argues that the grazing of animals may have occurred on Land that was uncultivated. Regardless of this suggestion, however, the Land's fertility was still necessary to produce the lush vegetation of wildflowers and thickets he insists were necessary for animal husbandry.
[91] Sg 4:15; Is 58:11.
[92] Num 24:6; Dt 11:10.
[93] Jgs 9:9; Lv 4:12.

31:10-14 achieves Eden-like status and confirms the aspirational ideal for Land outlined in 2:6-7. The definitive ideal for Land, this image of garden is a static or fixed image, making it the quintessential opposite to its negative counterpart, the wilderness.

Of interest to the present discussion is the context in which this ideal is articulated and the way it contributes to the hierarchical separation between garden and wilderness. A movement can be detected within the broader textual unit of Jer 31:10-14, as images that mirror the progression from exile to return juxtapose a sense of grief with the promise of a plentiful future.[94] This contrast is first identified in the second bicolon of stanza one (v 10b), where the prophet claims that the זָרָה (scattered) exiles of Israel will be קָבַץ (gathered) to YHWH. In the following bicolon (v 11), the paralleled terms פָּדָה (ransom) and גָּאַל (redeem) reinforce this movement, as the exiles are depicted as being released from the 'strong hands' of their captors and finding liberation in YHWH. A similar development can be identified in the third stanza as YHWH promises to turn the exiles' אָבַל (mourning) into שָׂשׂוֹן (joy),[95] and their יָגוֹן (sorrow) into שָׂמַח (gladness). At first glance, overt references to such movement are missing from the second stanza. Also noticeably absent are those aspects of wilderness that have characterised Land-based images in the text thus far. However, the movement from negative image to positive in the adjacent stanzas suggests that the lush garden of v 12 be read against an implied background of comparative deprivation. Where once the Land was desert-like (2:6; 50:12; 51:43), here the Land is drenched with water. Where the animals languished without herbage in a barren Land (14:5-6), here there is enough vegetation for expanding flocks. Where farmers watched their crops wither because of the dry and cracked Earth (14:4), here the Land provides a variety of agricultural goods. The wild animals that menaced the Land (12:9; 15:3; 16:4; 19:7; 50:39) are now domestic herds, and the lack of human inhabitants (2:6; 4:29; 9:10, 12; 48:33; 49:18; 50:3, 40; 51:43) is replaced by the מָחוֹל (dancing) of בְּתוּלָה (young women), בָּחוּר (young men) and the זָקֵן (elderly). Behind this immediate image of the garden, then, is a tacit comparison to the wilderness, and the broader movement from negative to positive is maintained in this stanza as the wilderness is transformed into that which is most conducive to human comfort: the garden.[96]

As a triumph over the wilderness, the physical transformation of the Land that runs parallel to the movement from exile to return taps into a broader symbolic reality of human interests in

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[94] Stulman, *Jeremiah*, 260, suggests that this movement is characteristic of Jeremiah 30-33 as a whole.
[95] This is a reversal of Jer 8:18. See also Lam 5:15.
[96] The movement from wilderness to garden is seen explicitly in Jer 33:10-12.

power and profit. Echoing the shift from chaos to order seen in the gathering of the scattered Israelites (v 10b), the carefully cultivated garden is a reflection of order that stands in contrast to the uncontrollable disorder of the wilderness. As the wilderness is an outward sign of the chaos and helplessness that governs the people of YHWH, so the order associated with the garden signals this people's pending restoration through having the power to control their surroundings once more. The hope that is offered in the image of the garden, then, is one of self-determination, of having the authority to make decisions and impose one's will. The image of the garden represents a sense of human control, freedom and victory. It creates an impression of boundaries that ensure the encroaching darkness of the wilderness – both physical and metaphorical – is kept at bay. The garden is thus the peak of terrestrial existence and the standard in relation to which all other types of Land are evaluated. Beyond the nourishing benefits of an ability to yield produce, the power to manipulate and exploit the Land points to the potential for a flourishing economy through trade and, from here, the possibility of political dominance and influence in an international setting.[97] The garden thus becomes a marketable commodity, making it an object that is able to be purchased and consumed. In essence, the image of the garden operates within a powerful symbolic reality to affirm the position of humanity on the superior side of the dualistic hierarchies. It represents the pinnacle of human achievement in dominating and asserting power *over* those ever-present subordinate entities, which constantly threaten chaos.

If any thought is given to crediting the Land with a role in this overwhelming abundance, it is instantly dismissed as the text makes clear that although humans command physical authority in this garden, its fertility is derived from YHWH. A causal relationship between YHWH and the abundance of resources is established in the first bicolon of the second stanza, immediately preceding the enumeration of these resources:

וְנָהֲרוּ אֶל־טוּב יהוה   *and they shall be radiant over YHWH's goodness* (v 12)

The bumper crop and growing herds stem directly from the goodness of YHWH whose blessing is manifest in the Land's fertility. Not only is YHWH present in the garden, but also this deity assists human interests by actively engaging in its nurture and cultivation. YHWH's promise to gather and redeem, to give comfort, joy and gladness is expressed through the presence of the garden. That this garden is received as a source of blessing, is seen in the

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[97] P. J. King, *Jeremiah: An Archaeological Companion* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 145, notes also that aside from being a food staple and a sacrificial offering, grain was also exported, especially to northern locations like Tyre.

delighted response of YHWH's people who רָנַן (sing aloud) and נָהַר (are radiant), who שָׂמַח (rejoice) and מָחוֹל (dance) in response to such fertility. By becoming the articulation of national restoration and redemptive fulfilment, the symbol of the garden is enlarged to include YHWH's power of life over death, blessing over curse and hope over despair.

Valued simply in terms of what it might provide for the (human/divine) master, the experience of the garden itself is negated, leaving only the heavy trace of the Land's presence in the text. The Land appears as a voiceless instrument that functions not only to serve the human species, but also to bolster the authority of this species over and against the wilderness and all that it symbolises. In this way, the garden is employed as a tool of imperial power and is used as an accomplice in the subjugation of subordinate others.[98] By serving these ends, the garden refuses the presence of those wilderness aspects that are so threatening to the master. Reinforcing this instrumentalism is the backgrounding of the Land as the scene or context for YHWH's restoration of Israel. As a tool in the divine/human drama, the Land is perceived as being little more than a limitless provider without needs of its own.[99] Without an obvious dissenting perspective, the Land seems to have internalised the anthropocentric value system of humanity who work resolutely to increase the orderliness of their surroundings, deeming that anything short of the idealised garden is defective and in need of transformation. From an ecological perspective, then, this text is highly problematic in its anthropocentric bias, its suppression of inferior others, and its denial of any expression on the part of the Land itself. Questions must thus be asked as to whether it is even possible to postulate about the Land's experience in this passage.

Even if the voice of the Land is inaudible in the immediate text, alternative interpretive perspectives that break free of this anthropocentric grasp are certainly possible by positioning the Land at the centre of the reading and exploring its relational encounters from this vantage point. Challenging the notion of Land as the stage upon which the divine/human drama is carried out, this reading suggests instead that the Land is a crucial character in the narrative of redemption depicted in these verses. Not only is this character the means by which YHWH's restoration is made manifest, but it is also the means by which the people experience redemption. The Land's narrative significance here thus allows for the possibility

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[98] Seddon, *Landprints*, 181, suggests that as a tool of imperial power, the garden remains one of the strongest symbols of colonization and the slowest to loosen its hold.

[99] Plumwood, *Feminism*, 21, identifies this backgrounding as one of the most common forms of denying both women and the Land. She suggests that the understanding of these subjects as inexhaustible providers is deeply embedded in the rationality of economic systems that continue into the present age.

of understanding this figure as being uniquely sacred by virtue of its capacity for revelation. The Land is an agent of restoration. As an agent, the Land becomes a subject – a co-actor alongside God – and instantly gains prominence within the text. This enables a perception of Land as a character operating within the narrative foreground, whose agency is recast in the sphere of recognised achievement and upheld as such. Although it is YHWH who initiates reconciliation with Israel, it is the Land alone who is able to bring this about and repair the human/divine relationship.

As an agent of restoration, the garden reveals the centrality of Land in defining what it means to be the reconciled people of God. Without Land, human identity is inconceivable. By acknowledging human indebtedness to the Land, a shift in perception occurs, enabling readers to view both Land and people in a new light. Far from dismissing the Land as an object which functions to produce consumable goods without limit, the Land is recognised as a subject whose life-giving activity lies at the heart of what it means to be human. This recognition, in turn, shapes the perception of human comportment towards Land. Rather than being an act of domination and exploitation, human cultivation of the Land becomes an act of gratitude and service to that which they are so indebted.[100]

While, on the surface, this reading may seem to perpetuate an anthropocentric view of Land, the emphasis here is on the Land's agency and subjectivity. It is an attempt to redefine this character on its own terms as an entity with boundaries and limits, which in turn determines conditions of encounter and establishes levels of respect. It is a reading that seeks to temper human ideas of limitless consumption of the Land's resources and urges a sense of gentleness and constraint as humans interact with the Land. Thus, the radical exclusion that hierarchically separated subject from object – and set humanity over and against the Land – loses validity in this alternative interpretation of these verses. In the image of the garden, eco-critical readers are invited to consider Land as an autonomous Other with its own distinct narrative. And it is a narrative that is intricately connected to the narrative of God and the narrative of humanity.[101]

More difficult to deal with from an ecological perspective is the way in which the garden is used as a tool of imperial power, aiding the oppression of the wilderness and its other-than-

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[100] Hiebert, *The Yahwist's Landscape*, 66, notes that the verb עָבַד, translates to mean 'to serve' as well as 'cultivate' (cf. Gn 2:5, 15; 3:23; 4:12). Although this term is not used in Jer 31:10-14, the relationship between Land and humanity in Genesis resonates with this alternative reading.

[101] The Land's interconnectedness is explored in greater depth in §5.2 and §5.3.

human inhabitants. Respect for the Land as garden is inherently exclusionary as this respect does not extend to include all kinds of Land, and thus the dualistic opposition between the idealised garden and the deficient wilderness is maintained.[102] In spite of retrieving alternative understandings of both these types of Land, the final challenge here must be to confront the hyperseparation between the garden and wilderness whose respective values have already been demonstrated as being based primarily on their instrumental potential to humanity. Tempting as it may be, it is inadequate to simply reverse the value judgments associated with these binary opposites, revering and romanticising the autonomous freedom of the untouched wilderness and setting this image of Land against the domesticated and exploited garden.[103] As well as being a perversion of the Jeremianic text, such a reversal would also demand the continuation of distortive polarities and would do little more than create equally reductive solutions. Following Val Plumwood's suggestions for reconfiguring binary frameworks, then, I suggest it is feasible to reject hierarchically oppositional understandings of garden and wilderness that have characterised these images of Land for so long.[104]

Without conflating these images of Land and making them indistinguishable from each other, it is possible to maintain a distinction between garden and wilderness while at the same time asserting and reclaiming a level of continuity between them. Instead of identification based solely on difference, this continuity would highlight the similarities between garden and wilderness such as subjectivity, autonomy, agency, intrinsic worth, otherness, and their ability to sustain a variety of ecosystems. By extending to the wilderness the same respect that is typically restricted to the garden, a space is created in the symbolic reality of the hegemonic social imaginary to allow for the presence of both garden and wilderness, where the existence of one does not come at the expense of the other.

Despite the hierarchical separation between wilderness and garden that is found in the biblical text and its history of interpretation, it is thus possible to read these representations in

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[102] Plumwood, "Wilderness Skepticism," 671, makes a similar point in relation to women saying, 'if [it is] only sacred virgins [who] are revered as truly women, those women we encounter in more profane contexts do not deserve our respect'.

[103] This dualistic reversal seems to characterise a number of writings about the wilderness that have emerged out of the late twentieth century. See, for example, M. Oelschlaeger, *The Idea of Wilderness: Prehistory to the Age of Ecology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991); and J. B. Callicott, and M. P. Nelson, eds., *The Great New Wilderness Debate: An Expansive Collection of Writings Defining Wilderness from John Muir to Gary Snyder* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998).

[104] Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, 134-135; "Wilderness Skepticism and Wilderness Dualism," 672.

a way that maintains their unique distinctions while affirming the inherent value of each type of Land. The question remains, however, as to the extent to which this imagery has shaped human attitudes and behaviour towards Land in reality. In order to assess the relationship between these representations and more contemporary perceptions of Land, I turn to examine the portrayal of wilderness and garden in a selection of poems from Aotearoa New Zealand.

3.4 Making Connections

From an analysis of the Jeremianic representations of garden and wilderness, my investigation shifts to ascertain the extent to which such images have been retained and work to inform understandings of Land in Aotearoa New Zealand. Recognising, as Berry does, that every written text draws upon older works more or less consciously,[105] this intertextual analysis attempts to identify possible points of connection between these ancient Hebraic images and attitudes towards Land in the contemporary context. In this, I begin by focussing on literature that has emerged out of New Zealand's colonial era. By engaging with poetry from this context, I seek to listen closely for the evocation of Jeremianic memories of garden and wilderness, and will touch upon the ways in which this rhetoric has shaped the environmental histories of this country.

A vast majority of the references to garden and wilderness found in New Zealand literature appear in the writings of early European settler communities, which began the process of colonisation from the mid-nineteenth century. The appearance of these references at this time is unsurprising on two levels. Firstly, prior to European contact – and indeed to this day – there was no equivalent word for or concept of 'wilderness' in Māori cultures.[106] Secondly, the emergence of these biblically-grounded images of Land coincides with a period of New Zealand history marked by a strong, Christian missionary presence, and an increasing number of British settlers who, if not practising Christians, were well-versed in biblical teaching by virtue of their heritage. As these groups sought to articulate their encounters with this new Land, it is not unexpected that they did so by employing the value-laden categories of their ancient scriptures. One such 'settler' was William Pember Reeves (1857-1932),[107] whose

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[105] W. Berry, "The Responsibility of the Poet," in *What Are People For? Essays by Wendell Berry*, ed. Wendell Berry (London: Rider Books, 1990), 89.

[106] J. Patterson, *People of the Land: A Pacific Philosophy* (Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 2000), 71, argues that the dichotomy between Land and humanity that is presupposed in notions of wilderness makes little sense to Māori, who understand this relationship as one of interconnectedness.

[107] Reeves' parents were settlers, migrating to Canterbury in 1857, and he was born in Lyttelton, three weeks after their arrival.

poetry is littered with images of the New Zealand landscape as well as numerous references to a range of biblical texts.[108] Of interest to my investigation is his extensive poem 'A Colonist in His Garden',[109] a conversation in the form of a letter between an Englishman and his friend whom he is urging to return home from the young colony of New Zealand: 'Old Friend, ere darkness falls, turn back / To England, life and art' (line 5). Allusions to the garden and wilderness begin to appear as contrasts are drawn between the English 'homeland' and its untamed colony, and the colonist speaker defends claims that New Zealand lacks the sophistication of art, music, history and culture. These references become explicit, however, in the description of the Land as 'desert' (lines 57, 64), 'wilderness' (line 65) and full of 'drought' (line 59), signalling the possibility of allusions to the aforementioned Jeremianic material, and demanding further exploration into the intertextual matrix of the work.

Although these primary markers point to the Bible generally, there is not enough evidence in the signposts alone to isolate Jeremiah as the evoked text. Confirming the author's knowledge of and accessibility to biblical material is the fact that there are numerous examples of explicit biblical allusions in other poems by Reeves,[110] and this lends preliminary support to an intertextual connection. At times, however, it is difficult to separate the notions of wilderness in the final form of the Bible from the millennia of Christian thought that has built upon these ancient ideas and added new depth to their meanings.[111] Despite the layers of development I agree with Innes,[112] Leal,[113] and Patterson,[114] who argue that regardless of the embellishing stratum of Christian meaning, the colonial attitudes towards wilderness have their underlying roots in biblical – particularly Old Testament –

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[108] In the poem 'New Zealand', Reeves alludes to Gn 1:1 and 2:7 as he describes the creation of this Land: 'God girt her about with the surges, / And winds of the masterless deep…' and from this deep God 'filled from the life of their motion / Her nostrils with breath of the sea'. W. P. Reeves, "New Zealand," in *The Passing of the Forest and Other Verse* (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 2000), 30-31.

[109] W. P. Reeves, "A Colonist in His Garden," in *The Passing of the Forest and Other Verse* (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 2000), 14-18. For reasons of copyright I am unable to include the text of this poem in its entirety. It is, however, able to be viewed online. See W. P. Reeves, "A Colonist in His Garden," accessed September 12, 2014, http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&d=MEX19041022.2.54.2.

[110] Refer to note 108.

[111] Layers of meaning around wilderness developed particularly out of the synoptic accounts of Jesus' time in the wilderness (Mk 1:12-13; Mt 4:1; Lk 4:1). Through these narratives the wilderness came to stand for temptation, spiritual deprivation, evil, and times of trial. This is reflected in Bunyan's classic *The Pilgrim's Progress*, which opens with the phrase 'the wilderness of this world', a place that the Christian must escape to reach the Celestial City. J. Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress from This World to That Which Is to Come* (New York: Lane & Tippett, 1845), 1.

[112] K. Innes, "Aspects of Wilderness," *Theology* 110, no. 854 (2007): 110-17.

[113] Leal, *Wilderness in the Bible*, 36.

[114] Patterson, *People of the Land*, 78.

imagery such as that found in Jeremiah. A second reading of 'A Colonist in His Garden',
however, alerts the reader to a variety of additional signals that resonate more specifically
with the Jeremianic material. Not only is the wilderness designated negatively as hostile,
without inhabitant (lines 81, 82), and as a 'silent waste' (line 76), but it is also contrasted
with the favourable garden (lines 24, 68, 100) with its orchards (line 26), culture (line 6) and
cultivation (line 103-8). Thus, while the immediate evidence is not strong enough to claim
unequivocally that Reeves' images allude directly to Jeremiah anymore than to, say, Isaiah or
Hosea,[115] the intertextual imagery is such that it is plausible to claim that if Jeremiah is not
the evoked text, it is *an* evoked text. It is on this basis that my investigation proceeds.

Returning to examine the initial allusional markers in the tenth and eleventh stanzas, the
reader is able to detect an intertextual pattern that echoes and builds upon those elements of
wilderness that were identified in Jeremiah. By encountering the terms 'desert', 'drought' and
'wilderness' in Reeves' poem, a parallel is evoked between the New Zealand landscape and
the wilderness described in the ancient Jeremianic texts. Through the use of such terminology
the poem retains an underlying notion of wilderness as a place of hostility, desolation and
darkness. It is the attitude of humanity towards this wilderness, however, that is transposed
from a position of fear in Jeremiah, to one of aggression in this text. Indeed, the negativity of
the wilderness seems to be the only justification for this Land's violent transformation.[116]
Reeves presents the colonists as the subjects of the violent imagery, engaged in a battle with
the Land to 'Fight Nature for a home' (line 60). Developing this war-like imagery further,
Reeves establishes a dichotomy between conqueror and conquered, as the human agents are
'matched against the desert's power' (line 64), bravely fighting to subdue the untamed Land
and bring it under human dominion (lines 59-61).[117] Ironically, it is this very wilderness that
contains the sought-after garden paradise, a notion that is hinted at in Jeremiah 31:10-14.
Here, however, the garden must literally be wrestled (line 62) from the desert, as the colonists

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[115] Similar imagery can be found in Isaiah, Hosea and Joel, where the wilderness is described as deserted (Is 27:10) and desolate (Is 64:10; Hos 2:3; Jl 2:22; 3:19), and portrayed as the negative opposite to the fertile land (Is 32:15; 35:1; 51:3; Hos 9:10). What is unique to Jeremiah, however, is the sheer quantity of such imagery and the consistency of its repetition.

[116] Reeves' poem is not alone in this attitude toward the wilderness. Metaphors of battle frequently occur in describing the relationship between humanity and wilderness. In her 1936 poem, 'By Burke's Pass', for example, Ursula Bethell depicts a farmer's 'assault' on 'man's antagonist' (the Land) and describes his English trees as his 'trophies' of war. U. Bethell, "By Burke's Pass," in *Countless Signs: The New Zealand Landscape in Literature: An Anthology*, ed. Trudie McNaughton (Auckland: Reed Methuen, 1986), 194.

[117] W. P. Reeves, "The Colonists" in *The Passing of the Forest and Other Verse* (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 2000), 43, writes of 'Our conquest of the wilderness / Our march to plant our soil…' In the later half of the twentieth century, J. E. Weir, "High-Country Men," in *The Magpies Said: Stories and Poems from New Zealand*, ed. Dorothy Butler (Harmondsworth: Kestrel Books, 1980), 30, writes of settlers to New Zealand, 'They carved roads in the wilderness, / Gave the land a name…'

'make the wilderness to flower' (line 65) by carving out of the Land the artefact called civilisation.[118] Despite this intertextual reformulation, then, Reeves' poem seems shot through with the familiar dualisms of Jeremiah, which set the human (colonial) master against the subordinate Land, and the fertile garden in opposition to the deficient wilderness. Like the attitudes encountered in the Jeremianic passages, an anthropocentric perspective dominates this text, objectifying the Land and valuing it only according to its instrumental potential as a tool for the advancement of the colonial agenda.

Echoes of the Jeremianic wilderness are not restricted to these initial allusions alone, however. In his description of New Zealand's Land as 'Wide, empty plains where shadows pass' (line 82), Reeves' work touches upon the chaos, unfamiliarity and isolation identified as characterising the wilderness of Jeremiah. An intertextual reverberation is immediately audible in this phrase, as the 'passing shadows' recall the wilderness as a 'shadow of death' in the KJV translation of Jer 2:6.[119] Like the Jeremianic text, this poem appears to associate the wilderness with distress and danger primarily on the basis of human absence and its existence outside the domain of civilized society. Once again, the well-established metaphorical dualism, setting light against darkness, enters the text. As in Jer 2:6, Reeves' poem draws a parallel between the Land and the moral equivalent of this shadowy darkness: evil. The darkness of the wilderness stands once more against implied perceptions of 'goodness' and light. Indeed, the apparent absence of God in the poem's depiction of wilderness reinforces this perception by hinting at divine displeasure, which recalls the connection between desert and curse in Jer 17:5-8.[120] Thus, the 'fight' against the wilderness becomes a moral imperative as this Land represents the chaos of that which exists beyond the

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[118] Reeves' poem anticipates the observations of R. E. Whitson, "Wilderness and Paradise: Symbols of American Religious Experience," *Religion and Intellectual Life* 5, no. 1 (1987): 8, who sees the wilderness as the raw material out of which paradise is sculpted.

[119] As noted in §3.1.2, recent translations of צַלְמָוֶת, understand the term to mean 'deep darkness'. Older translations such as the KJV, however, render this word as 'shadow of death'. Given that the KJV translation of the Bible was the only translation available to nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Christians in New Zealand, it is reasonable to assert a connection between Reeves' work and this older rendering.

[120] It is not uncommon to find references in colonial writings before 1850 that reflect a connection between God's curse and the wilderness. Referring, for example, to the absence of flowers in the New Zealand 'wilderness', S. Matthew claimed, 'I cannot but fancy it accursed, for flowers appear to me as the symbols and signs of the beneficence of the Deity'. Writing in 1840, William Barrett Marshall similarly wrote, 'when… any place is left desolate by man, it becomes… a waste… no longer a well-watered garden, but a wild and weary wilderness… The Christian spectator will… remember… that the barrenness by which he is surrounded is the curse laid by a merciful but holy God…' Quoted in P. Shepard, *English Reaction to the New Zealand Landscape Before 1850* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1969), 21, 24.

realm of God and Christendom. The colonial task, therefore, involves conquering both the physical and metaphorical darkness.[121]

Closely associated with the dark hostility of the shadowed Land is the depiction of wilderness as a place without inhabitant.[122] Evoking both the repetition and the sentiment of the Jeremianic texts which insist that no one dwells in or passes through the wilderness (Jer 2:6; 9:9 [10], 11 [12]; 51:43), Reeves claims that the islands of New Zealand are 'Wide, empty plains' (line 82), as 'empty as their deep' (line 10), and that they comprise 'a land without a past' (lines 13, 79), without 'man, nor beast, nor tree' (line 81), where 'none before have stood' (line 58). Like Jeremiah, then, Reeves presents a Land characterised by an absence of human occupation, although such emptiness extends here to imply a Land preserved for colonial development. By depicting the wilderness in this way, however, both the poem and its Jeremianic memories reject the existence of an indigenous human population as well as any other-than-human ecosystems in this Land. Reeves' denial of these communities thus shifts his depiction from a geographical description of an agriculturally unexploited region to an ethnocentric and anthropocentric ontological assertion that the wilderness lacks 'civilised' communities and their agricultural expertise.

Set in opposition to the civilisation desired by the colonists, the desolate wilderness is depicted as standing in benign anticipation, patiently awaiting the imprint of the European master. Consistently defined in terms of characteristics lacking, the New Zealand Land appears here as a space waiting to receive – a canvas on which 'we rough architects of State… paint the hues of life' (lines 74, 78). Yet another intertextual parallel is drawn as the reader recalls the Jeremianic connection between the unsown Land and the young bride (Jer 2:2-3). Both Land and woman are depicted as dutifully awaiting 'fulfilment' through conception by their (male) husband/owner in order that they might satisfy patriarchal/anthropocentric expectations and produce abundantly.[123] As in 31:12, Reeves'

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[121] A connection between the physical darkness and the metaphorical darkness is reflected in the words of the Wesleyan missionary Cort Schnackenberg who, in 1844, advised Māori '… if you find your mind [or] your heart to be a wilderness, cultivate it in the same manner as you do your fields, cut down the bush… spare no sin'. Quoted in G. Park, "After the Scene, After the Fever," in *Theatre Country: Essays on Landscape and Whenua*, ed. Geoff Park (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2006), 107.

[122] Descriptions of the New Zealand Land by early settlers present it as a desolate and barren place. Thomas Chapman, for example, bemoans that 'it has many, many times been grief to mind to see thousands of acres of land lying waste and miles of country desolate and entirely uninhabited'. Quoted in Shepard, *English Reaction*, 23.

[123] A contrast between the unsown wilderness and the fertile garden is drawn by the Rev. Richard Taylor in 1849 as he writes, 'This morning I walked over to Mr Chapman's garden. The ground was literally strewed with fallen apples. I took my natives to see them… [and] bid them compare that fruitful garden with the fruitless

Land is presented as a passive vessel waiting to be transformed by the products of (masculine) human labour and cultivation.[124] This now-familiar concept of the feminised, empty wilderness confirms the presence of the dualistic thought that was identified as characterising images of Land throughout Jeremiah. In the colonial context of this poem, however, it is not only the wilderness that is posited on the subordinate side of the dualistic hierarchies. The interconnected web of inferior Others extends here to include indigenous communities, conspicuous in this work by their absence but implicitly subsumed under the generic motif of the passive receivers of colonial enlightenment. Thus, the wilderness and the inferior Others it embodies exist in a temporary state, anticipating the 'betterment' of anthropocentric transformation and colonial 'rescue'. As well as echoing the Jeremianic imagery, then, Reeves' allusions reflect an ideological intertext with Jeremiah in that all subordinate Others are perceived in relation to their instrumental use to the (male, European) master. It is an ideology that would quickly make its way into the emerging social imaginary of colonial New Zealand and would have extensive repercussions for both the Land and its indigenous Māori inhabitants.

Set in antithetical parallel to this unruly New Zealand wilderness is the carefully cultivated garden of the English homeland. In trying to coax his colonist friend home, the Englishman's voice in stanza four describes the culture and sophistication of England in terms of a domestic landscape that exists purely for the pleasure of its British inhabitants: 'I'll draw you home. Lo! As I write / A flash – a swallow's arrow-flight! / O'erhead the skylark's wings… / Scents of the garden brings' (lines 19-21, 24). A romanticised notion of the English garden is portrayed as the poem goes on to describe the orchard wall – and by extension the orchard – that 'Glows in the sunlight long' (line 27) in the 'sedater clime' (line 33) of the 'old, green land' (line 40). If the description of the New Zealand wilderness echoes the Jeremianic imagery, then the same appears to be true for this English garden. Like the fertile field of Jer 2:7, this garden is presented as a place of amusement, gratification, safety and order, a place valued for its aesthetic pleasure and rich produce. Such qualities identify the garden with human concerns, particularly with the culture and sophistication of 'England, life and art' (line 6). The refinement of the garden is set in stark opposition to the 'bold aggressive New'

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wilderness we had passed over, that they might see what civilisation could effect…' Quoted in Shepard, *English Reaction*, 31.

[124] Similar sentiments are expressed in the poems of Thomas Bracken, particularly 'The Canterbury Pilgrims'. In this poem, early English settlers observed 'plains yearning for the spade and plough,' and 'vales waiting to be dressed by man'. T. Bracken, "The Canterbury Pilgrims," in *Musings in Maoriland* (Dunedin: A.T. Keirle, 1890), 84-85.

(line 31) of the New Zealand wilderness which 'respects no height; / And grace and colour, music, light, / From sturdy scorn are fled' (lines 16-18). As 'progress' and 'improvement' are depicted as moving away from the wilderness and toward the fertile garden, one recalls the movement between wilderness and garden in Jer 31:10-14.[125] As in Jeremiah, then, the garden becomes a powerful symbolic tool that represents the aspirational objectives prescribed by a dualistic logic. In this context, Reeves extends the symbolic reality to link the garden with the height of English sophistication – the art, culture, cultivation and civilisation that had come to characterise the colonial master of the nineteenth century. If the pinnacle of colonial endeavours was the English garden, the consequent obligation of colonists, then, was to relentlessly subjugate the wilderness until it resembled its more desirable dualistic alternative. It is to this transformation that Reeves now turns.

The broader movement from wilderness to garden is maintained in the poem as the New Zealand settlers seem to replicate the Jeremianic model by etching the romanticised English garden into the Land in the hope that, in such an environment, the 'best elements of British society might grow into an ideal nation'.[126] In response to his friend's attempts to lure him back to England, the colonist replies 'Yet that my heart to England cleaves / This garden tells with blooms and leaves… / And smells, sweet English, every one, / And English turf to tread upon' (lines 67-68 and 70-71). Even the birds of this garden seem to be 'British', as the colonist describes the 'English blackbird's song' (line 72), which sings '… the self-same notes / Your thrushes flute at Home' (lines 101-102). Like Jer 31:10-14, then, an essential step in the process towards the transformation of wilderness is that of inscribing the Land with one's own mark, signalling an authoritative human presence. Recalling the abundance of consumable goods in Jer 31:12, the colonist describes the 'aureate flowers, and warmth of sheaves, / Mid weary pastoral miles' (line 107-108), that characterise this new Land.[127] As the wilderness outwardly embodies the chaos of an unfamiliar Land, so this emerging image

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[125] A similar movement is portrayed by Godfrey Charles Mundy who wrote 'Here and there appeared a clearing more or less perfect and, in peaceful contrast with the wild woodland I have just described, fine crops of wheat, oats, barley, and potatoes, with cottages of brick or wood and huts of reeds and mud, according to the wealth or enterprise of the occupant. An occasional English-looking cart, with blue body and red wheels, and good teams of horses or bullocks gave a dash of Home to the picture, which was enhanced by the luxuriant growth of well-known English weeds…' Quoted in Shepard, *English Reaction*, 18,

[126] W. J. T. Mitchell, "Imperial Landscape," in *Landscape and Power*, ed. W. J. T. Mitchell (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 21. After seeing the forests of Te Atiawa, William Wakefield (1801-1848) wrote that he had found a 'land exceeding in fertility any I have seen in these islands, and equaling that of any English garden'. Quoted in G. Park, *Nga Uruora: The Groves of Life: Ecology and History in a New Zealand Landscape* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1995), 100.

[127] Similarly, Bracken, "Canterbury Pilgrims", 84-85, writes of the South Island settlers 'Who framed the New upon the Old, / And stamp'd the Old upon the New'.

of the garden indicates the growing control that the colonists have over their surroundings –
both human and other-than-human. Where the order and stability of the bounded garden
affirmed the hierarchical superiority of YHWH's chosen in Jer 31:10-14, here this ability to
organise and command affirms the power of the colonial master over and against the savage
wilderness and its inhabitants. Once again, it seems that the garden is employed as a tool of
oppression that is used by an imperial authority to express their intentions of domination and
to demonstrate their power and authority.

Extending beyond the world of poetic literature, this notion of garden and wilderness appears
to have been employed in the construction of colonial projects in New Zealand, and
appropriated as a justification for European domination.[128] As British settlers began to
impose the culturally and religiously loaded term 'wilderness' onto New Zealand's landscape
and its unique biotic communities, it was inevitable that this Land began to be perceived as
lacking the properly ordered character of its European counterparts.[129] The powerful
symbolic worlds associated with garden and wilderness that were found in the ancient
biblical literature and mirrored in the contemporary contextual literature provided both the
framework and the motivation for the actualisation of these symbolic realities. Settler
communities thus set about transforming the untamed wilderness into a 'friendly and pretty
agrarian landscape',[130] modelled on the property regimes and extensive agrarian schemes of
Europe. These actions irretrievably altered this country's distinctive Land and all but
destroyed its diverse other-than-human ecosystems.[131] Swept into an emerging self-
understanding of 'honest toil',[132] the colonial campaign began erasing the presence of the

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[128] J. Crosswhite, "Rhetoric in the Wilderness: The Deep Rhetoric of the Late Twentieth Century," in *A Companion to Rhetoric and Rhetorical Criticism*, eds. Walter Jost and Wendy Olmsted (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2004), 382, suggests that the notion of wilderness is especially active in settler nations and is deeply implicated in the process of British colonisation in the nineteenth century.

[129] Writing in the mid-nineteenth century, Thomas Chapman, for example, wrote 'as regards [the] polish of cultivation, the garden's glories, the plough's court robes, New Zealand is much in the state that Britain was when Caesar landed', Shepard, *English Reaction*, 23. In a similar vein, Jane Deans confidently declared that the Canterbury Plains were simply 'awaiting the advent of a white race of people to reclaim them and make them useful or beautiful as a garden'. Quoted in G. McLean, "The Rush to Be Rich, 1848-1882," in *Frontier of Dreams: The Story of New Zealand*, eds. Bronwyn Dalley and Gavin McLean (Auckland: Hodder Moa, 2005), 166.

[130] Patterson, *People of the Land*, 78.

[131] It is estimated, for example, that since the initial European contact of 1769, over 30,000 different types of flowering and cone-bearing plants have been introduced to New Zealand, mostly as garden plants. M. Wassilieff, "Gardens - Estate and Homestead Gardens", in *Te Ara: The Encyclopedia of New Zealand,* accessed March 16, 2010, http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/gardens/3. This alone would result in massive change to the Land's biodiversity, but it has also contributed to over 100 New Zealand plant species being classified as either critical, endangered or extinct. R. Holdaway, "Extinctions - Smaller Birds, Reptiles, Frogs, Fish, Plants", in *Te Ara: The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, accessed March 16, 2010, http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/extinctions/6.

[132] C. Bell, *Inventing New Zealand: Everyday Myths of Pakeha Identity* (Auckland: Penguin Books, 1996), 35.

Land's indigenous ecological agency and the agency of its other-than-human occupants, to make way for the 'large lawns', 'shrub boarders' and 'formal rose beds' of the transplanted English garden.[133]

It is important to note that it was not only the Land and its other-than-human inhabitants that were the subject of colonial conquest as these settlers sought to 'bring light' to this dark and empty wilderness. The agency of the Land's Māori inhabitants was also rejected, as the subordinate status of indigenous peoples ensured a perceived association with animality, corporeality and primitivity, binding them within the wilderness context.[134] Indeed, it seems it was the combination of a dualistic conceptual reality and a value-laden concept of wilderness embedded deep within the social consciousness that lay beneath the readiness with which British colonists saw Māori as 'reeking of primitive savagery'.[135] Like the larger context of which they were perceived to be a part, Māori were to be subjected to the transformative 'betterment' of English civilisation. In many contexts, this colonial 'enlightenment' of the wilderness resulted in Māori alienation from their Land, as settlers maintained that no one could claim dominion over uncultivated Lands whose soil did not bear the marks of their labour on it.[136] Uncultivated Land was wilderness, and as the cultural and religious symbol stipulated, wilderness was empty of civilised human existence and was thus without any claim of ownership. Not only did this British 'wilderness ideology' result in significant changes to the physical landscape of Aotearoa New Zealand, it also brought about widespread confiscation of indigenous Land, which was to have long-term implications for the social, economic and political well-being of Māori communities.[137]

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[133] Between 1900 and the mid-1930s, Alfred Buxton and his staff transformed over forty rural and city homesteads. As well as these 'large lawns', 'shrub boarders' and 'formal rose beds', his work is said to have featured 'sweeping driveways', 'informal flower beds', 'ponds', 'streams', 'fountains with rustic bridges', 'goldfish' and 'waterlilies'. Wassilieff, "Gardens".

[134] Thomas Chapman identifies Māori and wilderness as being parts of the same unsatisfactory state, writing that the 'wilds [were] but too true a counterpart of the inhabitants that possess it'. Quoted in Shepard, *English Reaction*, 27.

[135] Park, "After the Scene, After the Fever," 107.

[136] In 1844, Schnackenberg is again quoted as insisting that 'Wilderness land… is worth nothing to its native owners… Absolutely they would suffer little or nothing from having parted with land which they do not use…' Quoted in Park, "After the Scene, After the Fever," 107.

[137] After the New Zealand wars of the 1860s, substantial areas of Māori Land were confiscated by the New Zealand Government. The biggest areas of raupatu (confiscation) were in the Waikato and Taranaki regions where around 1.5mill hectares of Land were confiscated from local iwi (tribes). B. Keane, "Te Māori i te Ohanga: Māori in the Economy. The Alienation of Māori Land", in *Te Ara: The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, accessed March 16, 2010, http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/te-maori-i-te-ohanga-maori-in-the-economy/4.

Rowley Te Whenua Habib explores the connection between wilderness and Māori in his 1978 poem, 'Another Kind of Wilderness (Mount Eden: Summit and Prison)'.[138] Habib opens his work by depicting the triumphant proclamation of a four-sided obelisk atop Mt Eden dedicated to 'the memory of the… / Pioneer Surveyors Who played so worthy a part / in the transformation of a wilderness / into the smiling land which lies before you' (lines 10, 14-16). While these lines resonate with the writings of various nineteenth-century poets like William Pember Reeves, the stanza's subsequent lines juxtapose these colonial sentiments with a contemporary critique, as the voice of the poem demands: 'And I suppose the Maori was a part / of that so-called wilderness' (lines 17-18). The inseparable intertwining of these dualistic subordinates is foregrounded for the reader as Habib proceeds to make explicit the effects that this 'taking of the wilderness' has had on Māori communities. By shifting from the 'smiling land before you' to focus on the 'stark grey stone-cold building' (line 24) that is Mt Eden prison, the poem hints at a causal relationship between the transformation of the 'wilderness' and the social, economic and cultural disintegration that breeds crime and its penal consequences. The poem's final lines poignantly confirm this connection as wilderness moves from being a physical description of the Land, to a metaphor for the brokenness and defeat of a people imprisoned and oppressed by the colonial regime: 'A wilderness transformed into another kind / of wilderness. And there is no question / that the Maori is very much a part of this one' (lines 39-41). Although the negativity of the wilderness image is retained, it is no longer used to denote the Land or its inhabitants. In an ironic twist, the wilderness notion is turned back on itself to expose the disastrous consequences that have resulted from the powerful symbolic world of this colonial image and its transformational imperatives.

While there are few who, like Habib, engage directly with this colonial notion of wilderness, the literary evidence explored here suggests it was a significant image for many nineteenth-century settlers to New Zealand, and played a role in dictating the terms on which this Land was encountered. Aside from a small minority of dissenting voices who maintained a somewhat romanticised view of the wilderness as a symbol of pristine nature[139]– a perception

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[138] R. T. W. Habib, "Another Kind of Wilderness (Mount Eden: Summit and Prison)", in *Countless Signs: The New Zealand Landscape in Literature: An Anthology*, ed. Trudie McNaughton (Auckland: Reed Methuen, 1986), 170-171. Mt Eden is the English name of the volcanic mountain, Maungawhau, with scenic views in the heart of Auckland city. It is also the name given to the historic prison which is situated less than a kilometer away from the base of the mountain.

[139] Writing in 1832, Polack enthusiastically describes the Land between Hokianga and Kaipara as 'nature, un-destroyed by the arts introduced by mankind, [which] is here beheld in all her beauty and grandeur'. Quoted in Shepard, *English Reaction*, 32.

that would gain popularity in the twentieth century[140] – the prevailing attitude seems to reflect the dualistic dichotomy between garden and wilderness that has come to be identified as characterising images of Land in the book of Jeremiah. Indeed, the multiple intertextual connections made between the Jeremianic notions of Land and those presented in the work of William Pember Reeves points to these ancient texts as contributing to the construction of the emerging social imaginary in colonial New Zealand. Not only do these biblical texts seem to inform the collective perception of reality, but their sacred – or at least ancient – status also offers a potential justification for the legitimacy of such social constructions.

It is interesting to note that although this colonial mandate to 'take the wilderness' persisted well into the twentieth century,[141] the references to wilderness and garden – as well as their Jeremianic echoes – occur with far less frequency in the literature that began to emerge at this time.[142] Remnants of these attitudes seem to remain in the communal consciousness even in the twenty-first century, however, with Land being valued primarily in terms of its economic and instrumental potential to the human master. At the time of writing, for example, I am keenly aware of a recent proposal made by the National Government's Energy and Resource Minister, Gerry Brownlee, to investigate the possibility of mining a number of New Zealand's national parks.[143] Jeremianic echoes seem to resonate here, as the proposal would see these unexploited 'wilderness' Lands transformed for immediate economic gratification, regardless of the long-term ecological ramifications. The obvious anthropocentrism revealed in this proposal underlines the extent to which many New Zealanders continue to be the uncritical heirs of a dualistic reality that sets humans against their environment and imagines Land as being at the exclusive disposal of human desires.

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[140] With this shift in perception came the imperative to preserve New Zealand's uncultivated Land. Concern for conservation began in earnest towards the end of the nineteenth century, mirroring an international trend. The most tangible expression of this interest can be seen in the establishment of New Zealand's national parks – areas of Land set aside by the Government and protected from 'development'. Tongariro, New Zealand's first national park, was set up in 1887, followed by Egmont National Park in 1900. As of 2007, New Zealand has fourteen national parks, which account for 11.5 percent of this country's Land area.

[141] The most dramatic results of this mandate are reflected in the 'grasslands revolution' that began at the start of the twentieth century and would continue for the following eighty years. By combining bush clearance with the introduction of vigorous exotic grasses and the use of both herbicides and fertilisers, over fifty-one percent of the Land's surface area was transformed into grasslands. M. King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand* (Auckland: Penguin Books, 2003), 436, notes this percentage would have been higher but for the South Island's Southern Alps. The consequences of such drastic transformation continues to be felt, particularly in the alarming rate of erosion of the Land.

[142] The emphasis seems to have shifted to focus on the process of exploring and taming the Land as a means of representing the New Zealand character. Characters such as Tom Roland in Jane Mander's *Story of a New Zealand River* (1921), Amos Polson in James McNeish's *Mackenzie* (1970) and Ned Livingstone in Maurice Shadbolt's *Strangers and Journeys* (1972), are all depicted as taming their wild surroundings.

[143]A. Bennett, "Govt Eyes Letting Miners onto Even More Doc Land," *The New Zealand Herald*, March 23, 2010, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10633741.

Despite the centuries that separate us from colonial New Zealand, it is clear that the biblical images of garden and wilderness continue to influence our perceptions of Land and shape our experience of the environment. As demonstrated in the critical analysis of the Jeremianic texts above, however, these problematic depictions of garden and wilderness represent cultural fantasies rather than ecological realities. Because these images are symbolic representations projected on to the Land by human agents, it is the task of these same agents to reconfigure these representations in a way that honours the inherent worth of the other-than-human, and counters the age-old anthropocentric understandings of Land. If the Jeremianic images of garden and wilderness can be re-read from an ecological perspective, then it is equally possible to re-conceive these images as they appear in the contemporary context. By initiating a dialogue between the alternative perceptions of Land that were retrieved from the Jeremianic texts and the contemporary representations of garden and wilderness, a space becomes available in the New Zealand imaginary that allows for new understandings of Land to emerge. Where once the wilderness was perceived as both alien and hostile, this dialogue enables a vision of the wild as the domain of human and other-than-human nations: a space of belonging and familiarity for those who dwell there. Similarly, such dialogue challenges the perception of the garden as an instrument of progress and a tool for colonisation. Rather, this Land is acknowledged as a sovereign Other with boundaries and limits, upon whom humanity is utterly dependent. Thus, the alternative symbolic perceptions of Land uncovered in the ecological re-reading of biblical texts provide an important prerequisite for alternative behaviour towards Land in the contemporary context, behaviour that is based upon respect, gentleness and constraint. It is only through reconfiguring the texts of our past that we are able to reconfigure our behaviour in the present. With this in mind, I return to the biblical text in order to examine another predominant image of Land in the book of Jeremiah: Land as a sexually violated woman.

4 – LAND AS CITY AS WOMAN RAPED

Hear, O Land; I am going to bring disaster on this people.[1]

Readers are affected by what they read. Metaphors can hurt. Metaphors can distort. Metaphors can kill. Metaphors can oppress.[2]

Reality, in short, has been man-made, produced by male subjectivities and interests.[3]

4.1 LAND AS (FEMALE) CITY

A brief investigation into the figure of the city in Old Testament literature will almost immediately uncover an extensive array of pertinent references and allusions. Equal in proportion to these depictions, is the increasing collection of scholarly exploration in relation to the representation of the 'city'.[4] In recent years, however, it is the figure of 'the city as woman' that has occupied an overwhelming majority of analytical attention. In light of the fact that the Hebrew word עִיר (city) is grammatically feminine, it is perhaps unsurprising to find in the prophetic corpus a linguistic milieu where cities are typically portrayed as women. Such representations include, but are not limited to, the figure of the city as mother,[5] daughter,[6] widow,[7] whore,[8] princess,[9] menstruant,[10] and queen.[11] Although initial investigations into the feminised city were historically based,[12] more recent exegetical work

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[1] Jer 6:19.

[2] R. J. Weems, *Battered Love: Marriage, Sex, and Violence in the Hebrew Prophets* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 110.

[3] B. Hooper, "'Split at the Roots': A Critique of the Philosophical and Political Sources of Modern Planning Doctrine," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 13, no. 1 (1992): 48.

[4] See, for example, J. L. Berquist and C. V. Camp, eds., *Constructions of Space II: The Biblical City and Other Imagined Spaces* (New York: T&T Clark, 2008); W. P. Brown and J. T. Carroll, "The Garden and the Plaza: Biblical Images of the City," *Interpretation* 54, no. 1 (2000): 3-11; J. Ellul, *The Meaning of the City* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970); N. Roddy, "Landscape of Shadows: The Image of the City in the Hebrew Bible," in *Cities Through the Looking Glass: Essays on the History and Archaeology of Biblical Urbanism,* ed. Rami Arav (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 11-21; J. W. Rogerson and J. Vincent, *The City in Biblical Perspective* (London: Equinox, 2009).

[5] Is 50:1; 66:8-13; Jer 50:12.

[6] Is 1:8; 10:30, 32; 16:1; 23:12; 37:22; 47:1, 5; 52:2; 62:11; Jer 4:31; 6:2, 23; 46:11, 19, 24; 48:18; 50:42; 51:33; Lam 1:6, 15; 2:1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, 13, 15, 18; 4:21, 22; Mi 4:8, 10, 13; Zep 3:14; Zec 2:7, 10; 9:9.

[7] Is 47:8, 9; 54:4; Lam 1:1.

[8] Is 1:21; Jer 2:20; 3:1, 6, 8; Ezek 16:26, 28; 23:3, 5, 19, 30.

[9] Lam 1:1.

[10] Lam 1:9.

[11] Is 62:3.

[12] The majority of these historical-critical investigations sought to trace these feminine designations back to their original sources. See, for example, M. Biddle, "The Figure of Lady Jerusalem: Identification, Deification, and Personification of Cities in the Ancient Near East," in *The Biblical Canon in Comparative Perspective*, eds. Bernard F. Batto, William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1991), 173-194; F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion: A Study of the City-Lament Genre in the Hebrew Bible*

has critiqued the gendered imagery associated with the portrayal of the city as a woman.[13] As is evidenced in the prophetic literature, the image of the female city goes beyond the incidental function of grammatical gender, and enters the realms of sexual politics and power dynamics which appear to operate as the subtext to this literary representation. Thus, the city as *woman* has become the primary focus of investigative attention in this area of scholarship.

Apart from a small number of passing comments that make mention of a correlation between the female body and the fertile Land,[14] limited attention has been given to the connection between the city as Land and its personification as a woman. What follows, then, is an attempt to locate the figure of the city in Jeremiah, concentrating particularly on this figure as a Land-based entity and as the subject of personification. Although this ecological approach will privilege the perspective of the Land, it cannot ignore the feminine designation of the city, and so particular attention will be given to questions of gender that arise. Thus, without diminishing the significance of the sexual politics that underlie this imagery, my interpretive emphasis will focus on an ecological understanding of the *city* as it appears in the book of Jeremiah.

(Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1993), 85-88; A. Fitzgerald, "Mythological Background for the Presentation of Jerusalem as a Queen and False Worship as Adultery in the OT," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 34, no. 4 (1972): 403-416; and "BTWLT and BT as Titles for Capital Cities," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 37, no. 2 (1975): 167-183; E. R. Follis, "The Holy City as Daughter," in *Directions in Biblical Hebrew Poetry*, ed. Elaine R. Follis (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987); J. J. Schmitt, "The Motherhood of God and Zion as Mother," *Revue Biblique* 92, no. 4 (1985): 557-569; M. Wakeman, "Sacred Marriage," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 22 (1982): 21-31.

[13] A significant proportion of this research has been dedicated to the prophetic marriage imagery, which depends for its coherence on the relationship between a female city and male deity. Although this imagery has been examined in relation to Isaiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel and Hosea, this overview is limited to those whose work pertains to the marriage metaphor in the book of Jeremiah. Such work includes Abma, *Bonds of Love*; Bauer-Levesque, *Gender*; G. Baumann, *Love and Violence: Marriage as Metaphor for the Relationship Between YHWH and Israel in the Prophetic Books*, trans. Linda M. Maloney (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003), 105-134; A. Brenner, "On Prophetic Propaganda and the Politics of 'Love': The Case of Jeremiah," in *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 256-274; and "Pornoprophetics Revised: Some Additional Reflections," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 70 (1996): 63-86; B. Green, "Cognitive Linguistics and The "Idolatry-Is-Adultery" Metaphor of Jeremiah 2-3," in *Daughter Zion: Her Portrait, Her Response*, eds. Mark J. Boda, Carol J. Dempsey, and LeAnn Snow Flesher (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012) 11-38; C. M. Maier, *Daughter Zion, Mother Zion: Gender, Space, and the Sacred in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 82-93, 103-110; Shields, *Circumscribing*; and Weems, *Battered Love,* 52-58. See also B. E. Kelle, "Wartime Rhetoric: Prophetic Metaphorization of Cities as Female," in *Writing and Reading War: Rhetoric, Gender, and Ethics in Biblical and Modern Contexts*, eds. Brad E. Kelle and Frank Ritchel Ames (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 95-111.

[14] See A. A. Keefe, "The Female Body, the Body Politic and the Land: A Sociopolitical Reading of Hosea 1-2," in *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets,* ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffeild: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 70-100.

עִיר appears 137 times within Jeremiah and, with relatively few translational variations, the expression is typically rendered 'city'.[15] In the majority of instances where this term occurs in the singular, its referent is Jerusalem or the interchangeable synonym 'Zion'.[16] Without exception, עִיר appears as grammatically feminine, although a fully developed depiction of the city as woman is only identifiable in the first four chapters of Jeremiah. A discernable shift occurs after Jeremiah 4, however, as the city is more obviously aligned with the Land, assuming, as Gerlinde Baumann observes, greater 'local significance'.[17] From this point onwards in the text the distinctions between city, Land and woman become increasingly blurred.

Implicit in most treatments of the city in Jeremiah 5-52 is an assumption that 'city' refers to a fixed physical entity with roads and houses, surrounded by a defensive wall or protective structure.[18] Also embedded in this assumption is a second layer of meaning, where the city is understood as a metonym for its human inhabitants.[19] It is my contention, however, that these underlying conjectures fall short in their conception of the city by neglecting to consciously locate it in the Land. Without Land the city is merely a collection of people and buildings existing in space. This notion of city does not adequately account for the acute sense of anguish and loss surrounding the prospect of the city's imminent destruction by ever-advancing enemies.[20] The significance of the city as a place of deep attachment and identity lies primarily in an understanding of this entity as a geographical location – the city is grounded in the Land.

As a 'location', there is a sense in which the notion of city presupposes the presence of Land, thereby introducing a degree of ambiguity to the city referent and widening the hermeneutical possibilities surrounding it. This ambiguity is enhanced by the frequent appearance of the word אֶרֶץ (Land) in close proximity to עִיר (city). Indeed, on no fewer than seventeen

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[15] The NRSV, for example, alternates in its translation between 'city' and 'town'. The KJV, on the other hand, almost exclusively translates עִיר as 'city' (the one exception being 'town' in 19:15).

[16] A notable exception is the reference to the city (sing.) of Babylon in Jer 51:31.

[17] Baumann, *Love and Violence,* 110.

[18] This assumption is not limited to those writing about the Jeremianic depictions of the city. See Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep,* 87, and Roddy, "Landscape of Shadows," 13.

[19] That is, the female city is taken as the site upon which to enact the plight of its inhabitants. See also J. Galambush, "This Land Is My Land: On Nature as Property in the Book of Ezekiel," in *'Every City Shall Be Forsaken': Urbanism and Prophecy in Ancient Israel and the Near East*, eds. Lester L. Grabbe and Robert D. Haak (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001) 81-82; A. A. Keefe, "Rapes of Women / Wars of Men," *Semeia* 61 (1993): 79-97; and E. Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

[20] The theme of the city's decimation is a central part of Jeremiah's message, which is repeated with a growing sense of urgency throughout the book. See Jer 2:15; 4:7; 7:34; 8:16; 47:2; 51:43.

occasions,[21] these terms are found in the same verse, making it difficult, at times, to differentiate between city, Land and people. For Robert Carroll, the inseparability of these entities in Jeremiah reflects a 'deliberate attempt at… vagueness',[22] and it is this vague referentiality that I wish to use as a point of departure for my analysis of Land as city and woman raped in Jer 6:1-8 and 51:25-33.

4.2 JERUSALEM AS WOMAN RAPED: JEREMIAH 6:1-8

If the first thematic cycle of Jeremiah 2-6 focuses primarily on Israel's apostasy (2:1-4:4), the second distinct cycle (4:5-6:30) conveys a marked shift, emphasising the consequences of such disloyalty. From the domestic discord that characterises Jer 2:1-4:4, the text gives way to a variety of military metaphors centred around the ever-present threat posed by the 'foe from the north' (4:6; 6:1, 22). Given the rhetoric of violence and terror that dominates this second cycle, it is hardly surprising that the poems of Jer 4:5-6:30 have come to be known as 'war poems'[23] or 'foe literature'.[24] It is within this larger corpus of 'war poems' that Jer 6:1-8 is located and against this background that it will be read.

Opinion appears to be divided on the question of the pericope's demarcation. While most commentaries agree that the current marker indicating a new chapter correctly marks the poem's beginning, it is the lower limit that has proven to be contentious. Jack Lundbom, for example, insists on the exclusion of v 8 from the unit,[25] while Carroll is convinced that vv 1-5 and vv 6-8 form two distinct units on the strength of the *setumah* after v 5.[26] Based on the *petuhah* after v 8, the messenger formula of YHWH in v 9, and the כִּי at the beginning of v 6 which necessitates a connection between vv 1-5 and vv 6-8, I have opted to retain all eight verses as a single unit.[27] It is, however, the chiastic balance of language, voice and imagery

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[21] Jer 1:18; 2:15; 4:5, 7; 7:34; 8:16; 10:22; 17:26; 26:20; 31:23; 32:44; 33:13; 44:21; 47:2; 51:43; 52:6. In other instances עִיר appears without אֶרֶץ, but in the context of a variety of Land-based images. See, for example, 5:6, 17; 6:6; 14:18; 22:6; 33:12; 40:10; 48:8.

[22] R. P Carroll, "City of Chaos, City of Stone, City of Flesh: Urbanscapes in Prophetic Discourse," in *'Every City Shall Be Forsaken': Urbanism and Prophecy in Ancient Israel and the Near East*, ed. Lester L. Grabbe and Robert D. Haak (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 53. Habel, *The Land Is Mine*, 85, notes a similar ambiguity in the term נַחֲלָה, which seems to refer to both Land and people. See Jer 2:7; 10:16; 12:7, 8, 9, 15; 16:18; 17:4; 50:11; 51:19.

[23] K. M. O'Connor, "Reclaiming Jeremiah's Violence," in *The Aesthetics of Violence in the Prophets*, eds. Julia M. O'Brien and Chris Franke (London: Continuum, 2010), 41.

[24] Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 133.

[25] Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 414, argues that v 8 should be included in the subsequent poem (Jer 6:8-12), as it seems 'out of place' with Jer 6:1-7.

[26] Carroll, *Jeremiah,* 190-193.

[27] The position taken here is in agreement with a large majority of commentators, including Allen, *Jeremiah,* 84; J. Bright, *Jeremiah* (New York: Doubleday, 1965), 43; Brueggemann, *Exile and Homecoming,* 69; Holladay,

that confirms the poetic unity of this self-contained oracle, a structure that also underlines the centrality of the city as Land within the text:

v 1	Jerusalem יְרוּשָׁלַ͏ם		
	Tekoa תְּקוֹעַ		
		Evil רָעָה	
v 3			Against עַל
v 4			Arise קוּם
			To go up נַעֲלֶה
			Noon צָהֳרַיִם
v 5			Arise קוּם
			To go up נַעֲלֶה
			Night לָיְלָה
v 6			Against עַל
v 7		Evil רָעָה	
v 8	Jerusalem יְרוּשָׁלַ͏ם		
	To dislocate תֵּקַע		

Reinforcing this chiasm of key words is a chiasm of speakers that change without obvious notation. While the voice of YHWH dominates vv 1-3 and 6-8,[28] it is vv 4-5 in which I am particularly interested. Typically these verses are attributed in their entirety to the enemy soldiers,[29] although some have placed v 4b in the mouth of 'Jerusalem', in the sense of those who dwell within the city.[30] I favour this latter reading as it makes sense of the note of panic in v 4b which is inconsistent with the aggressive determination of the enemy seen in the confident cries of the adjacent bicola (vv 4a, 5).[31] In this way, 'Jerusalem' forms an inner chiasmus at the centre of the pericope:

Jeremiah 1, 204; McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25,* 138; and Stulman, *Jeremiah,* 75.

[28] Some commentators attribute vv 1-3 to Jeremiah. See A. Kalmanofsky, *Terror All Around: Horror, Monsters, and Theology in the Book of Jeremiah* (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 108; and McKane, *Jeremiah*, 138. Here, however, I follow Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 415, who argues that the first person pronouns of v 2 are better suited to YHWH.

[29] Stulman, *Jeremiah*, 75.

[30] Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 204; Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 415; and Maier, *Daughter Zion, Mother Zion,* 85.

[31] Jerusalem's cry of 'Woe!' in Jer 6:4b is consistent with other occurrences of the term אוֹי (woe), where a speaker attempts to articulate the hopelessness and despair that accompanies total defeat (1Sm 4:7; Jer 4:13; 10:19; 13:27; Ezek 24:6, 9; Lam 5:16).

v 4a	Enemy:	"Prepare war against her;
		up, and let us attack at noon!"
v 4b	'Jerusalem':	"Woe to us, for the day declines,
		the shadows of evening lengthen!"
v 5	Enemy:	"Up, and let us attack by night,
		and destroy her palaces!"

Thus, the lament of the city becomes the climax of Jer 6:1-8:

vv 1-3	YHWH	
v 4a		Enemy
v 4b		'Jerusalem'
v 5		Enemy
vv 6-8	YHWH	

Despite the places of human settlement listed in Jer 6:1, this opening verse neglects to identify explicitly the geographical subject of the poem. In v 2 however, the reader is introduced to בַּת־צִיּוֹן, whose significance as subject is initially seen in the way the phrase stands immediately before the end of the line, shattering the poetic flow with climactic impact. Although the expression בַּת־צִיּוֹן appears twenty-six times in the Hebrew Bible,[32] there is no agreement on a correct understanding of the phrase and translations vary. Explanations of its signification range from the collective noun 'people of Zion', referring to the inhabitants of the city,[33] to the genitive construct 'daughter of Zion' or 'Zion's daughter', implying a single female child belonging to 'Zion'.[34] Most common, however, is the understanding of בַּת־צִיּוֹן as an appositional genitive, where בַּת carries a metaphorical idea which is applied to צִיּוֹן, a view popularised by W. F. Stinespring, who rendered the phrase 'maiden Zion'.[35] While clearly connotative of people, this characteristically poetic expression

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[32] 2Kgs 19:21 = Is 37:22; Is. 1:8; 10:32; 16:1; 52:2; 62:11; Mi 1:13; 4:8, 10, 13; Zep 3:14; Jer 4:31; 6:2, 23; Lam 1:6; 2:1, 4, 8, 10, 13, 18; 4:22; Zec 2:14 [Eng 2:10]; 9:9; Ps 9:15 [Eng 9:14].

[33] The third entry for בַּת in F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008), 123, reads 'with name of city, land, or people, poet. personif. of that city or inhabitants, etc…' and includes Jer 6:2 as an example of this understanding. By interpretive extension, other translations render the phrase 'city of Zion', 'people of Jerusalem', and 'people of Israel'. See M. Kartveit, "Daughter of Zion," *Theology and Life* 27 (2004): 28.

[34] Most recently M. H. Floyd, "Welcome Back, Daughter Zion!" *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 70, no. 3 (2008): 484-504, has argued strongly for this translation. The 'daughter of Zion', he suggests, is not a personification of the city, but rather she is an individual woman, one of Jerusalem's daughters, who represents the women of the city collectively. The ASV, KJV, NIV and RSV also adhere to this translation.

[35] W. F. Stinespring, "No Daughter Zion," *Encounter* 26 (1965): 134.

appears to extend beyond a particular human community to the Land in which they dwell: the city identified here as 'Zion'. Like Stinespring, then, I understand בַּת־צִיּוֹן as an appositional genitive, although I have opted to translate בַּת as 'daughter', a term that functions to characterize 'Zion'. Thus, the subject of the poem is Zion the *place*, imaged as a woman.

Further confirmation of the central status of this subject can be found through closer inspection of the two terms that constitute the phrase בַּת־צִיּוֹן. Zion's characterisation as 'daughter' is evidenced consistently throughout the poem by the feminine word-endings of which 'she' is the direct object ('against her', v 3; 'within her', v 6), and by the explicit reference to הִיא (she) in v 6. In addition to this, the physical (Land) space, Zion, is marked primarily by a variety of references to environmental features ('trees', v 6) and urban infrastructure ('palaces', v 6; 'cisterns', v 7) that aid its identification as a city. The thrice-repeated noun יְרוּשָׁלַם ('Jerusalem', vv 1, 6, 8), which appears alongside its synonym 'Zion' also serves to reinforce the image of the city as *place* and subject.[36] The relationship between the two constituent parts of בַּת־צִיּוֹן, however, are so entwined that differentiation is difficult. Indeed, the identification of Jerusalem/Zion the city with Jerusalem/Zion the woman is made so seamlessly that the text seems to slide, almost without notice, between the two.

From this blurred combination of spatial and gendered elements emerges the metaphor of the city as a woman. Given the metaphorical nature of this description, it is important to pause briefly and acknowledge the language device at work behind the construction of Daughter Zion.[37] A metaphor is a way of speaking of one thing in terms that are suggestive of another.[38] I employ the terminology articulated by Max Black,[39] who suggests that a metaphor can be separated into two parts: the 'tenor' or principal subject, and the 'vehicle' or the figurative language used to describe the tenor. In Jer 6:1-8, then, a metaphor is created by

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[36] 'Zion' appears frequently in Hebrew poetry and may be regarded as a synonymous term for Jerusalem. C. M. Maier, "Daughter Zion as a Gendered Space in the Book of Isaiah," in *Constructions of Space II: The Biblical City and Other Imagined Spaces*, eds. Jon L. Berquist and Claudia V. Camp (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 106.

[37] It is outside the jurisdiction of this work to present my own comprehensive theory of metaphoric language. I have opted, therefore, to outline a definition of metaphor as a literary device that is appropriate to my work with the present text. For pertinent studies that are prefixed by theories of metaphor see Baumann, *Love and Violence*, 27-37; J. Galambush, *Jerusalem in the Book of Ezekiel: The City as Yahweh's Wife* (Society of Biblical Literature: Atlanta Scholars Press, 1992), 4-20; S. Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors in Hosea, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Ezekiel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 2-38; N. Stienstra, *YHWH Is the Husband of His People: Analysis of a Biblical Metaphor with Special Reference to Translation.* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1993); and Weems, *Battered Love*, 12-34.

[38] J. Soskice, *Metaphors and Religious Language* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 49.

[39] M. Black, *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962).

the dynamic interaction between the tenor (Jerusalem/Zion the city) and the vehicle (the woman). Through this encounter, the vehicle (the woman) modifies the audience's perception of the tenor (the city), allowing readers to view this tenor in new ways. This modification occurs as the reader calls to mind what Black describes as 'associated commonplaces',[40] a set of attributes typically associated with (in this case) the vehicle, which are then attributed to the tenor. Behind both vehicle (woman) and tenor (city) lie two systems of associated commonplaces based largely upon cultural stereotypes, which are brought into contact through the process of metaphor. The metaphor found in Jer 6:1-8, thus exploits a range of negative commonplaces associated with women – weakness, deviance, vulnerability to rape, and an ability to be conquered, governed or possessed – and applies these features to the city. By being compared to these negative stereotypes of women the city is thus posited on the subordinate side of the basic male/female, self/other dualisms, the continued existence of which ensure the enduring resonance of the metaphor. Far from an innocent depiction of a physical reality, then, the representation of the city can be identified here as a social product, deeply rooted in both patriarchal and anthropocentric agenda.[41]

Having identified Daughter Zion/Jerusalem as the subject of Jer 6:1-8, I return to v 2 where this city is introduced, in order to locate this figure within its immediate literary context. Opinion is divided over the meaning of נָאוָה, the first word of this verse. While some read the term as an adjective describing the city as 'lovely' or 'beautiful',[42] others render it as a noun meaning 'pasture'.[43] Based on the pastoral imagery that follows directly in v 3 and the variety of additional Land-based terminology scattered throughout the poem, I favour this latter understanding. Rendering נָאוָה in this way not only emphasises the notion of city as Land space, it works also to reinforce the dichotomy between the inhabited, arable (pasture) Land and the uninhabited place of desolation in v 8.[44] Less contentious is the following participle, מְעֻנָּגָה, which is typically translated as 'delicate' on the strength of a similarity of meaning in Dt 28:54-57. Ambiguity returns, however, in the verse's penultimate term, דָּמָה, where commentators are again divided between understanding this verb as 'to be like', or as the verb 'to cease' or its causative 'to destroy'. Without evidence of a *Lamed* or the direct object

[40] Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 38-44.
[41] L. McDowell, "Spatializing Feminism: Geographic Perspectives," in *Bodyspace: Destabilizing Geographies of Gender and Sexuality*, ed. Nancy Duncan (London: Routledge, 1996), 29, convincingly argues that 'spatial patterns are the outcome of social processes'.
[42] ASV, KJV, NET, NIV, NJB, RSV, Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 415; and Maier, *Daughter Zion, Mother Zion*, 85.
[43] NRSV, Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 191; Bright, *Jeremiah*, 43; Kalmanofsky, *Terror All Around*, 106.
[44] This dichotomy also recalls the garden/wilderness binary outlined in Chapter Two.

marker (אֶל) that would typically follow the former, it seems most appropriate that this term be translated to mean 'destroy'.[45] Jer 2:6 thus functions to set the scene for the poem as the voice of YHWH announces that the 'delicate pasture, Daughter Zion' shall be destroyed. If the subject of these verses is the city, then the context is war. YHWH is at war against the Land, a realisation that will be spelt out in detail in the following verses.

It is not difficult to identify the markers of battle in Jer 6:1-8. Both senses of sight and sound are evoked in v 1 as the reader hears the sounding of the שׁוֹפָר (shofar) and sees the raising of the signal, as troops are mustered and preparation is made for an attack on the city.[46] Heightening a rising sense of terror at the imminence of battle is the cry of the fast approaching enemy, who exclaim: 'consecrate (קַדְּשׁ) war against her [the city]' (v 4).[47] Typically translated in the weakened sense of 'prepare', קַדְּשׁ is more appropriately rendered 'consecrate' in this context, indicating divine participation in this battle. If more evidence were needed in support of YHWH's direct involvement in this attack, it is found in the epithet יהוה צְבָאוֹת (v 6). While צְבָאוֹת is invariably understood as 'hosts', alternative translations of this noun include 'army' or 'war', expanding the meaning of the epithet to include 'YHWH of armies' or 'YHWH of war'.[48] As chief warrior who oversees and engineers this war, YHWH is presented as a masculine authority who sanctions military violence against the female-identified city. It is my contention that this poem builds on the gendered interaction seen here, and that particular attention to the text's language and imagery will reveal an underlying rhetoric of sexual abuse – what Johnny Miles describes as a 'poetics of rape'.[49] Re-reading this text as a poem about the rape of the female city/Land, however, requires a return to, and a re-articulation of the sexual violence implicit in these verses. Only then will it be possible to begin to consider retrieving the experience of Daughter Zion/Jerusalem.

One of the immediate difficulties when working to name the violence present in this poem is that there is no verb or phrase in biblical Hebrew that corresponds exactly to contemporary ideas of sexual abuse or rape, a linguistic situation which makes the interpretive task an

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[45] This is consistent with translations by ASV, JSB, NET, NIV, NJB, RSV, Allen, *Jeremiah*, 83; McKane, *Jeremiah*, 138; and Maier, *Daughter Zion, Mother Zion*, 85.
[46] Such imagery appears also in Jer 4:5-6, 19, 21; 6:17.
[47] Not until Jer 20:4-6 is the foe from the north identified as being from Babylon.
[48] This imagery is consistent with the description of YWHW in Jer 50:25.
[49] J. Miles, "Re-Reading the Power of Satire: Isaiah's 'Daughter of Zion', Pope's 'Belinda', and the Rhetoric of Rape," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 31, no. 2 (2006): 194. Jer 6:1-8 is not the only Jeremianic text with an underlying rhetoric of rape. Most notably, Jer 13:20-27 has been critiqued from a feminist perspective for its violent sexual imagery.

ongoing challenge.[50] Traditionally, historical and social-scientific critics have been unwilling to impose contemporary ideas of 'rape' or 'sexual abuse' anachronistically on to the biblical texts as they perceive this to be a distortion of the cultural reality of ancient people.[51] By refusing to name the severity of abuse described in the Hebrew text, however, readers risk reinscribing ancient ideas of acceptable sexual behaviour, potentially normalizing violence toward subordinate Others. It is also important to remember that there are almost no non-euphemistic expressions for sexual organs in Hebrew, and that sexual imagery functions quite differently from other types of imagery, employing a wide range of words and phrases to describe sexual encounters.[52] For the purposes of this synchronic analysis then, I understand sexual abuse and rape as an event where power, domination and sexual aggression are combined to create an act of violence.[53] Despite these cultural and linguistic difficulties, then, both 'rape' and 'sexual assault' will be used as the primary terms to describe instances in Jer 6:1-8 where power, domination and sexual aggression are present, as I understand these terms as adequately describing the forcible violation conveyed by Hebrew euphemism.

After the alarm raised by the shofar and the signal in Jer 6:1b, the next indication of danger is found in v 1c with the introduction of an 'evil' that 'looms out (שָׁקַף) of the north'. In the niphal form, the verb שָׁקַף is a term that denotes power and its subject is commonly one who 'looks down over' a particular location.[54] Like a high-angle camera shot that functions to highlight vulnerability, so this looming figure suggests a position of strength, rather than the geographical location of the enemy. In accordance with the basic up/down dualities, the enemy is immediately placed 'higher' or 'up' in a position of dominance because of an ability

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[50] See S. Gravett, "Reading 'Rape' in the Hebrew Bible: A Consideration of Language," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 28, no. 3 (2004): 279-299; and S. Scholz, *Sacred Witness: Rape in the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 24-25. The Hebrew verb most commonly translated to mean 'rape' is עָנָה, literally meaning 'to be bowed down' or 'to be afflicted'.

[51] Gravett, "Reading Rape," 296; and H. C. Washington, "Violence and the Construction of Gender in the Hebrew Bible: A New Historicist Approach," *Biblical Interpretation* 5, no. 4 (1997): 357.

[52] A. Brenner, *The Intercourse of Knowledge: On Gendering Desire and 'Sexuality' in the Hebrew Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 33.

[53] S. Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (New York: Bantam Books, 1975), 18, has described rape as 'if a woman chooses not to have intercourse with a specific man and the man chooses to proceed against her will, that is a criminal act of rape'. More recently, F. R. Magdalene, "Ancient Near Eastern Treaty-Curses and the Ultimate Texts of Terror: A Study of the Language of Divine Sexual Abuse in the Prophetic Corpus," in *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 328, has defined sexual abuse as 'any act with a sexual connotation or result that is used in order to objectify, dominate, hurt, or humiliate an individual'. In the context of my analysis, however, these definitions must be deemed inadequate in their gynocentric (Brownmiller) and anthropocentric (Magdalene) focus. I have purposefully opted for a broad definition as it allows the experience of the Land to be named in terms of rape.

[54] This verb is most commonly used either to refer to YHWH 'looking down' from above (Ex 14:24; Dt 26:15; Pss 14:2; 53:2; 102:19; Lam 3:50), or to a person peering down out of a window (Jgs 5:28; 2Sm 6:16; 2Kgs 9:30; Prv 7:6; 1Chr 15:29).

to peer *down* upon the lowly – and thus subordinate – city. From the outset, then, before any military engagement occurs, the city's inferior status, its vulnerability and susceptibility to abuse, are foreshadowed by the power dynamics implicit in this simple phrase. It is not long before these dynamics are realized.

Following through on the promise in Jer 6:2 to destroy the 'delicate pasture' that is Jerusalem, v 3 builds on the Land-based focus of the previous verse as it introduces the means by which such destruction will be brought about: the city's invaders take the (metaphorical) form of shepherds and flock. The threat to this pasture Land is initially felt in the wordplay between the רָעָה (evil) that 'looms down' from the north in v 1c, and the רֹעִים (shepherds), found twice in v 3.[55] A sense of sinister foreboding in this connection warns the reader that these 'shepherds' are bent on using the Land for more than just grazing sheep. Confirmation of their dubious intentions is seen immediately in the phrase אֵלֶיהָ יָבֹאוּ (come upon her), an expression which appears in an overwhelming majority of contexts to denote sexual intercourse.[56] What is disturbing about this phrase as it appears here, however, is that although the recipient of these advances is the single female city, denoted by the third person feminine singular suffix of אֵלֶיהָ, the subject is a group of male attackers, identified here by the third person masculine plural suffix of יָבֹאוּ. Adding to the already unequal power dynamics, then, the city is further set against her male aggressors who have a numerical advantage, making her more vulnerable to violation.

In support of these claims to sexual innuendo is the verb תָּקַע, used in Jer 6:3 in the third person masculine plural in the context of pitching a tent. Although the same term is used in v 1 in the sense of 'to blow [the shofar]', here it means 'to thrust', presumably referring to the way in which a tent peg is driven into the ground. Once again this terminology alludes to the act of sex where thrusting aids penile penetration. As the metaphorical woman is penetrated by her male assailants – a sign of military might and victory – so the tent pegs thrust into the soil by the shepherds penetrate the Land in a symbolic act of possession and domination. This allusion is also nuanced by its connection with the warning blast of the shofar in v 1 where the sense of panic associated with its sound is carried over on to this homonymous verb and its wider sexual connotations. Further evidence of sexual assault is seen as this Hebrew verse

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[55] The image of an enemy coming from the north is evoked in Jer 13:20 and is also part of a poem which deals – somewhat more explicitly – with the rape of the city, Jerusalem. In both Jer 6:1-8 and 13:20-27, this foe מִצָּפוֹן (from the north) is introduced as a prelude to the sexual violence that follows.
[56] Gn 16:2; 19:34; 29:21; 30:3; 38:2; Dt 21:13; 25:5; 2Sm 16:21.

continues, describing the placement of the enemy encampment סָבִיב (all around) the city. This image of the menacing encirclement of tents captures a sense of the city's suffocation as the perpetrators close in, preparing to ravage.[57] From an ecological perspective, this appears to be an horrific situation over which the Land/woman has little control. Terrified and surrounded on all sides by a leering crowd of sexually aroused shepherds, she awaits what amounts to little more than gang rape.

The final stich in Jer 6:3 is obscure but, in accordance with the preceding pastoral imagery, most translators, albeit with slight variations, understand the phrase רָעוּ אִישׁ אֶת־יָדוֹ as referring to shepherds grazing or feeding [sheep] in their areas [around the city].[58] Although this pleasant and peaceful portrait fits with the shepherds and flock of v 3 generally, it is not consistent with either the panic carried over from the wordplay of v 1, or the second metaphorical layer that has been identified in this verse as the sexual violence toward the female Land/city. Typically rendered 'area',[59] יָדוֹ (lit. 'hand'), is more appropriately read euphemistically here to mean 'penis' (cf. Isa 57:8, 10).[60] Thus, the expression would be read "each man (אִישׁ, here 'shepherd') feeding his 'part'", a translation that creates space for both levels of the metaphor. Like the defenceless woman, the Land/city will be raped without restraint until the perpetrators are completely satisfied.

As Jer 6:1-8 moves towards its climax in vv 4-5, the reader is given insight into the perspectives of both conqueror and conquered by means of a series of shouts that make up the centre of the poem. Structure reinforces sentiment in these verses, as the chiasm of enemy voices (vv 4a, 5) that surround Jerusalem's single gasp of protest (v 4b) echoes the image of shepherds encircling the Land/city (v 3). Euphemistic overtones nuance the enemy battle cries with sexual innuendo similar to that found in the previous verse. Each shout includes an explosive command to קוּמוּ (attack), followed by the instruction וְנַעֲלֶה (and go up, vv 4a, 5). In the same way that עָלָה was indicative of sexual intercourse in v 3, so here it contains similar connotations. Recalling the upward movement associated with the 'thrusting' of the previous verse, עָלָה reinforces the allusion of male penetration with intent to wound. The chiastic repetition of this phrase functions not only to rouse the assailants and encourage their sexual hunger, but also to highlight the acute vulnerability of the victim that is the Land/city.

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[57] See also Jer 4:17; 50:29.
[58] ASV, KJV, NIV, NRSV, RSV.
[59] For the use of יָדוֹ as 'area', see Num 2:17.
[60] Both Bright, *Jeremiah*, 48; and Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 127, acknowledge the euphemistic potential of יָדוֹ, although this does not seem to shape their overall translation or interpretation of the poem.

Contributing to the dark tone and increasing sense of danger in this poem is the day/night wordplay that is central to the structure of this inner chiasm. With surprising quickness the imagery of vv 4-5 changes from day, to evening, to night – from light, to dusk, to dark. Although the attack on the city commences in the open daylight at צָהֳרָיִם (noon, v 4a), the light gradually diminishes as the assault continues, and the transition of colours begins to mirror the city's growing sense of terror and loss of hope. Indeed, the only utterance voiced by Jerusalem in the entire pericope is a bemoaning of the day's decline and the emergence of the evening shadows (v 4b). If the city was vulnerable to attack during the day, there will be no witnesses to offer protection against further abuse under the cover of darkness. This enveloping darkness of night once more evokes the stifling closeness of the encircling enemy, whose attack on the Land persists, apparently without loss of intensity, and irrespective of the passing time. If violent penetration is the aim of these assailants, however, then the ultimate victory must be in the destruction of אַרְמְנוֹתֶיהָ (her palaces, v 5), the city's most protected spaces. The power of this imagery again lies in the insinuation and innuendo that equates these precious places with the vagina.[61] Violation of the Land and her infrastructure is presented in the most sexually provocative terms possible, with her most intimate places aggressively breached. As the Land finally 'opens' to her attacker, physical submission is attained.

With this final physical conquest comes another ritual associated with rape: the public stripping of the now-defeated female victim. As a molested woman is menaced with bodily exposure, so the Land will be laid bare as YHWH issues the command to כִּרְתוּ עֵצָה (cut down her trees, v 6).[62] Like the woman's clothes, the Land's trees appear to symbolise dignity, identity and status.[63] Positive valuation and relative worth is expressed in the degree to which the Land is 'covered' by foliage; to be without such concealment is to be naked and exposed, denoting inferior status.[64] It is not only the diminution of status that is expressed in this act of stripping, however – vulnerability, humiliation and shame are also intended in the public observation of this 'body' in such an acutely private and intimate way.[65] Even though

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[61] See Jer 50:26 and Lam 1:10 for similar imagery.
[62] I read the *He* of עֵצָה as a mappiq denoting a feminine suffix, which renders the term *her* trees (see also LXX, NRSV, RSV). Although some translations treat this term as a collective noun meaning 'many trees' (ASV, KJV, NIV), this is not an adequate interpretation in light of the figure of the Land/city that has emerged thus far.
[63] Cf. Hos 2:11-12 [Eng 9-10].
[64] Baumann, *Love and Violence*, 80.
[65] Similarities can be seen in Lam 1:8 where nakedness and shame are closely connected, and in Hos 2:11-12 [Eng 9-10] where YHWH intends to deprive the Land of clothes and expose her shame. See also Isa 47:1-3; Ezek 16:37-39; 23:10; 25-26.

this display of nudity is usually a *prelude* to a sex crime, the uncovering of the Land's 'nakedness' in order to shame must be seen as part of the broader rape act, and thus identified as sexual violence. As well as physical denigration, then, the Land experiences a gross violation of integrity and autonomy, a psychological defeat that reinforces her physical suppression.

Finally, this sexual abuse against the Land has dire reproductive repercussions. If the city as woman is the source and matrix of life, then the violation of this figure is an attempt to crush her life-giving ability. The שְׁמָמָה (desolation) of the Land described in Jer 6:8 verifies this objective as Jerusalem is threatened with being forced to revert to a desert-like state.[66] Like Tamar, whose barren body is described as שְׁמָמָה after being raped by her brother Amnon (2Sm 13:20), the procreating potential of the Land has been destroyed as a direct result of this violent sexual encounter. This intertextual association thus nuances the word שְׁמָמָה as it is referenced in Jer 6:8, and 'desolation' becomes indicative of the Land's inability to sustain life. In the same way that the raped and barren Tamar is ostracized and denied relational connection by virtue of her humiliation and 'use-less' status, the violated and non-arable Land is deemed to be 'wilderness', existing outside the domain of society. Not only is this act of rape a sexual crime, it is also, as Miles claims, 'a means of total and utter domination, physically, mentally, and spiritually'.[67]

By seamlessly joining together the language of sexual and military violence, this elaborate metaphorical picture underscores the function of gender in determining relations of power both between men and women, and among humanity, YHWH and the Land. Evidence of extreme gender inequality is seen in Jer 6:1-8 by the way in which the city/woman is denied basic autonomy – the power to consent to sexual intercourse or to withhold this consent – by virtue of her feminine designation. The patriarchal ideology that understands women as objects of male possession is transferred over onto the female-identified Land/city, who is deemed similarly threatening and is also deprived of subjectivity and bodily integrity. Helping to maintain this patriarchal perspective is the frequent negating or misnaming of the city's violent sexual experience in this poem. Without articulating the sexual violence within these verses, interpretation runs the risk, as Carolyn Pressler rightly claims, of doing what rape does. It eliminates all consideration of the victim's experience and erases her right to

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[66] See also Hos 2:5 [Eng 2:3] where YHWH threatens to strip the woman, expose her, and make her 'like a wilderness… like a desert'. The image of the 'desolate' Land is found repeatedly throughout Jeremiah: 2:15; 4:7; 9:9-10 [Eng 10-11]; 44:22.
[67] Miles, "Re-Reading the Power of Satire," 209.

bodily integrity.[68] In the acknowledgment of this violence, however, comes the potential for resisting the powerful ideological undercurrents of this strongly anthropocentric and misogynistic text.

If gender operates to constitute dynamics of power, then the subtext of Jer 6:1-8 is control (by God/men) and subordination (of women/Land), where the masculine/feminine designations become an important indicator in the experience of violence. Because this gendered pair and the encounter of its constituents are socially construed, the images presented in these verses must be viewed in the context of the larger system of sexual politics that is the patriarchal household. The title בַּת (daughter) that is bestowed upon the city/Land in v 2 immediately compares this figure with a female member of a family unit. With this affiliation comes the anticipation that she will function appropriately within an ideologically determined frame of rules and behavioral expectations that govern the relationship between a daughter (the city/Land) and her male head (God). In accordance with these conventions, the Land is considered to be the exclusive property of YHWH to whom she must surrender absolute authority and upon whom she is utterly dependent. As a possession of this divine master with no right of disposition over herself, the city/Land is conceived in terms of something that is 'owned' and, as such, controlled.[69] Given that the status and prestige of the owner relies heavily on his ability to 'manage' his household possessions, it is perhaps unsurprising that violent aggression is presented here as an acceptable means by which to confirm control over this property. Within the context of this patriarchal ideology, then, violence appears to be central to the discursive production of the relationship between owner and owned. The city/Land is raped and publically humiliated at the command of this deity in order to stress her position as an object of YHWH's possession and control.

In addressing the character of God in Jer 6:1-8, some commentators avoid the problematic depiction of divine brutality, noting instead that YHWH's actions are mediated by humans and accordingly reflect the violence of those agents chosen to deliver judgment.[70] Such deflection – intentional or otherwise – distorts the text and acquits readers of the responsibility to critically assess this portrayal of the divine figure. Both the messenger formula of v 6 and the first person pronouns of vv 2, 7b-8, however, clearly place the violent

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[68] C. Pressler, "Sexual Violence and Deuteronomic Law," in *A Feminist Companion to Exodus and Deuteronomy*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 103.

[69] Jer 6:12 and 8:10 list houses, Land and women together as property that shall be given over to others.

[70] T. E. Fretheim, "The Character of God in Jeremiah," in *Character and Scripture: Moral Formation, Community and Biblical Interpretation*, ed. William P. Brown (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 220-222; and "'I Was Only a Little Angry' Divine Violence in the Prophets," *Interpretation* 58, no. 4 (2004): 367-369.

commands of this passage in the mouth of the deity. It is YHWH who oversees and engineers this encounter, YHWH who directs the human instruments of terror and, ultimately, YHWH who wields rape as a weapon of war. Without denying or excusing human participation in such abuse, it is impossible to ignore the divine agency inscribed here, and so my reading must acknowledge YHWH as an active perpetrator of violence against the Land.

The divine pronouncement of punishment in Jer 6:1-8 exposes a domineering deity with an explosive temper and a jealous possessiveness towards his 'property'. Beneath the rhetoric of justice lies the language of intimidation and coercion by one who appears determined to assert authority over a deviant subordinate. Here, YHWH fits the profile of a vindictive patriarch who is prepared to degrade women and violently abuse the Land in order to exert power and maintain honour. There is also a sense of irony – undetected by commentators – in the hypocrisy of a deity who inflicts upon the city the very same violence and destruction of which she stands accused in v 7. If, as Kathleen O'Connor claims, YHWH experiences any hesitation or self-doubt in issuing these violent commands, however,[71] it is not articulated in this passage. To suggest that behind the figure portrayed here is a betrayed and suffering God who is ultimately loving, risks both excusing YHWH's aggressive behaviour and negating the experience of the violated Land. YHWH's conduct in these verses is undeniably characterised by violence, making this Lord of armies (v 6) almost indistinguishable from his human instruments of war.

Having explicitly named the metaphoric depiction in Jer 6:1-8 as violent rape by YHWH/human agents against the Land/city-as-woman, my interpretive emphasis shifts from the imagery on the textual surface, to the ideologies at play in the production of these images. Many advocates who privilege an historical-critical approach to interpretation perceive this critique as superfluous, confining such ideologies to history and situating meaning in the distant past amidst ancient communities whose views on violence are assumed to be no longer shared by modern readers.[72] By inadequately attending to the ideologies of domination

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[71] K. M. O'Connor, "The Tears of God and Divine Character in Jeremiah 2-9," in *Troubling Jeremiah*, eds. A. R. Pete Diamond, Kathleen M. O'Connor and Louis Stulman (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 391-392. See also Fretheim, "The Character of God in Jeremiah," 212.

[72] In his analysis of sexual imagery in Hosea, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Carroll insists that the use of metaphor in these depictions has little to do with the representation of 'real' characters – women or Land – but rather reflects the socio-political exchanges of imaginary communities and imagined past histories. For Carroll, the metaphoric nature of these representations means that their referential force is strictly symbolic and must be read in the context of the society that imagined them. R. P. Carroll, "Desire under the Terebinths: On Pornographic Representation in the Prophets - A Response," in *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 275-307. In a similar vein, O'Connor argues that by

present within the Jeremianic depictions of sexual abuse, however, such interpretations fail to address the world-creating power of these images and the ideological demands that they continue to make on readers in each new interpretive encounter. To dismiss the violence of Jer 6:1-8 as *only* metaphor is to ignore – and thus tacitly condone – both the sexual brutality depicted in the text and the ideologies that the imagery embodies. The fact that this is metaphorical or historicised violence does not make it somehow less problematic, nor does it diminish the force or power of such rhetoric. Indeed, it is through uncritically participating in the construction of violent metaphors such as this that the ideologies determining representation take root in the unconscious of readers, accrue meaning there, and are inevitably re-enacted by determining attitudes and behaviour.[73] In critiquing the ideological subtexts of this passage, then, I am particularly interested in the reality that is implicitly affirmed through this depiction of women and Land.

At the core of Jer 6:1-8 lies the basic assumption that there are two fundamentally different types of substances or orders of being that comprise reality. On the one hand is the material world of Land, its cities and its inhabitants, human and other-than-human, entities that are vulnerable to physical violation and destruction. On the other hand is the divine domain, an intangible, spiritual realm of agency, authority and permanence. Distinction between these categories is achieved initially through the designation of gender and the implied value judgments associated with bipolar ideas of 'male' and 'female'. Although the material world is already perceived as subordinate by virtue of its opposition to the divine counterpart, its position here is underlined through its gendering as female. In drawing connections between the female body and the Land/city, this poem exploits a conceptual framework that simultaneously 'naturalises' women and feminises the Land, reinforcing the diminished status of both.[74] As the material is set against the spiritual, so the masculine gender is diametrically opposed to its feminine equivalent and thus positively associated with the

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presenting YHWH as the perpetrator of the city's demise, these verses originally functioned to reinterpret the exilic destruction as a positive event that affirmed YHWH's power over the Babylonians and their gods. O'Connor, "Reclaiming Jeremiah's Violence," 37-49.

[73] W. C. Booth, "Metaphor as Rhetoric: The Problem of Evaluation," in *On Metaphor*, ed. Sheldon Sacks, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 63, argues that 'to *understand* a metaphor is by its very nature… to decide either to be shaped in the shape [the] metaphor requires or to resist.' But even the decision to resist is secondary, subsequent to the assenting act of comprehension.

[74] This mutually reinforcing association is not restricted to Land and women. The dualistic schema hangs together in such a way that the more valued members of each binary come to be associated with one another, while the less valued in each pair are also connected with one another. Case-Winters, *Reconstructing*, 69. In this way, the conceptual strength of racism, colonialism and classism is drawn from presenting economic, racial and ethnic differences as being closely associated with the quintessentially inferior Land-as-woman. Plumwood, *Feminism*, 4.

unblemished, divine realm, a correlation supported by the masculine gendering of YHWH, Lord of war (v 6). In the same way that divine association guarantees the inherent worth of the spiritual sphere, so the masculinity of this deity ensures that men are upheld as the ideal human. Taking into consideration the value assigned to these dualistic extremes, it is unsurprising that the final distinction between these spheres of existence is presented in terms of wickedness and righteousness. In keeping with their already established worth, the negatively held material world of Land and women becomes the symbol of social and political sin in this passage. The masculinised spiritual realm, on the other hand, is presented as the place from which judgment upon this sin is pronounced and punishment meted out.

Before turning to the plight of the Land, however, it is worth noting that despite this rigid system of categorisation, the classification of humanity in Jer 6:1-8 seems less fixed, as the human community is presented as being poised between these opposing spheres, and caught in their potential to identify with both dualistic paradigms. In the first regard, the poetic rhetoric requires all readers to recognise themselves in the metaphor of the deviant Land-as-woman, and to repent of their wayward behaviour. Contrary to this demand is the simultaneous expectation that 'faithful' readers – both male and female – will sympathise with the divine point of view and the ethical perspective embodied by the superior spiritual realm. Although an affiliation with the material world is necessary for the metaphor to succeed in its rebuke, then, this realm is not an end in itself. The dual affinity of humanity to both higher and lower spheres enables – and indeed encourages – repentant readers to respond to YHWH's warning and call for reform by moving beyond the sinful trappings of the inferior Land-based realm and conforming to the ethical standards of the divine domain. Because of the masculine designation of both the deity and the spiritual world, a male identification with and participation in this realm appears here as natural and obvious. Alternatively, while female readers are also implicitly called upon to adopt the divine point of view in this passage, to do so presents the difficulty of siding with a perspective that degrades and violates a character from the reader's own social context.[75] In spite of this clearly problematic division of loyalties, the ultimate imperative for divine sympathy demands the female interpreter read against her own interests, favouring instead her common humanity – however inferior – by aligning herself with the poem's masculine addressees and, by extension, the masculine realm of the master.

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[75] J. C. Exum, "The Ethics of Biblical Violence Against Women," in *The Bible in Ethics: The Second Sheffield Colloquium*, ed. John W. Rogerson, Margaret Davies and M. D. Carroll Rodas (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 265.

Central to this idea of a humanity to which the faithful reader – men or masculine-aligned women – must aspire, is the implicit rejection of and radical disassociation from the lower order realm of the Land and its other-than-human inhabitants. The imperative to transcend this inferior order thus carries with it an image of an idealised humanity that is superior to the sphere of the reader's initial identification. In this value-laden separation, it is not difficult to recognise the foundations for a logic of authority and, by extension, a justification for the higher order domination of subordinate entities. Equity feminists have historically affirmed a move that enables women to sever ties with and ascend beyond the lesser realm, favouring the gender equality found in a common humanity. This model of liberation – and the dominant mode of salvation presented in this text – fails to observe the problem of an idealised human identity that is maintained by discontinuity with and domination of an inferiorised order.[76] Indeed, this strategy of repudiating the ancient connection of women to Land and providing an avenue of escape in female identification with their opposite dualistic pairing, does little more than endorse a broadening of the dominating class. Once the oppressed, women now join the ranks of the oppressor. Far from challenging the underlying structures of domination, an interpretive approach such as this leaves intact the conceptual framework that upholds an ontologically oppositional concept of reality.

Through the process of separation and distinction, the rhetoric of this poem encodes clues for the reader that both determine attitudes towards and define appropriate ideas about the relationship between humanity and the Land. By giving obvious privilege to the divine realm as the authentic sphere, the ideal human identity is presented as being 'outside' the material world of which the Land is so central a part. Human superiority over Land, then, is promoted as an ontological and moral right stemming from humanity's affiliation with the divine, an assertion evidenced in the ability of human agents to decimate the Land at YHWH's command. As social-symbolic creatures whose relation to their surroundings is based primarily on preconceived concepts and impressions, readers find inscribed in Jer 6:1-8 a symbolic world that permits control by force – human or divine over the Land. This violent and hierarchical relationship operates at a conceptual level to endorse a vision of reality where the principal mode is one of combative interaction between the master and the material. By functioning at a semiotic level this hierarchy moves beyond a system of

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[76] Plumwood, *Feminism*, 26, takes issue with the heavily normative concept of humanity and the enormous weight given to the notion of becoming 'fully human'. She notes that in modern discourses of liberation, ideas are measured by their conformity to this somewhat vague and universalized concept of humanity without examining the implications of this ideal for those categorized as other-than-human.

classification to become what Anne Primavesi describes as a 'state of consciousness' that has 'internalised domination and subordination as eternal traits' of humanity and the Land respectively.[77] Without an obvious dissenting perspective, these verses normalise their oppressive ideological subtexts, depicting as acceptable – and even necessary – the human abuse and exploitation of the Land. Indeed, the apparent lack of detectable opposition by the Land forces the uncritical reader to assume this character's passive co-operation, and acceptance of the assault as valid.

Resistance to the symbolic reality affirmed in Jer 6:1-8 is imperative, though, for no one is safe in a world shaped by the rhetoric of violent domination articulated here. Although the prolonged suffering experienced by the Land/city seems to stifle any overt efforts at protest, it does not reduce this victim to silence entirely. I return, then, to the single exclamation uttered by 'Jerusalem' in v 4b, in an attempt both to retrieve the Land's brief lament and explore the insights offered by this text into an alternate relationship between humanity and the Land. I have already noted the issues surrounding a precise identification of 'Jerusalem' in this poem, and the difficulties of a text that seems to use this term to refer, variously and without differentiation, to the city's human inhabitants, the personified woman referred to elsewhere as 'daughter Zion', and the Land space on which the city is situated. As I have shown, the metaphor presented here hinges on this very indistinguishability – it is the blurred identification that gives these verses their rhetorical force. The result of such ambiguity is that when the words of v 4b are attributed to 'Jerusalem', there is no precise indication as to whom this designation actually refers at any particular point within the poem. While the first person common plural לָנוּ (to us) suggests that more than one subject is contributing to this utterance of woe, there are no further clues in the text as to these subjects' specific identification. Indeed, in their intermingled inseparability there is a sense in which the Land, the people and the women are crying out as one, and that this interjection reflects a collective articulation of grief at an horrific violation.[78] It is this single gasp of shared protest that will provide the foundation for the retrieval of this text.

On an immediate level the Land, as part of the collective subject 'Jerusalem', is attributed agency, and in solidarity with the personified woman and the city's inhabitants, it voices a challenge to the sexual aggression described in Jer 6:1-8. This protest emerges primarily out

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[77] A. Primavesi, *From Apocalypse to Genesis: Ecology, Feminism and Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 17.
[78] This image is consistent with Jer 4:31 where 'daughter Zion' is depicted gasping for breath and crying out in distress.

of the deep grief displayed in the mournful tone of v 4b where 'Jerusalem' bemoans its dire situation. Inherent in this sense of hopeless despair is an objection to the position of powerlessness imposed upon this victim of rape and, by extension, a rejection of a conceptual framework that enables such an inequality of relationship. Like the people and the personified woman, the Land here is also capable of feeling excruciating pain and overwhelming terror in the face of abuse. In articulating this experience (v 4b), these characters together demand respect – however unheeded – by attempting to assert their individual dignity that is implicitly denied in such an attack. While the perpetrators of this crime are not explicitly named here, an unspoken accusation lies behind this brief exclamation. By lamenting a position of disempowered suffering, 'Jerusalem' simultaneously calls to account those who have imposed such abuse, namely YHWH and his servants of war. It is through their act of dissent, then, that this group becomes a symbol of unified resistance, bound together in their opposition to abuse and unwillingness to be silenced into submission. As the Land protests alongside the people and the personified woman, so the ecological reader is implored to stand with 'Jerusalem', resisting this metaphor. Not only does such resistance demand the rejection of rape as an appropriate representation of punishment, it also requires opposition to a symbolic world order where such a metaphor is able to resonate so powerfully.

Without diminishing the importance of this collective resistance, my focus moves from the bond between the Land/city and its human inhabitants, to the relationship between this Land and the reader. In critiquing the representation of Land in Jer 6:1-8 I noted that the success of the metaphor used in this passage relies upon readers recognising themselves in, but moving beyond, the inferior realm of the Land. Although the text does not seem to expect one to dwell on this connection, the fact remains that beneath the metaphor lies an assumption that the reader will emotionally identify with the Land. Indeed, by documenting the abuse in minute detail and providing harrowing insight into the Land's experience, the poem compels a sympathetic response to the plight of this character, and through this connection the Land becomes a relatable subject. As with human relationships, these feelings of compassion have the ability to elicit from readers an attitude of care and concern for the Land Other in these verses, which in turn provides the motivation for ethical reasoning and behaviour.[79] Ironically, then, it is within the depths of violence and destruction that there lies a foundation

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[79] K. J. Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It Is and Why It Matters* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), 111, argues persuasively that an ability to care for the Earth is paramount, as 'moral motivation for acting and ethical reasoning are not possible without it'.

for an interpretive approach that conceives of the self as being in profound relationship with the Land.[80]

Having critically analysed the plight of Jerusalem in these verses, I turn to Jer 51:25-33 in order to examine the fate of Babylon, another (female) city made to bear the punishment of her inhabitants. Babylon, whose armies inflicted such harm in Jer 6:1-8, will be made to suffer for 'her' role in Jerusalem's destruction. The tables, it seems, have been turned. For the Land, however, the prospects remain much the same.

4.3 BABYLON AS WOMAN RAPED: JEREMIAH 51:25-33

The Jeremianic figure of the besieged city as a sexually violated woman stands not only for Jerusalem, but also for 'foreign' cities as well. Poetic justice and rhetorical symmetry align the fates of Jerusalem and Babylon, as each once-illustrious city incurs the violent disfavour of YHWH. In keeping with the 'great reversal' theme which characterises the oracles against the nations in Jeremiah, Babylon – like Jerusalem – is now personified as the female victim of a brutal sexual attack. The rhetoric of Jeremiah 50-51 clearly asserts that the tide has turned for Babylon: where once this mighty empire was the destroyer, it will now be destroyed. Babylon the rapist will in turn be raped. While remaining attentive to issues of power, domination, gender and violence, then, my investigative emphasis now shifts to examine the portrayal of Babylon, Land as (female) city, in Jer 51:25-33.

The oracles concerning Babylon in Jeremiah 50-51 constitute the climax of the oracles against the nations (46-51), as their length and position in the book indicate.[81] Although it is generally agreed that these chapters reflect a collection of poems rather than a literary unity, a lack in semblance of structure giving shape and coherence makes it both difficult and contentious to determine the scope of the individual poetic units.[82] Despite such disagreement, commentators typically take Jer 51:1-33 as a section, and this broader poetic unit is then divided into smaller segments based on a range of textual markers which signal a break in the composition. Relevant to my research are the final two segments of this section, vv 25-26 and 27-33. The first of these is delimited at the top by a *setumah* prior to v 25, coupled with a messenger formula in the opening tricola of the same verse. This formula is

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[80] This notion of relationality will be developed further in Chapter Five.

[81] In the MT Babylon is the last of nine nations to be addressed, and the oracles against this mighty empire comprise almost half of the total material in the Jeremianic oracles against the nations.

[82] K. T. Aitken, "The Oracles against Babylon in Jeremiah 50-51: Structures and Perspectives," *Tyndale Bulletin* 35 (1983): 26, refers to the composition of these chapters as a 'loose and amorphous conglomerate in which the same stock themes recur time and again'.

then repeated in v 26, signalling a close in the text. Not only does this expression function as a conclusion, it also serves to introduce vv 27-33. Although a *setumah* appears after v 32 and is followed immediately by a full messenger formula, this seems to point to the importance of content in v 33 rather than a break in the section. A radical change of theme and voice in v 34, however, denotes the lower limit of these verses and the beginning of a new, self-standing poem.

While I am mindful of these textual divisions, I have chosen to read vv 25-26 and 27-33 together, based on a continuity of imagery relating to the Land as city.[83] Linguistically, a variety of catchwords found across both units indicate a close relationship between the two:

v 25	against (עַל) you	vv 27-28	against (עַל) her (x4)
v 25	the Land (אֶרֶץ)	vv 27-29	the Land (אֶרֶץ) (x4)
v 26	a desolation (שָׁמֵם)	v 29	a desolation (שָׁמֵם)

On the level of imagery, this connection is further reinforced by the chiasm of Land-based depictions:

A   the mountain (Babylon) will be levelled (vv 25-26)

    B   war against the Land as city is prepared (vv 27-28)

        C   the Land trembles and writhes (v 29)

    B'   war against the Land as city is carried out (vv 30-32)

A'   the threshing floor (Babylon) will be levelled (v 33)

As a unit, these verses do not proceed logically and are characterised by constant changes in temporal perspective, partial identification of speakers, and dramatic shifts in viewpoint. YHWH appears to be speaking as the poem opens (vv 25-26), pronouncing future judgment upon the Land of Babylon and its people. A change can be detected, however, in vv 27-28, as the prophet assumes the role of speaker on behalf of YHWH, instructing – in the present tense with a string of imperatives – a number of nations to muster an army for battle. Verses 29-32 reflect another shift, with the prophet giving his own account of the battle, which is already in progress. His point of view within these verses also moves from one observing from outside the city (v 29), to one who is inside (vv 30-32). Finally, in v 33 the voice of YHWH returns to confirm – using the future tense – Babylon's impending destruction. This

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[83] A. O. Bellis, *The Structure and Composition of Jeremiah 50:2-51:58* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1995), 145, also notes the unity of vv 25-33.

textual confusion seems to mirror the confused turmoil experienced by Babylon and its inhabitants in the face of violent demise. Regardless of voice or point of view, then, the reality for Babylon remains resolutely the same: brutal retribution is imminent.

Without explicit reference to Babylon, the poem's subject is introduced in v 25 as a 'destroying mountain'. While the reader is left to decide what is meant by this expression, both the following phrase ('[the one] destroying all the Land') and the broader context of the chapter leaves little doubt that the 'destroying mountain' refers – metaphorically – to the city of Babylon.[84] The image of the mountain unmistakably alludes to the empire's historical role as a dominant power, while its destructive quality recalls the devastating force used by Babylon against its neighbouring nations. In v 29, however, Babylon is confirmed as the subject and, once mentioned, appears at least once in every subsequent verse (except v 32), including a reference to the city as בַּת־בָּבֶל (daughter Babylon) in v 33. This appositional genitive instantly calls to mind the designation bestowed upon Jerusalem in 6:2, although a greater sense of foreboding is created here by the unforgiving harshness evoked by the thrice-repeated *Bet* of בַּת־בָּבֶל. Like Jerusalem, Babylon the besieged city is imagined as a woman suffering the violent consequences of divine disfavour. Unlike Jerusalem, though, Babylon will not be afforded the possibility of mercy through repentance.

While a majority of the verb endings found in Jer 51:27-33 correspond with the female depiction of Babylon in v 33,[85] this is not true of vv 25-26, where masculine verb endings are used of the city. Indeed, where Babylon is accused of being a brutal agent of conquest – the metaphorical mountain of destruction – the second person masculine singular suffix ךָ is employed. As this proud superpower faces violent decimation, however, the masculine references for the city become feminine and female imagery dominates the text. Where Babylon was directly addressed as a masculine entity (you), the city as female – denoted by the third person feminine singular suffix הָ (her) – is merely an object for observation and description. Instead of being an instigator of action like the destructive mountain, the feminine city is presented as a passive recipient of masculine exploits: *her* sanctuaries (מִשְׁכְּנֹתֶיהָ) are set alight (v 30), *her* bars (בְּרִיחֶיהָ) are broken (v 30) and war is carried out

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[84] Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 842; M. Kessler, *Battle of the Gods: The God of Israel Versus Marduk of Babylon: A Literary/Theological Interpretation of Jeremiah 50-51* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 2003), 119; Lundbom, *Jeremiah 37-52*, 458; and McKane, *Jeremiah, 26-52*, 1313, all agree on the metaphorical status of this expression.
[85] An exception to this is seen in v 31.

against *her* (עָלֶיהָ, vv 27, 28).[86] Contained within these contrasting presentations of Babylon, then, are the now familiar concepts of gender whereby the feminine is signified as an inert victim of abuse, while masculinity entails violent agency and domination.[87] It is this underlying signification of gender that gives meaning to the figure of Babylon, the city as raped woman.

Forewarning of an attack is given in YHWH's assurance of retribution in v 24, where the deity promises to repay Babylon for all the רָעָה (evil, cf 6:4) inflicted upon Jerusalem. It is in the opening line of v 25, however, that YHWH candidly announces his opposition to this city, declaring unequivocally: 'Behold, I (am) against you'. While the remainder of vv 25-26 reiterates this antagonism by way of a series of mountain metaphors,[88] these threats are realised by the mobilisation of armies preparing to march against the city in v 27. What follows is strongly reminiscent of the battle imagery found in Jer 6:1-8 although, ironically, the commands given in 51:27-28 are now being used against the very people who once issued them. The punishment must fit the crime. A summons to war is signalled in v 27 by a string of six clauses prefaced by a series of imperatives indicating decisive action: 'raise… blow… consecrate… summon… appoint… send up…' Once more the hoisting of the flag provides the visible expression of attack, and this is closely accompanied by the audible warning of war, a trumpet (שׁוֹפָר) being blown (cf. 6:1). A sense of divine approval is also evoked here in the twice-repeated anaphoric command to קָדַשׁ (consecrate) the nations for battle (51:27, 28; cf. 6:4), and YHWH's endorsement of such military action is subsequently affirmed in the epithet found in v 33, יהוה צְבָאוֹת (YHWH, [Lord] of war, cf. 6:6). Once again, the context for this poem is war. Invader is set against invaded, masculine endeavours are set against feminine endeavours, and YHWH is set against Babylon.

As in Jer 6:1-8, the depiction of this attack against Babylon draws upon an array of provocative sexual intimations, which make use of the city's feminine designation and her vulnerability to assault. While the imagery in this poem is not as explicit as that found in 6:1-8, the more one enters into the experience of the Land as city presented here, the harder it is to avoid the sense that the violence in this text is deeply eroticised. In keeping with the rest of

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[86] The marshal, governors and rulers of the advancing enemy armies in vv 27-28 are all masculine.

[87] That the female gender signifies one who submits to violence is seen most obviously in v 30 where the Babylonian warriors defeated in battle are reckoned as women. See also Is 19:16; Jer 50:37; Na 3:13. See note 98.

[88] From the image of Babylon as 'rolled down from the rocks' (v 25b), to that of the city being a burned-out mountain (v 25c) which has been turned into rubble (v 26a), YHWH's apocalyptic-like judgment is clear. Babylon will be reduced to nothing – an 'everlasting desolation' (v 26b).

these verses, the allusions to sexual violation do not proceed in any logical order, and the most overt innuendo is, in fact, found in the poem's final two verses. Initially, the most obvious reference to eroticised abuse appears in v 32, where the verb תָּפַשׂ that is used to portray the military seizure of Babylon's Land (the fords) is the same term used for the violent seizure of a woman in rape (cf. Dt 22:28). As the body of the captured woman in Deuteronomy becomes the property of her captor who may use her as he pleases,[89] so the Land of Babylon is at the mercy of her conquerors, leaving her equally vulnerable to brutal mistreatment.

Immediately following this evocative description of the city's capture is the divinely delivered oracle in Jer 51:33, which compares Babylon to a threshing floor at the time of harvest. On one level, this semi-apocalyptic rhetoric anticipates a day of judgment for the city, where the pounding boots of soldiers and the hammering hooves of horses will trample Babylon as if she were a threshing floor. Given the sexual nuances of the preceding verse, however, this simile also assumes sinister overtones, adding a second layer of meaning to the oracle. The personification of Babylon as a young woman (daughter) combined with images of stomping and threshing is highly suggestive of rape and pillage.[90] In the same way that the threshing floor is made level by constant trampling in order to reap the benefit of its harvest, so this 'daughter' will be violently set flat, her perpetrators helping themselves at will to her 'spoils'. Both the Land and the woman in this simile will be reduced to a bloody and bowed mess. The subjugation of the Land and the sexual domination of this woman thus become the primary symbols of Babylon's humiliating defeat in this poem. Bearing these lewd overtones in mind, I return to examine the text's earlier verses, paying particular attention to the plight of the Land as city in light of her fate in these final two verses.

Less overt in its allusion to sexual abuse, is the repeated use of עָלֶיהָ (against [lit. 'upon'] her), which appears four times in 51:27-28 with adversative meaning. Although not clearly sexual in itself, the phrase recalls an identical image in Jer 6:3-4 in the context of violent penile penetration. The pounded repetition of the term as it appears in the present text, however, suggests something of the repeated battering – sexual or otherwise – that is intended to bring Babylon to her knees. Here again, the masculine perpetrators of YHWH's army (vv 27-28) have a numerical advantage over the lone female city, highlighting the

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[89] Dt 22:29.
[90] Both Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 841, and J. Hill, *Friend or Foe? The Figure of Babylon in the Book of Jeremiah* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 168, remark upon the sexual overtones detectable in this verse.

inequality of these gendered characters. Reinforcing this image of domination is a more literal understanding of עָלֶיהָ, which translates to mean 'upon, over, or above', and further nuances the term as it appears here. To stand in a position over or above another is suggestive of superiority and strength, and is a position assumed by an assailant in the moments before attack. An ominous sense of foreboding is thus evoked here, as the advancing army is imagined as an overbearing figure (cf Jer 6:1), looming menacingly down upon its chosen target, the city of Babylon.

As Babylon's demise is recounted in detail (Jer 51:30-33), the incidence of innuendo increases with multiple allusions to sexual violation. In v 30c, the text describes the ruin of the city's מִשְׁכָּן (tabernacles) and the destruction of her בְּרִיחַ (bars). Although the term מִשְׁכָּן is rendered 'dwelling places' in a majority of English translations,[91] it more accurately refers to a tabernacle or holy site associated with the dwelling place of YHWH.[92] The city's most sacred and intimate spaces have been breached by enemy soldiers. If the city Babylon is understood here to be a woman, then – to extend the metaphor – these protected places represent the woman's vagina (cf. Jer 6:5). In support of this reading is the imagery contained in the following line, depicting the demolition of Babylon's 'bars', referring by synecdoche to the city gates.[93] With these gates reduced to rubble, the sacred spaces are left vulnerable without defence, and entrance is easily achieved. Like the woman who is laid bare before her rapist, the Land that is the city is also exposed and open to the onslaught of her attackers. Like Jerusalem, the end for Babylon is now inevitable.

Evocative soundplay and arrangement of words follow in Jer 51:31, as messengers rush to inform the Babylonian king of the city's invasion. Repetition is skilfully used to create a chaotic fusion of sight and sound as the runners seem almost to trip over each other in their haste, in the same way that the reader stumbles over the excessive duplication of the verbs 'to run' (רוּץ), 'to announce' (נָגַד), and 'to meet' (קָרָא):

רָץ לִקְרַאת־רָץ יָרוּץ וּמַגִּיד לִקְרַאת מַגִּיד לְהַגִּיד

Although not a literal translation of the Hebrew, most commentators take the heralds' message to mean that the city has been captured 'from every side' (מִקָּצֶה, lit. 'from the

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[91] ASV, KJV, NIV, RSV. The NRSV has 'buildings'.
[92] Cf. Lv 15:31; 26:11; Josh 22:29; Pss 43:3; 84:1; 132:7.
[93] The association between 'bars' and (a city's) gates is seen in Na 3:13; Lam 2:9; Neh 3:3, 6, 13-15. The term בְּרִיחַ (bars) is also found in connection with מִשְׁכָּן (tabernacle) in the context of a holy site in Ex 40:18; Num 3:36.

end').[94] Babylon is surrounded and the enemy is closing in. The cumulative effect of this verse is one of utter panic and confusion (cf. v 32c), reflecting the experience of the captured city and her inhabitants. Echoes of Jerusalem's fate are also brought to mind for the reader who recalls her sense of suffocation in Jer 6:3 as the Babylonian army closed in on her.[95] Encircled on all sides by a lascivious enemy, it is Babylon this time, however, who is left with no option other than to surrender to the eager advances of her attackers.

Having surrounded the city and destroyed her urban infrastructure, the enemy's ultimate act of conquest is to decimate the Land upon which Babylon is situated. As well as the fords being seized in 51:32, the הָאֲגַמִּים (marshes, lit. 'pools') are also wiped out by fire in accordance with YHWH's promise to make the city a wasteland (v 26). In keeping with the image of Babylon as a sexually violated woman, this final display of triumph is reminiscent of the punishment described as being imposed upon women charged with sexual misconduct throughout the Bible, who could be publicly stripped,[96] or executed by burning.[97] Like a deviant woman, the Land will be stripped of her vegetational covering and publicly exposed for all to see. Although Jerusalem was similarly castigated in 6:6, her punishment stopped short of wholesale burning. Babylon is not spared such treatment, however, and faces irreversible ruin. If rape is understood as an event where power, domination and sexual aggression are combined to create an act of violence, then this poem seems to bear all the hallmarks of such an attack.

While sexual assault might be the means of depicting attack, Babylon's utter desolation is the ultimate objective. Indeed, prior even to the summoning of an army, YHWH makes clear his solemn intent that the Land shall become an שְׁמְמוֹת עוֹלָם (everlasting desolation, v 26 cf. 6:8). Babylon has fallen from divine favour and her Land must face permanent destruction. Reiterating this fate is the repetition of the term שָׁמֵם (desolation) in v 29 and the further qualification that this devastated Land will be without inhabitants. Destruction of Babylon's Land means destroying that which is the source of life and protection for all its inhabitants – human and other-than-human. Like the woman who has been raped, the Land must give over her procreative power to the masculine authority to whom she is now accountable. At his

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[94] See Holladay, *Jeremiah 2*, 398, Lundbom, *Jeremiah 37-52*, 461, and the ESV, GNB, NJB, and RSV translations. The other most common translation is similar in meaning, and renders the phrase 'from end to end' (NASB, NRSV). The KJV alone opts for the literal interpretation, 'taken at one end'.
[95] See also Jer 50:29.
[96] Ezek 16:37-38; 23:22-35; Na 3:4-6.
[97] Gn 38:24; Lv 20:14; 21:9; Ezek 16:41.

behest she will be rendered barren, both as a sign of his victory and as an assurance of her eternal submission.

Echoing the physical devastation of the Land is the emotional distress of her people. This is seen in the parallel between vv 29 and 30, where the נָשְׁתָה (dried up) strength of the city's warriors mirrors the desert-like condition of the Land (cf. Jer 2:6; 17:6). The fate of the people is intrinsically linked to the fate of their city. Sharing in the horror of the Land's physically desolate state, Babylon's people respond emotionally to the destruction with utter terror (v 32). Powerless to counteract the enemy's onslaught, the soldiers cower passively in their strongholds, and they, like the defenceless city in the face of invasion, are referred to derogatorily as women.[98] The comparison, which strengthens these citizens' connection to the Land by way of their common feminine designation, evokes the most degrading insult possible. To be associated with this denigrated material world is to be ridiculed and disgraced as a man. Stripped entirely of dignity and without power or agency, all is lost for this once mighty city that was Babylon.

Finally, YHWH will ensure that the city's fiery end will render it to dust (v 26); there will be no possibility of restoration. Although there is a striking similarity between YHWH's vengeful dealings with Jerusalem and his punishment of Babylon, it is in this final verdict that the divine treatment of the two cities differs. In the oracles concerning Jerusalem there is always the chance of repentance, and the deity typically seems willing to revoke his threats on the condition of remorse. Even when YHWH proclaims destruction upon the Land, still he will 'not make full end' (4:27; 5:10, 18b). Jerusalem shall be rebuilt (25:8-14). With Babylon, however, YHWH appears intransigent.[99] Despite the fact that it was God who summoned Babylon to execute his justice, it appears that this deity holds the city ultimately responsible for its evil misdeeds. These oracles contain threats of destruction exclusively, and any hint of divine forgiveness is absent. Babylon's position as an instrument of YHWH can last only as long as it is useful to the divine plan, after which, ironically, the city will be decimated by YHWH himself for its part in this plan. For Babylon, this is truly a 'no win'

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[98] Most interpreters neglect to critically comment on this blatantly sexist and degrading reference, which affirms weakness and cowardice as traits inherent to all women whose value is diminished because of them. Commentators like W. Brueggemann, *To Build, To Plant: A Commentary on Jeremiah 26-52* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 274, who do address this reference, typically seek to understand it in the misogynistic context of war. In doing so, however, they neglect to attend to the implications of such imagery for the reader and the world created beyond the text.

[99] J. G. Amesz, "A God of Vengeance? Comparing YHWH's Dealings with Judah and Babylon in the Book of Jeremiah," in *Reading the Book of Jeremiah: A Search for Coherence*, ed. Martin Kessler (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 99-102, also comments upon this discrepancy.

situation. Even if some of Babylon's citizens may be – legitimately – held at least partially responsible for the atrocities committed against Jerusalem, it is once again the Land and *all* her inhabitants who must suffer the consequences of YHWH's wrath. Because Babylon is not chosen, there will be no salvation, no balm to heal the Land's wounds.

One of the most concerning issues that emerges from examining this text is the fact that a vast majority of commentators fail even to acknowledge – let alone critically comment upon – the violence inscribed in these verses. To ignore this matter completely – presumably on the grounds of contextual acceptability – suggests that there is no issue with abusive behaviour when it is sanctified by God and carried out against one's foe. In neglecting to acknowledge this violence, these readings risk missing the world-creating potential of this rhetoric. So normalised are the ideas of appropriate conduct toward an enemy city that most interpreters are no longer able to perceive this act as violent – or at least not able to perceive such violence as problematic. Both the text itself and its history of interpretation imply that brutal violation of a city's Land and its people is perfectly standard in the context of war. For most Western readers, then, Jer 51:25-33 informs what Johan Galtung describes as the 'cultural violence' of a society, those aspects of our symbolic sphere that are not violent in themselves, but rather shape our collective attitude towards violence.[100] It is this symbolic sphere that is used to justify and legitimise direct and structural acts of abuse.[101] Thus, although this text is not guilty of brutality in itself, these words have a life of their own beyond the letters on a page, and have the power to adversely affect the welfare of the Land and its inhabitants in the contemporary context.

As in Jer 6:1-8, the violence in this poem is construed in terms of gender, along lines which correspond to the distinct realms of the spiritual and the material. The spiritual domain, headed by the divine commander-in-chief, YHWH, is dominated once again by the 'holy' instigators of war who demonstrate agency and yield 'righteous' power. Balancing this supreme order by their hierarchical opposition, are those assigned to the material world – the Land as city and its people, imagined as women – who represent the vulnerable recipients of this attack. Sharpening the divide between these two realms further is the distinction that is made between friend and foe. As the favoured of YHWH and the champions of Israel's restoration, the triumphing army fulfils the role of 'friend', as it is seen to be defending the

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[100] J. Galtung, "Cultural Violence," *Journal of Peace Research* 27, no. 3 (1990): 291-305.
[101] Direct violence, writes Galtung, "Cultural Violence," 292-296, is an event and corresponds to the notion of violence as an act that violates, injures or kills. Structural violence, on the other hand, is a process and relates to the ways in which social systems oppress individuals.

divine honour and making right injustices of the past. Babylon, on the other hand, as the infamous rival of Israel with well-documented crimes carried out by its people against this nation, is naturally vilified as the enemy. Having noted the interconnected modes of oppression within the material world,[102] it is easy to see how this enemy status is implicitly extended to those other elements of this realm. In addition to its already-subordinated classification and negative standing, then, the Land is further demonised by its association with the enemy.

Implicated in its people's misconduct, the Land's destruction here is tacitly condoned as 'collateral damage' in a cause with a higher purpose. Because this devastation serves a superior cause, the Land's violation is not presented as a crime; rather it is organized, regulated and justified so that it appears to conform to acceptable ideas about justice and fairness. Suffering alongside her inhabitants, the Land, like the body of the woman raped, is made to bear the marks of violent decisions made by those driven by power and hungry for revenge. Without bodily integrity, the needs of the Land are considered secondary to those of the chosen elite who have YHWH on their side and military forces at their disposal. The importance of subjugating an enemy appears to place the problem of collateral above critique, deeming the welfare of those caught in the crossfire to be negligible.

Outside its function as a means by which to inflict the maximum amount of suffering and distress upon the Babylonian empire, the Land is invisible. Beyond the concern of both YHWH and his soldiers, the Land is erased from the domain of ethical consideration, becoming a convenient tool to be used without restriction, whose needs, goals and intrinsic value are placed beyond the limits of concern and respect. The Land is, once again, nothing more than a prop on the set of the divine-human drama. From an ecological perspective, then, the world that is created in front of this text is one where extreme violence against the Land is acceptable in the cause of the advancement of humans who have the means and justification to do so. It is a reality where the wellbeing of the material world – the Land and its other-than-human communities – is subservient to the desires of the spiritual realm – the human community – whose needs are deemed to be of greater value.

Reinforcing this perception further is the depiction and interpretation of YHWH's character in Jer 51:25-33. In stark contrast to the commentary surrounding this deity's abusive treatment of Jerusalem in Jer 6:1-8, there seems to be far less reluctance amongst

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[102] See §4:2.

commentators to identify YHWH's direct participation in the violent attack against Babylon.[103] The text leaves little doubt as to YHWH's vicious intent, which is calculatingly premeditated in the 'plans' (מַחֲשָׁבָה, lit. 'thoughts') referred to in v 29, and initiated in the divine hand that is stretched out against Babylon in a sign of hostility and aggression (v 25).[104] From his threat to make the city like a burned-out mountain (v 25), to his promise of judgment where this city is compared to a trodden threshing floor (v 33), YHWH is in sole command of Babylon's fate.

Initially at least, YHWH's rationale for this act of revenge seems to be justified on 'tit-for-tat' grounds, repaying Babylon 'in full' (Jer 51:56) for the atrocities committed against 'daughter Zion'. As the Babylonian soldiers were without pity in their brutal conquest of Jerusalem (21:7), so YHWH will act without compassion in judgment of the Mesopotamian superpower. Under the guise of 'recompense' the divine figure is prepared to exert horrific violence, which is primarily carried out at the expense of the innocent and vulnerable: women and the Land. YHWH's vengeful behaviour towards Babylon in 51:25-33 evokes a strongly anthropomorphic image of a divine warrior, a larger-than-life replica of the barbaric human equivalent, whose petty desire for revenge demands widespread punitive suffering. Much like the human warrior-patriarch whose wounded ego will not abide the loss of honour associated with a violation of his 'property', YHWH's ability to regain status will be measured in terms of his capacity to take back what belongs to him (and more), by way of coercion and theft – rape and pillage. Although such ancient concepts regarding the maintaining and regaining of honour might be roundly condemned as macho barbarism when pertaining to a human subject, YHWH's violence, once again, is typically assigned a radically different moral status based on the reader's prior commitment to understanding the divine action as ultimately good.[105]

Critical questions must be voiced, however, concerning appropriate representation of God in these verses. Such conceptions can have far-reaching ethical implications for readers who

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[103] W. Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 244, for example, suggests that by subverting human brutality, divine violence functions to bring creation to a point without abuse. For Brueggemann, God's violence is 'purposeful in the service of a non-violent end'.

[104] This image is used to denote YHWH's violent anger in a variety of contexts. See Ex 15:12; Ezek 6:14; 14:9, 13; 16:27; 25:7, 13; 35:3.

[105] J. Berkman, and S. Hauerwas, "Violence," in *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology and Society*, eds. Paul Barry Clark and Andrew Linzey (London: Routledge, 1996), 866, similarly note the differing status of a coercive act based on the perceived social standing of the one committing the act. They write: 'a criminal and a public officer may commit the same act, and yet their differing status leads us to call the former 'violence' and the latter 'enforcement of the law'.

reproduce in action those violent characteristics that are seemingly upheld here as positive attributes of this revered figure. To name YHWH's aggressive display of power and domination as anything other than vengeful savagery risks enshrining violence as the divinely ordained method for establishing 'goodness' and order in the world. Indeed, to accept that violence defines the relationship between YHWH and the Land as woman may have disastrous ramifications for these already subordinated characters. Indifferent acceptance of such behaviour runs the risk of promoting a reality where human existence – in an attempt to emulate divine conduct – is understood as being locked in perpetual ideological warfare against an enemy whose otherness enables them to be violated and stripped of all inherent worth so that they might submit and take their 'rightful' place within the master order. The rhetoric employed to depict YHWH in these verses seems to advocate a reality that legitimizes 'power-over' relationships and demands that interactions between all forms of life (divine or otherwise) be defined in relation to such power, which is in turn attained through acts of violence, domination, and oppression. For readers seeking justice for the Land in the book of Jeremiah, this image of God is both deeply troubling and highly problematic.

Although it appears that a vast majority of Jeremianic interpreters are reluctant to engage critically with the sexual violence perpetrated against the Land as woman in Jer 51:25-33, this victim, it seems, is less willing to be silenced and refuses to let such a crime go unchallenged. Initially, the reader's attention is drawn to v 29 by what Martin Kessler describes as the 'cacophonous sound patterns' of words whose articulation is made difficult by a variety of harsh-sounding consonants that stand at odds with the euphonious flow of the surrounding phrases.[106] The forced pause that results from this awkward pronunciation suggests a rupture in the broader textual unit, which is immediately confirmed by the content of this verse. In a demonstrable display of defiance the Land shakes (רָעַשׁ) and writhes (חִיל) as YHWH resolves to make Babylon a desolation (שָׁמֵם). While most commentators seem to agree that the actions attributed to the Land in this verse are a direct response to (כִּי lit. 'because of') YHWH's plans against Babylon, there is considerable dispute surrounding the interpretation of such conduct. Some tacitly negate the Land's agency, glossing over this reaction as hyperbole or 'large language' which functions to illustrate the annihilation of all life in Babylon.[107] Others affirm the Land's agency but insist that this character is acting on

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[106] M. Kessler, "Rhetoric in Jeremiah 50 and 51," in *Semitics*, eds Hans Jurgens Dreyer, Ian Heinrich Eybers and J. J. Glück (Pretoria: University of South Africa Press, 1973), 30.
[107] Brueggemann, "*Creation in Extremis*," 156. Bellis, *Structure and Composition*, 159, suggests that this language may depict an army on the march.

behalf of YHWH, rising up with this Lord of armies against Babylon.[108] By closely examining the verbs employed to depict the Land's response, however, I suggest that the shaking and writhing exhibited here is most appropriately understood as an act of protest by which the Land seeks to interrupt YHWH's plans of destruction.

In every instance that the verb רָעַשׁ ('to shake') occurs in relation to the Land it appears in the context of YHWH's terrifying violence, and Jer 51:29 is no exception.[109] Taking into consideration both the divine fury and the sanctioned sexual brutality in the surrounding verses, the Land's convulsions here seem suggestive of a fearful shiver that echoes the frantic panic of its inhabitants (v 30-31). This initial movement appears to be an instinctive response that betrays the Land's underlying objection to YHWH's unrestrained destruction of the enemy. While resistance is hinted at in this cowering shudder, it is not fully realized until the following verb חַיל (to writhe), whose double meaning allows the reader to perceive not only the Land's physical gesture, but also the emotional sentiment associated with it. On one level, this verb simply denotes the physical contortion of the Land, a depiction that affirms the 'quaking' imagery that has already been established in this verse. Like many Hebrew terms, however, חַיל contains what Hayes describes as a 'dual association', meaning that this term elicits both a psychological and a physical signification.[110] In addition to the writhing imagery, this verbal root denotes anguish, and is employed elsewhere to describe the painful suffering of one's heart,[111] the agony of a woman in childbirth[112] and the distress of individual torment.[113] As this secondary connotation is brought to mind, an additional layer of significance is mapped onto the semantic field of primary meaning, further nuancing the Land's activity in this context. Far from supporting YHWH in his tirade against Babylon, the Land's writhing seems to be a physical manifestation of its acute internal anguish as it is enveloped by raging warfare. In its shaking and writhing, the Land firmly registers its dissent from the divine 'plans' towards Babylon and, in doing so, calls into question a reality where violence and hierarchically-charged interaction is perceived as acceptable.

Adding to the insights gained from the multiple layers of meaning encountered in these verbs is the similarly ambiguous term found in the final phrase of verse 29, where YHWH promises

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[108] Lundbom, *Jeremiah 37-52*, 466, 468; Kessler, *Battle of the Gods*, 123.
[109] Jer 4:24; 8:16; 10:10; 49:21; 50:46. See also 2Sm 22:8; Pss 18:7; 77:18; Is 13:13; 24:18; Ezek 38:20; Jl 3:16.
[110] Hayes, *'The Earth Mourns'*, 16-17.
[111] Ps 55:4; Jer 4:19.
[112] Is 13:8; 21:3.
[113] Dt 2:25; Est 4:4; Jl 2:6; Na 2:10.

to make Babylon a שְׁמָמָה (desolation). On an immediate level this noun denotes a material reality, presenting an image of a Land that has been laid to waste, or is physically deserted.[114] On a secondary level, however, שָׁמֵם carries with it an alternative 'psychological' meaning, which is typically rendered 'to be appalled' or 'to feel horror'.[115] As well as detailing the physical ruin of Babylon, then, this root also conveys to the reader a sense of the misery and despair that is experienced by the Land as it endures such destruction. Once again, this term connects the fate of the Land in this text with the שֹׁמֵם woman, Tamar, whose rape negated her reproductive ability, rendering her barren and childless.[116] In addition to the feelings of horror and desolation associated with this term, then, there is a sense of stunned grief and sadness which is carried over from Tamar's experience, and which in turn intensifies the anguished resistance displayed in the Land's shaking and writhing.

If the resistance displayed by the Land in this verse is to be taken seriously, then one must acknowledge a level of agency and intentionality inherent in this character. In the distress that is directed by the Land towards her assailants, the reader is able to discern a teleology or life-goal, which is reflected in the signs of sentience, choice and preference that she seems to exhibit here. Without denying the differing sorts of mind-like qualities among the various members of the other-than-human community, this recognition challenges the ecological interpreter to explore intentionality as a characteristic that is shared by both humans and other-than-humans. From rudimentary gestures of growth and movement to the more complex shaking and writhing, almost all members of the other-than-human community display an implicit teleology which, while not assuming consciousness for all, does provide a common ground where the relationship between the human and the other-than-human might be reconceived.[117] Indeed, if intentionality is common to all forms of life, humanity cannot reasonably be classified as unique, nor elevated as separate or superior beings based on the possession of mind. The Land and its other-than-human inhabitants can no longer be relegated to the sphere of 'alien other'; rather, they acquire a new identity as ones who are akin to humanity. This identity instantly negates the divide between the realm of 'mindful' humanity and the mindless domain of 'all the rest'. Not only do the actions of the Land here

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[114] Cf. Jer 6:8. Kalmanofsky, *Terror All Around*, 32, observes that emptiness as well as wildness appear to be one of the key elements of שָׁמֵם. See Jer 4:7; 9:9 [Eng 10]; 34:22; 46:19; 48:9; 49:33; 50:3, 13; 51:37, 43.
[115] Hayes, *'The Earth Mourns'*, 75-76, notes that שָׁמֵם occurs frequently in both senses throughout Jeremiah. In many cases, she argues, this dual sense makes it difficult to decide which meaning is primary.
[116] 2Sam 13:20. See §4.2.
[117] Plumwood, *Feminism*, 135, uses the example of mountains which, she argues, are the product of a long unfolding process and whose growth includes both direction and potential for change.

protest against and resist its brutal treatment, but they also directly defy the rigid divisions of binary thought, challenging the way in which human subjects perceive themselves – both individually and collectively – and their relation to their other-than human 'kin'.

Despite the acts of protest and defiance identified in Jer 6:1-8 and 51:25-33, the fact remains that these texts depict divine punishment in terms of sexual violence towards women and Land. The imagery works insidiously, instilling in readers highly problematic ideas about appropriate behaviour towards both these characters. Moving beyond the symbolic world of Jeremiah, this analysis shifts to explore the potential presence of this imagery within the contemporary social imaginary. In an effort to determine the degree to which this representation of Land continues to resonate, I turn once more to the poetry of Aotearoa New Zealand.

4.4 MAKING CONNECTIONS

From a close reading of these two Jeremianic texts my attention now turns to the New Zealand context where I seek once more to listen for intertextual echoes of these ancient images of Land. Even a brief glance at New Zealand literature generally reveals a long tradition of linking the bodies of women with conceptions of space – in particular, the Land. Although gendered understandings of Land in New Zealand predate European contact with this country,[118] my analysis will focus on the post-settlement period where, symbolically, female metaphors of Land have played an important role as the inhabitants of this place have attempted to articulate their experience of Land. In both Māori and Pākehā literature it is not uncommon to encounter stereotypes of women that have been employed to evoke particular attitudes towards the Land.[119] With the single-minded determination among settler communities to master and possess their surroundings, however, this imagery seems to take on increasingly misogynistic overtones. As the colonists came to perceive themselves as

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[118] In Māori tradition, Papa-tū-ā-nuku is the female personification of the Land. She is portrayed as a mother figure who provides the physical and spiritual basis for all life.

[119] T. McNaughton, ed. *Countless Signs: The New Zealand Landscape in Literature: An Anthology* (Auckland: Reed Methuen, 1986), 12. The most common stereotype is that of Land as mother. See H. Melbourne, "Why the Wind Comes," in *The Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse*, eds. Ian Wedde and Harvey McQueen (Auckland: Penguin Books, 1985), 498; R. McAlpine, "The Underside of the Hills," in *Countless Signs: The New Zealand Landscape in Literature: An Anthology*, ed. Trudie McNaughton (Auckland: Reed Methuen, 1986), 179; A. Powell, "Land Pictures," in *Spirit in a Strange Land*, eds. Paul Morris, Harry Ricketts and Mike Grimshaw (Auckland: Godwit, 2002), 139; A. Taylor, "The Womb," in *The Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse*, eds. Ian Wedde and Harvey McQueen (Auckland: Penguin Books, 1985), 522. Less common, but nonetheless present, are images of Land as 'daughter'. See B. Baughan, "Maui's Fish (After the Maori Legend)," in *The New Place: The Poetry of Settlement in New Zealand 1852-1914*, ed. Harvey McQueen (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1993), 211.

being pitted against a raw and hostile environment and the colonial rhetoric became one of conquest and domination,[120] the figure of the Land as a woman tamed became equally commonplace.[121] It is hardly surprising, then, that one does not have to delve far into the poetic literature of Aotearoa New Zealand to find language comparing the violation of women to the exploitation of Land. Indeed, from Charles Brasch to James K. Baxter and from Allen Curnow to Patricia Glensor, our anthologies are shot through with such comparisons. The spread of colonialism, it seems, worked to ensure that in both symbol and reality the Land would be penetrated and plundered for all its benefits.

Although the image of Land as a violated woman appears initially to have been employed without irony to describe settler activity on the Land,[122] more recently the metaphor appears in a majority of contexts to critique the attitudes and actions of those exploiting the Land for economic advancement.[123] This is particularly true of the imagery found in the poem 'Not by wind ravaged' by Hone Tuwhare (1922-2008).[124] In the opening two stanzas of this work the poet laments the loss of Māori Land as a result of colonisation and, like other works penned by Tuwhare, the extended metaphor that is used to describe this place of devastation is that of a woman who has been maltreated.[125] Erotic innuendo dominates the final two stanzas also, although a new mode of interaction is introduced which results in the renewal of the Land's fertility as well as her healing and restoration. While the term 'rape' does not appear explicitly within the poem, the initial reference to the personified Land as both deeply

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[120] In McNeish's novel *Mackenzie*, for example, the author has a settler character say 'I would not be a surveyor if I did not believe in thrashing nature. Why else are we here? … Nature's disorganised, chaotic, cruel, we must thrash it.' McNeish, *Mackenzie*, 190.

[121] D. D. Alessio, "Domesticating 'the Heart of the Wild': Female Personifications of the Colonies, 1886-1940," *Women's History Review* 6, no. 2 (1997): 239-270, suggests that New Zealand was not unique in the way in which the Land was personified. Female allegories have played an important role in white settler societies generally.

[122] Sexual overtones, for example, can be detected in the description of George Angus exploring a 'chaste' and 'secret' cave in all its virgin 'purity'. He found delight in knowing that 'ours were the first human eyes to behold this resplendent saloon [which] hid in the bowels of the earth'. Quoted in Shepard, *English Reaction, 76.*

[123] Wallace, for instance, laments the 'soul of the earth, raped by greed and enterprise…' B. Wallace, *Something to Sing About: Hymns and Reflections in Search of a Contemporary Spirituality* (Christchurch: Methodist Church of New Zealand, 1981), 47.

[124] H. Tuwhare, "Not by Wind Ravaged," in *No Ordinary Sun*, ed Hone Tuwhare (Auckland: Longman Paul, 1974), 20. Again, copyright prohibits the inclusion of this poem in its entirety. It is, however, able to be viewed online. See H. Tuwhare, "Not by Wind Ravaged," accessed September 27, 2014, http://nzpoems.blogspot.co.nz/2011/07/not-by-wind-ravaged-hone-tuwhare.html. Tuwhare was of Ngā Puhi descent and was an outspoken advocate of Māori self-determination.

[125] The image of Land as a woman raped appears elsewhere in poems by Tuwhare. In his outspoken poem entitled 'Warawara, Pureora, Okarito', the voice of the poem angrily tells 'Guvment Agencies' and wealthy private enterprises to 'Stop your raping of the land. / Fuck off.' H. Tuwhare, *Making a Fist of It: Poems and Short Stories* (Dunedin: Jackstaw, 1978), 35.

'scarred' and 'ravaged' (lines 1 and 2) is highly suggestive of sexual assault and this thematic connection offers a starting point for intertextual reflections.

Alert to the possibility of allusions to the Jeremianic text, the reader is at once drawn to the way in which the Land is invoked at the beginning of the second stanza, as the voice of the poem introduces this subject by crying out in deep lament: 'O voiceless land' (line 8). Tuwhare's use of apostrophe, denoted here by the exclamation 'O', recalls an identical rhetorical tool used frequently throughout Jeremiah to convey extreme urgency or emotion. Indeed, this exclamatory device appears as part of an invocation more than ninety times in both the NRSV and the KJV translations of the book.[126] Strengthening this point of connection is the fact that the Jeremianic material repeatedly employs this literary technique to address the Land – or a personification of the Land – in the context of its impending sexual abuse.[127] If this initial connection seems somewhat tenuous, another intertextual marker follows immediately as the poem's speaker seeks to echo the 'desolation' of the violated Land (line 8). Once more the imagery of Jeremiah is evoked, bringing to mind the Hebrew term שָׁמֵם (desolate), which is used in at least seven instances to depict the Land's destruction and abuse.[128] Also of importance to this connection is the identification of 'desolate' as a biblical term that describes the body of a victim of rape.[129] Lending credence to the plausibility of an intertextual association between these texts is Tuwhare's acknowledgment that the King James Bible – in particular the Old Testament – came to be a powerful presence in his writing.[130] By the author's own admission, then, his work is allusional in nature, and a principle intertext is the Bible. Once again, it is impossible to claim a direct link between this poem and Jer 6:1-8 or 51:25-33 specifically, so I proceed with this investigation based on the identification of Jeremiah as *an* evoked text. Thus, I return to Tuwhare's work to seek the formation of more particular intertextual patterns.

Another reading of 'Not by wind ravaged' reveals an array of imagery that contains remarkably similar elements to those images of Land found in Jeremiah, although in the context of Tuwhare's poem these allusions appear to have been transposed in order to pertain

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[126] The exclamatory 'O' is used in Jeremiah to invoke a broad range of subjects from cities (4:14; 13:27; 15:5) and countries (46:11; 48:46; 50:24), to the heavens (2:12) and the Land itself (6:19). Even God is called upon using this literary technique (5:3; 10:6, 23, 24; 11:20; 12:1, 3; 14:7, 9, 20, 22).
[127] Jer 6:8; 13:27; 51:25.
[128] Jer 4:27; 6:8; 12:11; 32:43; 44:22; 50:3; 51:29 (NRSV and KJV).
[129] Jer 6:8; 51:26, 29. See also 2Sam 13:20.
[130] Tuwhare is said to have loved the structure, rhymes, and cadences of the King James translation of the Bible, which, as child, he read with his father. He is quoted as saying that his work is infused with the 'smell of the old Bible'. J. Hunt, *Hone Tuwhare: A Biography* (Auckland: Godwit, 1998), 32.

to the landscape of Aotearoa New Zealand. Intertextual parallels can be detected from the outset of this work as it becomes clear from the word 'ravaged' in the poem's title that the subject – who is later identified as the personified Land – has suffered some kind of abuse or destruction. At this early point in the poem, the nature of such abuse is not specified, but the strong sexual overtones associated with the word 'ravaged' establishes an underlying sense of apprehension and offers a hint of what is to come. The perpetrator of this maltreatment is also anonymous at this stage, but the notion of being ravaged is often equated with the terrorising actions of an invading army during wartime, and it is with growing discomfort that the reader calls to mind the menacing intentions of the rapacious armies marching on the Land in both Jer 6:1-8 and 51:25-33. As if to underline this terrifying act, the word 'ravaged' appears again in the poem's second line. The cluster of negatives surrounding this term nullify the agency of the wind, rain, and stream (lines 2-3), giving rise to a suspicion that such ill-treatment is not the result of natural phenomena. As in Jeremiah, it seems that the Land has fallen victim to a human aggressor. Unlike the Jeremianic texts, however, the fate of the Land is sealed from the poem's beginning: it will be ravaged. What follows is a description of how this result is brought about, and the allusions are unmistakable.

Although there are no gendered nouns or personal pronouns relating to the Land in this poem, the subject is unmistakably female. Gender is most overtly evidenced by the euphemistic references to female genitalia in the description of the Land's 'dull folds' (line 12) and 'moist lips' (line 30). A variety of stereotypically 'feminine' attributes such as compassion (line 23) and soothing (line 12) also define the Land, who, in stanzas three and four regains her mother-like potential for fertility and productivity. Perhaps the most decisive indicator of the Land's gender in this poem, however, is her lack of agency and her susceptibility to (sexual) violation by a masculine offender – the 'avaricious men' of line 28. As in Jer 6:1-8 and 51:25-33, it seems that gender is central to the experience of violence here also and, as the passive recipient of abuse, the Land assumes the role traditionally designated as feminine. Using imagery which is strikingly similar to the Jeremianic imaginings, then, the Land is conceptualised as the body of a woman, and its destruction is conceived symbolically in terms of abuse.

In line four, the woman who is the Land is described as being 'stripped'. Until now, the sexual nature of the Land's ravaging has only been insinuated. The depiction of a nameless perpetrator violently undressing and exposing a victim's naked body, however, suggests that

this ravaging involves sexual misconduct.[131] Jeremianic echoes can be detected once more (cf. 6:6; 51:32), as this forceful tearing of the woman's garments appears to be a metaphorical reference to what Park describes as the 'wholesale levelling of the [New Zealand native] forests',[132] which were systematically destroyed by European settlers in order to make way for towns and farms.[133] Without concealment by the forest, the Land is like a woman laid bare and unprotected.[134] The image is one of enforced submission and carries with it a sense of powerlessness, humiliation and vulnerability to further attack. As in Jer 6:1-8, the Land is not only stripped of her protective covering but also, it seems, deprived of her unique reproductive capacity. While there is no explicit connection between this act of stripping and the Land's barrenness, the image of a restored and fecund Land who 'shall bear all' in the fourth stanza implies by juxtaposition a degree of infertility in the Land who is brutally made to 'bear all' in stanza one. Stripping here, as in Jeremiah, seems to be symbolic as much as it is practical, as the Land's assailants assert ownership and control over their victim.

Although the Land is deprived of her indigenous forest covering as a result of being stripped, she is not left exposed for long. Once undressed and naked, the Land is compelled to don the attire provided by her aggressor: the 'brief finery / of gorse and broom' (lines 4-5). These plants function metonymically here, finally revealing the identity of the Land's 'greedy' and 'avaricious' attacker to be colonisers of British origin. Native to western Europe, gorse (*ulex europaeus*) and broom (*planta genista*) were introduced to this Land in the early stages of New Zealand's colonial history. Both species are noxious, invasive, difficult to eradicate and detrimental to indigenous habitats. As metonyms, these plants operate both figuratively and

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[131] Hinewirangi Kohu draws a connection between deforestation and the rape of the Land in her poem 'Papatūānuku'. British colonists are described by Kohu as 'stripping Papatūānuku bare', 'raping the belly of Papa / slashing fern / [and] exposing inner fertility…' H. R. Kohu, "Papatūānuku," in *Te Ao Marama: Comtemporary Maori Writing*, ed. Witi Ihimaera (Auckland: Reed Books, 1993) 53-54.

[132] Park, *Nga Uruora,* 306.

[133] New Zealand's mature native forest was an impediment to the aspirations of colonists who wanted the Land for agricultural purposes. The prevailing attitude of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century settlers was summed up in 1907 by ethnologist Elsdon Best who was of the opinion that 'a people settling in a forest country must destroy the forest or it will conquer them'. Quoted in G. Park, "Going between Goddesses," in *Quicksands: Foundational Histories in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand*, eds. Klaus Neumann, Nicholas Thomas and Hilary Ericksen (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1999), 193. Premier Vogel's Land Act of 1877 required Land-owners to 'bring it [the Land] into cultivation', which meant clearing the forest as quickly as possible. The combination of fire and axe meant that by the 1930s, almost all the lowland forests in New Zealand had been destroyed. Park, *Nga Uruora*, 259.

[134] Similar imagery is used by William Pember Reeves to describe the violent destruction of the Land. In his poem 'Aorangi', Reeves describes 'the war and waste of Nature' which includes 'Stripping the ridges naked, to the bone'. W. P. Reeves, "Aorangi," in *The Passing of the Forest and Other Verse* (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 2000), n.p. Similarly, in her poem 'Otago Landscape', Patricia Glensor describes the 'stripped and servile' Land crushed by the weight of human oppression and forced to 'kneel / and feed us.' P. Glensor, "Otago Landscape," in *Countless Signs: The New Zealand Landscape in Literature: An Anthology*, ed Trudie McNaughton (Auckland: Reed Methuen, 1986), 268.

literally to represent the oppressive colonial presence in this country. On one level the gorse and broom (and later, in line 10, 'thistle') metaphorically stand for the human settlers accused of assaulting and desecrating the Land. Like the symbols used to represent them, these immigrants are depicted as being aggressive and dominating, making it almost impossible for life to exist outside their imperial framework.[135] The plural 'men' in line 22 also indicates that, as in Jer 6:3-4 and 51:27-28, these colonists have a numerical advantage over their victim which, in the context of their attack on the Land, further underlines their ability to enforce their will violently. On a literal level, this gorse and broom is a reference to the extensive environmental modification which occurred in order to facilitate the agricultural endeavours of these settlers, and which resulted in the unprecedented devastation of indigenous ecosystems in this Land.

In the same way that the shepherds of Jeremiah 6:3 lustfully 'fed' off the Land, marking her as their own, so this act of stripping and replanting claims imperial ownership over the New Zealand Landscape, communicating a message of conquest and appropriation. This symbolic domination is also reinforced on a practical level as the deforestation serves to ready the Land for the process of surveying and mapping, which enables the Land to be divided up and sold as a resource for further exploitation.[136] Branded with the markings of her oppressors, the Land must bear the signs of her attack, which will forever identify her as the object of her assailants' triumph. As the exclusive property of these captors who may use her as they please, the Land is rendered utterly powerless, stripped not only of her protective coverings, but also of all agency and self-determination. Underlying the Land's status as the docile possession of a colonial master is the description of her new coverings as 'brief finery' (line 4). Like a scantily clad woman who is forced to parade about for the arousal of her captors, so here the defeated Land is made to dress in the gaudy yellows of foreign lingerie for the enjoyment of her oppressors. In this lewd demonstration of power it becomes clear to the reader that the Land's treatment by colonial agents is conceived in terms of sexual abuse.

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[135] Tuwhare's poetic depiction of these settlers is supported by firsthand accounts that make reference to the aggressive colonial process in New Zealand. In 1843, the British naturalist John Richardson observed that the colonists of this country sought 'the overthrow of native forests, with a view to their replacement by farmhouses, verdant pastures, [and] rich crops of the cerelea [cereals]…' Quoted in Star, "Humans," 51.

[136] Maps, insists J. B. Harley, "Maps, Knowledge, and Power," in *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and Use of Past Environments*, eds. Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 280, 282, were an invention in the control of space, as Land claimed on paper initially anticipated empire and then legitimised its physical conquest. The topographical features of New Zealand's 'empty' spaces could be placed on provincial government maps so that they might be divided into rectangular checkerboard blocks of greens and browns and then auctioned to adventurous immigrants. Another method of incorporating New Zealand into the imperial matrix was by imposing English names upon landmarks and settlements, most of which already bore Māori names.

The extended metaphor continues in line 12 with a depiction of the Land's 'dull folds' – a euphemistic allusion to female genitalia. Once again this sexually explicit imagery operates on multiple levels, comparing the contours of the Land to a woman's vagina. Similarly, the colonial destruction of the environment is, by extension, equated with penile penetration. In the same way that a woman who has been repeatedly raped is robbed of all subjective sensuality, so the Land is numb to the abuse that is persistently inflicted upon her by these new inhabitants. Exploitation, it seems, is so normal an experience for this victim, that her body has become dull and desensitised to the unrelenting attacks. Imagining the Land's destruction in terms of violent vaginal penetration is highly reminiscent of the Jeremianic portrayals of the Land's demise, in which the city's most sacred and intimate spaces – its palaces (6:5) and tabernacles (51:30) – are aggressively breeched using similar metaphorical parallels. Like the gates of Babylon which were unsuccessful in defending the city against attack in Jer 51:30, so these 'folds', dulled from overuse, have failed to protect the womb of the Land, enabling colonist entrance into and exploitation of this sacred space.[137] The Land, it seems, is being raped.

At last the reader is able to comprehend the reason for the Land's 'voiceless' condition (line 8). Prolonged violent sexual assault has deprived this character of all forms of expression and reduced her to a desolate silence. Not only have her attackers stripped and exploited the Land's body, they have also negated her status as a subjective vocal being, denying her the power to articulate a contrary opinion or to advocate for her own wellbeing. Irregular and truncated syntax in the first stanza further reflects the Land's lack of animation, as the halting uncertainty of these syntactical convulsions seems to mimic this fearful, faltering character. As a result of this experience, the Land's defining characteristic in this poem is 'deep scarring' (line 1) and, in light of my close reading, it would appear that the scarring is meant in both a literal and a figurative sense. On a literal level, the Land has suffered extensive physical injuries, permanent wounds that will eternalise her encounter with the avaricious assailants. Figuratively, however, this description also gives significant insight into the lasting psychological effects of grief and fear that this traumatic experience has left upon the Land's character. She has been utterly defeated. The mournful tone of the poem echoes this sense of defeat with the speaker expressing 'bitterness' (line 11) and 'melancholy' (line 14) in response to the Land's 'bleak loneliness' (line 6). By sharing intimately in the Land's

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[137] In his work *The Man on the Horse,* James K. Baxter describes the Land as 'a primitive and sacred Bride, unentered and unexploited.' J. K. Baxter, *The Man on the Horse* (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1967), 12.

experience here, there is a sense in which the voice of the poem resembles the grieving prophet in Jeremiah who laments the loss and destruction of the Land in such similar terms. Jeremianic imagery, it seems, continues to resonate powerfully – if elusively – as part of the contemporary intertextual matrix of Aotearoa New Zealand.

As well as these explicit intertextual parallels, it is important to acknowledge the problematic, ideological perspectives which have been identified as underlying the evoked imagery, and which are also shared as part of the intertextual exchange. The most immediately obvious ideological intertext here is the complex intertwining of gender and geography – the imaging of Land-as-woman. As in the Jeremianic examples, so here is found a sharp, hierarchically-charged dualistic divide which subordinates both women and Land (and indeed all things indigenous) as the inferior opposites to a British, masculine, colonial authority. Once again, the interaction between masculine and feminine, and also between human and other-than-human, appears to be characterised by extreme power inequalities. Subordinate members of the hierarchical relationship are understood as the valuable (sexual) property of their superior counterpart (men/humanity) under whose authority they exist. Thus, both women and Land are presented as objects to be owned and controlled. Such imagery therefore simultaneously upholds traditional gender expectations, as well as maintaining human privilege over the Land.

Building upon these ideas of gender and ownership is the notion that the master must control or domesticate 'his' property by bringing it within an authorised framework of his devising and then containing it within such an horizon. For the Land in this poem, domestication and containment means the stripping of all indigenous foliage and its replacement with exotic plant species from the English homeland (stanza one). It is an image which is strongly reminiscent of the Jeremianic imperative to transform the wilderness into a garden. Here, also, the colonial victors seek to stamp their mark upon the body of their victim – the Land – in a sign of conquest and dominance. The tamed and docile Land as woman becomes the matter upon which the master plants his foot in order to further himself.[138] As a point of departure for greater pursuits, the domesticated Land enables humanity to appear removed from this corporeal realm of matter, reinforcing the traditional human identification with the

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[138] L. Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman,* trans. Gillian. C. Gill (New York: Cornell University Press, 1974), 134, suggests that women are the obedient body-matter used by men as a springboard to leap higher in pursuit of those things deemed important by the master.

world of the master. Indeed, the only remaining human connection to the corporeal seems to be the violent imprint inscribed forever upon the object of conquest: the Land.

Thus it seems that inherent in these evoked images are a number of problematic values and assumptions belonging to the ancient world out of which they emerged. If the persuasive rhetoric of metaphorical imagery predisposes readers to experience reality in a particular way, then the continued presence of Jeremianic ideologies in the imagery of contemporary New Zealand texts provides opportunities for the unconscious dissemination of such problematic perspectives. This means that by reinscribing what appear to be 'normal' modes of behaviour in the Jeremianic text, the intertextual evocations risk uncritically accepting as normal those ancient and problematic ideologies, unintentionally allowing them to inform behaviour, shape attitudes and determine action in contemporary New Zealand communities. In this way, images of the (female) Land as a victim of extreme sexual abuse act upon the world by persuading the reader that violent behaviour toward this Land (and women) is acceptable. The acceptance of abuse and a lack of concern for the Land's perspective all too easily become a lived reality for those who take seriously the textual imagery. Fortunately, however, voiceless passivity is not the ultimate end for the Land in Tuwhare's poem, and it is to her acts of resistance that I now turn.

A shift in tone can be detected in the final two stanzas of Tuwhare's work, as the Land regains both her voice and creative capacity, and the poem's speaker becomes the primary subject of the now-familiar sexualised imagery. In offering his 'naked' (line 16) and 'unadorned' (line 17) body as a gift to the Land, the speaker – who, based on the poem's author appears to be male – seems to align himself with the Land's experience by making himself sexually vulnerable and open to attack also. Although he is not made to suffer the Land's fate, the act reflects a willingness to take sides and empathise with the Land as a being with a life and integrity of her own. As a gesture it appears symbolic of an eagerness to work with the Land to bring about healing and restoration. The action offers an alternative mode of interaction between humanity and the Land, one that counters the combative mode of engagement presented at the poem's outset.

More than just the investment of his body, the speaker also gifts his voice to the Land, echoing her sentiments (line 8) and advocating on her behalf. As well as giving voice to the Land's experience, the speaker also seems deeply attuned to the Land's presence. The most obvious example of this is at the end of the third stanza where an ellipsis establishes a

prolonged period of silence for the reader. When the voice of the poem speaks again in the fourth and final stanza, it is with renewed insight into and awareness of the Land's character. Where, up to this point, the Land has been depicted as the vulnerable victim of abuse who is without agency, she becomes a strong and generous figure who is ultimately in control of all her inhabitants – including those who desire her oppression and exploitation. Far from being desolate and lonely, the Land seems to rise above human concerns to the extent that she is almost dismissive of those who have inflicted violence upon her (line 22). Her existence is neither dependent upon, nor interested in human ideas of hierarchy, power and ownership. In a complete turn of events, it is now the Land who initiates action as she shows 'huge compassion' (line 23), embracing 'those who know no other feeling other / than greed' (lines 24-25). Suddenly, it is the Land who holds authority over all life and in this realisation the reader comes to recognise a deep and primordial power residing within the Land. Initially, it is difficult to account for this total shift in conviction that is found in the fourth stanza. If, however, the space provided by the ellipsis is understood as being filled by another voice – that of the Land – then this leap of logic in the text begins to make sense. The physical properties belonging to the ellipsis draw the reader into silence, encouraging careful consideration of the Land's presence in the text. In this silence the Land is given space to define herself, independent of her oppressors' claims, and – like the poem's speaker – the reader is compelled to listen.

Thus, the mutual constitution of the Land and the human speaker in this poem not only reveals a deep interconnectedness between these characters, it also implies their shared identity. The Land is given voice through this lyrical subject and he, in turn, finds his voice by echoing the Land. Within the lines of these final stanzas is found an alternative mode of existence where humanity is understood to be both vulnerable and utterly reliant on the Land's compassion. It is an orientation that stands in absolute contrast to the mode of violent interaction of the initial stanzas, implicitly challenging the ideologies that underlie such a way of being. This renewed relationship yields new life and growth in the Land, who seems to acknowledge the alternative orientation with renewed fertility and animation. Instead of gorse and broom, the 'fragile blush of manuka' (line 21) studs the Land, as indigenous life returns in a sign of restored balance. The 'dull folds' of the Land's vagina which were previously symbolic of sexual assault are transformed into 'moist lips parting / to the morning' (lines 30-31), an erotic image of sexual arousal. Where once reproduction was a violently forceful and coercive act, the reference to 'blooms' and the parting of moist lips

suggests pleasure and consent. This alternative mode of engagement, it seems, ultimately offers the possibility of healing for the Land.

Although the presence of Jeremianic imagery in Tuwhare's poem is problematic in terms of the ideologies and assumptions they implicitly endorse, it is clear that such imaginings are understood as being unacceptable representations of the relationship between the human and other-than-human. Indeed, in 'Not by wind ravaged' the Jeremianic imagery provides the negative antithesis against which the preferred mode of interaction is presented. Thus, while it seems that this imagery continues to function as part of the broad intertextual matrix of the New Zealand social imaginary, it is not necessarily taken uncritically; rather it is challenged, expanded and transposed in the encounter of the multiple and contending intertextual horizons. The fact that this imagery is present and continues to operate as one of the perspectives clamouring for recognition and acceptance, however, underlines the necessity for ongoing critical reflection into the way in which the Land is conceived and related to in Aotearoa New Zealand.

5 – LAND AS INTERCONNECTED

In the beginning is relation.[1]

It is an urgent task for Christian thinkers to find ways to express the truth of our relatedness to other creatures, and to help us to see how we human beings are part of an ecological whole on the Earth.[2]

5.1 RELATIONALITY IN JEREMIAH: AN OVERVIEW

To claim that the Hebrew Bible is essentially relational in character would be neither contentious nor groundbreaking for most contemporary biblical interpreters.[3] Of particular interest to the present analysis, however, is the fact that – in the prophets at least – such relationality is typically understood by commentators as referring to a connection (or lack thereof) between the people of Israel, their God, and the Land. A range of terminology has been adopted to describe the relationships between these entities. Christopher Wright's highly anthropocentric historical-critical investigation into Old Testament ethics identifies these 'three pillars of Israel's worldview' as a 'triangle' of relationships, with each 'pillar' affecting and engaging with the others.[4] Hilary Marlow's ecologically sensitive reading of 'the prophets' and environmental ethics takes this notion further as she describes an 'ecological triangle' of interconnections which are fundamental to order in the world.[5] An increasingly common articulation of this relationality refers to a 'symbiotic relationship' among these three entities, and it is this notion of symbiosis that has characterised much of the thinking about relationality in the book of Jeremiah.

Understanding relationality in Jeremiah as a three-way symbiotic partnership between God, people, and the Land was popularised by Habel in his 1995 publication, *The Land Is Mine.* In this study of biblical Land ideologies, Habel claims that the idea of a tripartite symbiosis reflected the convictions of an ancient Israelite community that rejected Baalism and

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[1] Buber, *I and Thou*, 27-28.
[2] D. Edwards, *Made from Stardust: Exploring the Place of Human Beings within Creation* (North Blackburn: Collins Dove, 1992), 49.
[3] Fretheim, "I Was Only a Little Angry," 367, asserts that in the Hebrew Bible, 'relationships are constitutive of life itself'.
[4] C. J. H. Wright, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 19, exposes his anthropocentric bias in his instrumentalist depiction of the Land – the 'economic' pillar – which he seems to value based on its material worth.
[5] Marlow, *Biblical Prophets*, 110-111, 263. Unlike the more general approach employed by Fretheim and Wright, Marlow restricts her investigation to the exegesis of particular texts found in Amos, Hosea, and First Isaiah.

demanded exclusive allegiance to YHWH.[6] For Habel and those who have subsequently drawn upon his line of thought,[7] the imagery surrounding this symbiosis highlights YHWH's claim to the Land as its sole owner, as well as YHWH's sovereignty over the people who have been lovingly 'planted' in this Land by their deity.[8] It is argued, however, that the relationship is not purely one-sided, and that this symbiotic connection denotes 'the mutualism of a close relationship' where each participant is both bound to and dependent upon the other participants for their wellbeing.[9] Indeed, the inextricable bond among these members means that the adverse actions of one party will inevitably result in the violation and suffering of all constituents. Thus, interpretations of Jeremiah from this perspective typically emphasise the text's depictions of humanity rupturing this symbiotic harmony.[10]

A symbiotic understanding of the God-people-Land relationship in Jeremiah has allowed contemporary interpreters to read this text in new ways, enabling alternative meanings to emerge. As well as insights gained into the profoundly relational orientation of the ancient Israelite community in the time of Jeremiah,[11] this perspective challenges modern readers to consider the ecological implications arising from the recognition that humanity continues to be inescapably a part of this tripartite partnership and thus even seemingly inconsequential actions have far-reaching repercussions.[12] Other interpreters have used the notion of symbiosis as a starting point for developing alternative understandings of 'covenant' in the book of Jeremiah, and have explored what it might mean to be in right relationship with covenantal partners in light of such relationality.[13] Still others have drawn parallels between the symbiotic connections described in Jeremiah and the experience of indigenous communities. Shirley Wurst, for example, notes that like the descriptions found in Jeremiah, indigenous peoples have a strong sense of reality as being deeply interconnected, and know

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[6] Habel, *The Land Is Mine*, 75. See also Habel, "The Suffering Land," 14; *The God of Jeremiah* (Homebush: St Pauls, 1996), 89; and "Stewardship, Partnership and Kinship I: Three Ways of Relating to God's Earth," in *A Just Asia: The Challenge of a Globalized Economy*, ed. Viggo Mortensen (Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, 1998), 58, all of which express similar ideas around this issue.

[7] V. M. Billingham, "The Earth Mourns," 3, employs what she calls 'an ecologically oriented symbiotic relationship' as a lens through which to read Jer 4:23-28.

[8] Habel, *The Land Is Mine*, 79.

[9] S. Wurst, "Retrieving Earth's Voice," 177, employs this notion of symbiosis in her ecological reading of Jeremiah 4.

[10] See, for example, T. E. Fretheim, *God and World in the Old Testament: A Relational Theology of Creation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 173; Davis, *Scripture,* 128; and Dempsey, *The Prophets*, 5.

[11] Wright's work on the Old Testament generally (*Old Testament Ethics*), and Habel's on Jeremiah specifically (*The Land Is Mine*), are, for the most part, concerned with the world behind the text.

[12] For Marlow, *Biblical Prophets,* 275, this triangular paradigm of ecological interconnectedness in the prophets demands an interrelated model for deriving environmental ethics.

[13] Billingham, "The Earth Mourns," 11-12; and C. J. Dempsey, *Hope Amid the Ruins: The Ethics of Israel's Prophets* (St Louis: Chalice Press, 2000), 19.

that when their kin – the Land – is destroyed, all suffer.[14] While acknowledging the catastrophic breakdown of relationships that is evident within this text, an overwhelming majority of interpreters who engage with the notion of symbiotic relationality appear to accept uncritically the biblical explanation that it is solely human misconduct that has caused such rupture. At the same time such interpreters seem equally complacent in their affirmation of the biblical ideal that upholds a properly functioning, symbiotic partnership as being characterised by the faithfulness of the people to their God, the creative sovereignty of this deity over all, and the resultant fertility of the Land. It is this lack in the interpretive matrix that provides space for my analysis to explore critically the assumptions that underlie the Jeremianic notion of an interconnected reality in both its broken and idealised forms.

For the most part, those writing about symbiotic relationality in Jeremiah give the distinct impression that all members of the tripartite partnership are equal. Daniel Block, for example, argues that these relationships are so intertwined that it is often difficult to determine which bilateral association should be deemed most significant.[15] Indeed, the 'privileged intimacy' described by Habel as uniting God, people and Land, implies a sense of relational symmetry where each bilateral relationship is of equal import.[16] A close reading of Jeremiah from the perspective of the Land would suggest, however, that deep inequalities exist between the different parties of the partnership and that issues of power and powerlessness abound in passages concerning the interaction of these parties. One such passage is Jer 3:1-5. In this analysis I will endeavour to read this text anew, drawing upon the now-familiar ecological hermeneutic to consider how this symbiotic relationship might be experienced by the Land.

5.2 LAND AS POLLUTED: JEREMIAH 3:1-5

By placing Jer 3:1-5 in its broader literary context I return to the first thematic grouping of Jeremiah 2-6, locating this poem within the larger collection of texts which make up this cycle (2:1-4:4).[17] The unifying metaphors that govern this material are primarily concerned with the issue of Israelite apostasy. Images of marital infidelity, harlotry, and broken family relations dominate the cycle, and the call to repentance creates a common thread which runs throughout these texts. With its emphasis on divorce, prostitution, and the question of

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[14] Wurst, "Retrieving Earth's Voice," 178. Billingham, "The Earth Mourns," makes a similar connection throughout her work.

[15] D. I. Block, *The Gods of the Nations: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern National Theology* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1988), 5-6.

[16] Habel, *The Land Is Mine*, 79.

[17] See §3.1.

reconciliation, 3:1-5 reflects on a micro level the concerns of the wider literary unit. Thus, although the poem is distinguished from the surrounding texts as a self-contained work, it will be read with this broader context in mind.

It is widely accepted that Jer 3:1-5 constitutes a distinct unit, as the parameters of these verses are relatively easily determined.[18] The top end of the poem is delineated by the formula לֵאמֹר (to say), which, while bearing no obvious grammatical relation to the immediate literary context, is thought to be the remnant of an original superscription.[19] At the lower end of the poem, the limit is marked by the presence of a *petuhah* at the conclusion of v 5 and by the introduction of prose writing in v 6. The form of this unit, however, has been the subject of significant debate. Some argue it is a 'juridical parable'[20] or a lawsuit,[21] while others insist that the recurring rhetorical questions are an example of 'didactic questioning' and so posit a wisdom background.[22] Like Burke Long, I agree that these questions seem adversarial in design and, far from being instructional, they provide a rhetorical basis for indictment.[23] Thus, these verses seem to take the form of a 'disputation', where rhetorical questions are followed by an accusation.[24] In its antagonistic intent, this form mirrors the poem's content and reinforces the mounting tension between its main characters.

Further confirmation that these verses reflect a disputation is found in the poem's structure, where rhetorical questions and their ensuing indictment create a well-balanced inclusio:

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[18] See Allen, *Jeremiah,* 51; Baumann, *Love and Violence,* 108-109; Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 66; D. Jobling, "Jeremiah's Poem in 3:1-4:2," *Vetus Testamentum* 28, no. 1 (1978): 45; and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 299.

[19] Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 300, suggests the word functions as a short form of the larger superscription 'the word of YHWH'. This formula is omitted in the LXX and is typically left untranslated in modern Bibles, although the JSB has '[The word of the Lord came to me] as follows'.

[20] U. Simon, "Poor Man's Ewe-Lamb," *Biblica* 48, no. 2 (1967): 207-42.

[21] Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 73.

[22] T. R. Hobbs, "Jeremiah 3:1-5 and Deuteronomy 24:1-4," *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 86, no. 1 (1974): 23-29.

[23] B. O. Long, "The Stylistic Components of Jeremiah 3, 1-5," *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 88, no. 3 (1976): 387.

[24] Long, "Stylistic Components," 387. See also Allen, *Jeremiah*, 54; and Shields, *Circumscribing,* 36.

A	vv 1-2	הֵן (behold)
		Will he…?
		Would not...?
		You have…
		You have…
B	v 3	Therefore…[25]
		Withheld are the רְבִיבִים (showers)
		And the מַלְקוֹשׁ (spring rain) has not come
A'	vv 4-5	הִנֵּה (behold)[26]
		Will he be…?
		Will he be…?
		You have…
		You have…

Throughout the poem YHWH is the speaker, discarding the third-person style after v 1a in favour of the more adversarial second-person address. Moving from question to accusation, the deity launches into an emotional tirade complete with wordplay, hyperbole, and irony. YHWH's opponent, with whom he simulates dialogue through quotation (vv 4-5), is the Israelite community of faith. Despite featuring prominently in multiple verses (vv 1-2) as well as being the subject of the poem's climax in v 3, the Land remains silent and motionless throughout. YHWH's dispute is with the people and, at first glance, the Land seems to be little more than a pawn in this ongoing feud.

The first five cola of Jer 3:1 establish a legal basis for YHWH's dispute with Israel by evoking the law concerning divorce in Dt 24:1-4.[27] This law states that a divorced man is not permitted to remarry his former wife if she has married another man between leaving and returning to her first husband. According to the text, the reason for this prohibition is threefold: 1) the woman is defiled; 2) it is abhorrent to YHWH; and 3) it would cause the Land to sin.[28] As with many of the prophet's poems, 3:1-5 requires reading on multiple levels

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[25] Despite the fact that there is no evidence of this word appearing in the Hebrew text, a majority of translations include 'therefore' at the beginning of v 3, implying a causal connection between the behaviour of the people and the actions of YHWH (ASV, KJV, NIV, NRSV). Both the NET and NJB have 'that is why' instead.

[26] Most modern translations overlook the repetition of this word.

[27] Dt 24:1-4 contains the only law in the Hebrew Bible to deal with the dissolution of a marriage.

[28] The relationship between Dt 24:1-4 and Jer 3:1-5 has been the subject of considerable debate from a wide

simultaneously, and it is immediately apparent that this legal citation has been reinterpreted here as a metaphor for the God-people-Land symbiosis. This usage compares Israel's relationship with its deity to that of a couple whose marriage has ended. YHWH's position is analogous to the first husband in Dt 24:1-4, while Israel is compared to the hypothetical wife. Instead of remarrying once, however, Israel's covenantal infidelities are likened to a woman who 'play[s] the whore with many lovers' (Jer 3:1). Finally, the prospect of the woman Israel's return to her first husband, YHWH, is rejected on the grounds that such an indiscretion would result in the pollution (חָנֵף) of the Land (3:1-2).[29] What follows, then, is an exploration into the so-called God-people-Land symbiotic relationship as it is presented through this metaphor.

Although my ecological hermeneutic gives privilege to the place of Land in any given reading, I begin this analysis of Jer 3:1-5 by examining the figure of the woman who metaphorically represents the people of Israel, and whose behaviour will have disastrous implications for the Land in these verses. By alluding to a Deuteronomic law concerned with sexuality, these verses invoke the now-familiar cultural assumptions and deeply entrenched gender stereotypes. The poem's primary metaphor, which casts YHWH as a husband and Israel as his wife, immediately evokes patriarchal ideals of male dominance and female subordination. In v 4, however, the imagery shifts as Israel is quoted appealing to YHWH, אָבִי (my father). אָב is a relatively uncommon designation for God in the Old Testament,[30] and its interpretation here is contested as commentators seek to reconcile what Mary Shields has called the 'slippage' of metaphors within these verses.[31] While I, like most interpreters, take the imagery at face value to be that of a father/daughter relationship,[32] some suggest it

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range of historical-critical perspectives. These debates, however, are superfluous to my concerns. The strong – and in places almost identical – linguistic affinities between these two texts lead me to presume an intertextual connection where Jer 3:1-5 assumes knowledge of Dt 24:1-4. That Deuteronomy precedes Jeremiah is implied in the rhetorical questions of Jer 3:1. Culler, "Presupposition and Intertextuality," 113-114, argues that such questions assert their intertextual orientation 'not just because they seem to request an answer and hence designate themselves as incomplete, but because the presuppositions carried by their questions imply a prior discourse'. Those who draw the same conclusion include Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation,* 311; A. Kalmanofsky, "The Dangerous Sisters of Jeremiah and Ezekiel," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 130, no. 2 (2011): 309; C. Pressler, *The View of Women Found in the Deuteronomic Family Laws* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1993), 58; and Shields, *Circumscribing,* 38.

[29] Although the Land is affected negatively by the behaviour of the people in both Dt 24:4 and Jer 3:1-2, the words used to describe the Land's experience in each passage are slightly different. In Dt 24:4 the Land is said to 'sin' (חָטָא), whereas in Jer 3:1-2, the Land is 'polluted' (חָנֵף).

[30] See Dt 32:6; Jer 3:19.

[31] Shields, *Circumscribing,* 44-45.

[32] See Shields, *Circumscribing,* 44; and Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors,* 92-94.

refs to a teacher/pupil analogy,[33] and others omit the term as a gloss and maintain the continuation of the original metaphor.[34] Whatever particular designation is given to this term and its resulting analogy, it is clear that underlying the relationship between Israel and YHWH is a distinct imbalance of power and a marked difference in status.

This inequality of relationship is further reinforced by the inclusion – and exclusion – of particular voices within the text. Throughout these verses, the power of speech belongs to YHWH, the wronged husband/wounded father. It is from his perspective alone that the reader learns about the depraved behaviour of his wife/daughter, Israel, as he interrogates and accuses her without pause for breath. Although vv 4-5 narrate the woman's lament, this voice is at all times controlled by YHWH who quotes her remorse and then proceeds to use his version of her words as the basis for indictment. In reality, then, this poem privileges the masculine position by failing to represent the woman's alternative perspective and denying her the opportunity to defend herself against the onslaught of accusations. Her voice is never heard.

Rhetorically speaking, the primary function of the female figure within this broken marriage metaphor is to present Israel's infidelity to YHWH in the most sexually demeaning and shameful terms possible. As the poem unfolds, it emerges that the woman, Israel, has not only committed adultery against her husband, but has also been openly involved in a great number of sexual relationships outside her marriage (Jer 3:1-2). This allegedly brazen and insatiable promiscuity earns her the derogatory title 'whore' (זָנָה cf. 2:20) and, like a prostitute, she is willing to practise her trade anywhere. Indeed, in the indictment of his wife, YHWH goes so far as to imply that her behaviour is predatory as he depicts his spouse sitting by the waysides (v 2) enticing anyone who passes by.[35] If there was any uncertainty around the implied attitude toward such conduct, the repeated references to the woman's wickedness leave the reader in no doubt as to the negative judgment being brought to bear on her behaviour. In v 2 the hendiadys 'whoring and wickedness' explicitly links female promiscuity with moral wrongdoing. Even the wordplay between the terms 'lovers' (רֵעִים, v 1) and 'evil' (רָעָה, vv 2, 5) subtly reinforce this connection. Finally, the woman's set brow (v 3:3b) suggests that she resolutely refutes her guilt, stubbornly refusing to feel humiliation (כָּלַם) for the choices she has made. In addition to flouting the responsibilities expected of a

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[33] McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 61-62.
[34] Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 115.
[35] Cf. Gn 38:14-16; Prv 7:10-12.

faithful wife, then, this woman is also accused of resisting the conventions of honour and shame, and thus threatens the authority of society generally.

Many commentators, it seems, are hesitant to question YHWH's version of events in this passage and subsequently disregard what Sharon Moughtin-Mumby has called the 'most audacious sexual metaphor' of all: the reference in Jer 3:2 to the woman, Israel, having sexual intercourse.[36] Presumably uncomfortable with both the interpretive implications and the obscene violence associated with the verb שָׁגֵל, readers have persistently sought to reduce the shocking impact of this word and so, from Masoretic times onwards, it has constantly been replaced by the less confronting alternative שָׁכַב (lie with). The phrase is then rendered: 'where have you not been lain with?'[37] By returning to examine the original verb שָׁגֵל, however, new insights into the woman's licentious behaviour emerge, which counter the poem's dominant perspective put forward by YHWH. The verb appears only four times in the Hebrew Bible,[38] and in each instance the context is one of conflict or violence, with the word carrying the suggestion of forced sexual intercourse. Indeed, the NRSV translates the same word to mean 'raped' in Zec 14:2, and 'ravished' in Is 13:16. More than simply a crude expression for sexual relations, it appears that this term conveys the notion of sexual violation: the woman is being raped. In trying to capture properly the sinister nuances of this verb, Angela Bauer-Levesque has rendered the phrase 'where have you not been raped?'[39] Cynthia Chapman and Sandie Gravett, on the other hand, prefer the more graphic and provocative translation, 'where have you not been fucked?'[40] If the passive use of this verb means that the woman becomes the *object* of abuse, then doubt is immediately cast over the cogency of YHWH's account of his wife. Far from the hedonistic nymphomaniac depicted by her husband, this unhappy wife appears vulnerable and without direction, willing to do absolutely anything and align herself with absolutely anyone in order to secure an alternative existence. Clearly, YHWH (as husband) and his people (as wife) have ceased to function in blissful symbiosis and, as we shall see, their mutual antagonism will have extensive ramifications for the Land's wellbeing.

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[36] Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors*, 103.
[37] See Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 302; and the ASV, KJV, NRSV, and RSV translations. McKane, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 58, and Weems, *Battered Love*, 55, both render the phrase 'is there any place where you have not fornicated?'
[38] Dt 28:30; Is 13:16; Zec 14:2.
[39] Bauer-Levesque, *Gender,* 50.
[40] C. R. Chapman, *The Gendered Language of Warfare in the Israelite‑Assyrian Encounter* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 122; and Gravett, "Reading Rape," 289.

In verse 2, the reader learns that it is as a direct consequence of the woman's behaviour that the Land becomes polluted.[41] Where the reference to the Land's pollution in v 1 is purely hypothetical, here, it is direct and accusatory: 'you (2 fem. sing.) have polluted (חָנֵף) the Land'. The meaning of the term חָנֵף, however, is greatly contested, with translations ranging from 'polluted'[42] and 'defiled',[43] to 'profaned'[44] and 'perverted'.[45] While I have chosen to retain the term 'polluted',[46] I heed Eve Feinstein's suggestion that any translation of חָנֵף should be nuanced by its cognates in Ugaritic and Aramaic, which convey a sense of wickedness, villainy, and godlessness.[47] Being more than a mere description of the Land's physical condition, then, this term carries with it a moral accusation, implying that the subject of such pollution (in this case, the Land), has been involved in transgressive behaviour. In what Alice Keefe refers to as a 'dense symbolic complex',[48] the Land thus becomes a metaphor for the woman's body which, in turn, is symbolic of the social body. As the indiscretions of the people are transferred – in terms of sexual deviance – onto the woman, so the contamination that resulted from the woman's wrongdoing is carried over onto the Land.

But why describe sexual transgression in terms of pollution, and what has the Land got to do with such behaviour?[49] Shields argues persuasively that underlying the claim of pollution in these verses is a metaphor of seed and soil, where seed represents the male (as deity and husband), and soil represents the female (as Land and wife).[50] The woman's womb and the fertile Land are therefore construed analogously as the recipients of the (male) seed.[51] Inherent in both the creation and gender ideals contained within this metaphor is the notion that the soil must be exclusively sown (ploughed) by one (man's) seed, and herein lies the problem at the heart of this poem. If the woman's multiple infidelities (inseminations) cause her to be perceived as defiled, then the corresponding pollution of the Land should be

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[41] The notion that human misdeeds pollute the Land is not uncommon in Jeremiah (3:9; 16:18) and it is also found throughout the Hebrew Bible. See Gn 4:12; Num 35:33-34; Is 24:5-6; Ezek 36:17; Ezr 9:11.

[42] ASV, KJV, NJB, NRSV.

[43] GNB, NET, NIV.

[44] Abma, *Bonds of Love*, 219.

[45] E. L. Feinstein, "Sexual Pollution in the Hebrew Bible: A New Perspective," in *Bodies, Embodiment, and Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, eds. S. Tamar Kamionkowski and Wonil Kim (New York and London: T&T Clark, 2010), 141.

[46] I use this term both because it is by far the most common English translation of the Hebrew, and because it evokes for readers the now widely-publicised, contemporary discourse concerning environmental pollution.

[47] Feinstein, "Sexual Pollution," 142. J. Pedersen, *Israel: Its Life and Culture, III-IV* (Copenhagen and London: P. Branner, 1940), 271, suggests the verb denotes that which 'resists' the sacred.

[48] Keefe, "The Female Body," 99.

[49] For a concise summary of the various reasonings for the condemnation of the wife in Dt 24:1-4 see Pressler, *View of Women*, 51-59.

[50] Shields, *Circumscribing*, 60.

[51] The Hebrew verb זָרַע (sow) is used to describe the divine activity in Jer 31:27 and Hos 2:23.

similarly understood as an undesirable mixture of seed contaminating the soil.[52] Multiple seed donors (sexual partners) cause confusion by raising questions of paternity and, by extension, authority. At stake from the (normative) masculine perspective, then, are issues of power and identity. Without absolute control over his wife's sexual activity, the husband's sovereignty is disputed as he cannot confidently claim his power of fertility and ensure an untainted line of descent. It is similar in the case of the Land, where it becomes a question as to which deity is the source of the Land's fertility and thus holds the ultimate power over all life. Within the context of this metaphor, then, pollution should be understood as a fundamental violation of property. As the woman's disloyalty violates the husband's right to exclusive possession of his wife's sexuality, so the people's disloyalty has violated God's position as supreme deity and sole owner of the Land.

Verse 3 presents the logical conclusion to the seed/soil metaphor, as the rains cease and YHWH's fertility is withheld. While there is no evidence in the Hebrew text of a causal relationship between the infidelity of v 2 and the implied infertility of v 3, most English translations convey such a connection by inserting the adverb 'therefore' between the two verses.[53] The severity of the ramifications resulting from such infidelity is highlighted by the striking chiastic structure of v 3a, which presents the life-giving precipitation as being surrounded by what Bauer-Levesque calls 'verbs of absence':[54]

> '(Therefore) **withheld** are *the showers*
> and *the spring rain* has **not come**'[55]

Mirroring this structural constraint, the rain is cut off and drought in the Land, it seems, is inevitable.

Although the text neglects to identify explicitly YHWH as being responsible for withholding the rainfall, the deity is nonetheless the implied agent of this action.[56] The rationale behind YHWH's behaviour here seems to be closely related to the underlying issues of power and

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[52] Cf. Lv 19:19; Dt 22:9.

[53] See note 25.

[54] Bauer-Levesque, *Gender*, 53.

[55] While this chiastic order is clearly evident in the Hebrew text, this structure is not mirrored in most English translations. These contemporary renderings typically favour synonymous parallelism instead:
>   '(Therefore) *the showers* have **been withheld**,
>   and *the spring rain* has **not come**'.

[56] YHWH's mastery over the rain is seen throughout Jeremiah: 5:24; 10:12-13; 14:22; 18:14; 51:15-16. It is also found repeatedly within the Hebrew Bible. See Gn 2:5; Lv 26:4; Dt 11:14, 17; 1Sm 12:16-18; 1Kgs 8:35-36; 2Chr 6: 26-27; Jb 5:10; Hos 6:3.

identity, and such thinking appears to be threefold. 1) At the most basic level, withholding the rain serves to punish the people for their infidelity. Without life-sustaining water, the Land will become barren. Because the Land is unable to provide for her inhabitants – human and other-than-human – they will languish and cease to exist. 2) In addition to this, YHWH's control of the rain affirms his power of fertility and unequivocally establishes this deity – and at the level of human relationships, all men – as the source of life. 3) Finally, and as a result of his mastery of creation, this action upholds YHWH as being dominant over the people's lovers – the rival deities. If, as Habel suggests, Jeremiah presents a jealous rivalry between YHWH and Baal over competing claims to the Land,[57] then this verse clearly asserts that it is YHWH alone who sustains the Land, and therefore YHWH alone who is entitled to rule over it. Thus, by withholding the rain and bringing drought upon the Land, YHWH has simultaneously reprimanded his obstinate subjects, proven his unparalleled virility, and re-asserted his authority as supreme deity.

Inherent in YHWH's claim of absolute control over all aspects of fertility and procreation, however, is the implicit negation of the Land's role – and indeed the role of women – in reproduction and nurturance. With no evidence of respect or gratitude for the Land's ability to create and sustain life, the text here seems to take for granted this character's fertility and her contribution to the survival of both human and other-than-human communities.[58] The Land is thus presented as an intrinsically fertile constant, lying in wait for the rain to activate her dormant potential.[59] As rain seems to be perceived as the only variable in this relationship and YHWH has claimed power over the weather, it is the deity who assumes sole responsibility for the flourishing of all life. Paradoxically, YHWH's gift of water in this poem is contingent upon Israel's fidelity, meaning that ultimately it is humanity who controls the Land's life-giving capabilities. Stripped of her procreative position, the Land is utterly at the mercy of human behaviour and the divine assessment of such conduct.

Caught between the deviant people and their reproving God, the Land is both implicated in human iniquity (Jer 3:2) and employed as the divine punishment for such behaviour (v 3). For YHWH, the Land seems to function here as an instrument of judgment and a means by which to call his people to account. Even though the lack of rain is intended to reprimand the

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[57] Habel, *The Land Is Mine*, 77.
[58] This observation recalls the imagery identified in §3.3 where YHWH was portrayed as having absolute authority over the garden's fertility.
[59] T. Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses: Women, Culture, and the Biblical Transformation of Pagan Myth* (New York: The Free Press, 1992), 92.

people, it is the parched Land and its other-than-human inhabitants who bear the brunt of YHWH's punishment instead. In this way, the Land serves as what Julie Galambush calls the primary 'site of injury',[60] that is, the physical body upon which YHWH's vengeance is wrought. Damage caused by drought thus becomes a tangible wound etched into the Land. Far from having any concern for the Land, however, the text seems principally concerned with the fact that the people's dependence upon the Land means that its suffering will – by extension – adversely affect its human inhabitants. Implicit in these verses, then, is a direct connection between the suffering of the Land and the suffering of its people, and YHWH seems prepared to exploit this connection by using the suffering Land as a tool to chastise the people.

Like the (metaphorical) woman who is raped and then blamed for the actions of her rapists (Jer 3:2), so the Land is polluted and then made to suffer the punishment of her so-called transgressions (v 3a). By 'accepting' adulterous seeds that will in turn yield a contaminated harvest, the Land is made guilty of betrayal and must become barren as a result.[61] Contrary to these insinuations of guilt, however, the Land seems to be the unfortunate victim in a struggle for power and domination, one who suffers abuse as a consequence of the choices made by others. Aside from functioning (without consent) as a vehicle for crime and punishment, both Land and woman are innocent of transgression in this poem. Human disobedience and the divine response thus occur at the expense of these vulnerable others.

In reflecting on the breakdown of relationships in Jer 3:1-5, most – if not all – commentators place the blame for these disastrous circumstances solely upon the people of Israel.[62] Time and again, interpreters of this text insist that YHWH's actions here are not arbitrary, but rather determined by human (mis)behaviour.[63] Through their infidelity, the human community has incited divine anger and, as the instigators of provocation, the people have

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[60] J. Galambush, "God's Land and Mine: Creation as Property in the Book of Ezekiel," in *Ezekiel's Hierarchical World: Wrestling with a Tiered Reality*, eds. Stephen L. Cook and Corrine L. Patton (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 99.
[61] Cf. the woman in Num 5:20-22.
[62] See, for example, Billingham, "The Earth Mourns," 60.
[63] W. Brueggemann, "Israel's Sense of Place in Jeremiah," in *Rhetorical Criticism: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg*, eds. Jared J. Jackson and Martin Kessler (Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1974), 152; Dempsey, *Hope,* 79, 86; T. E. Fretheim, "Divine Judgment and the Warming of the World: An Old Testament Perspective," in *God, Evil, and Suffering: Essays in Honor of Paul R. Sponheim*, eds. Terence E. Fretheim and Curtis L. Thompson (St Paul: Word & World, 2000), 26; Frymer-Kensky, *Wake of the Goddesses*, 102-103, 105; Shields, *Circumscribing*, 44, 64; and E. van Wolde, *Reframing Biblical Studies: When Language and Text Meet Culture, Cognition, and Context* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 220.

brought drought upon the Land and upon themselves.[64] In the final analysis, then, human action is found to impact the environment directly, meaning that the ultimate responsibility for the well-being of the Land and its inhabitants resides with the people. While such insights resonate easily in an ecologically sensitive age, the emphasis on human culpability is problematic in that it masks YHWH's punishing agency and the divine violence perpetrated against the Land. Thus, without negating the guilt of the human community in the events described here, I wish to address this interpretive omission by examining the character of God in this poem.

Throughout Jer 3:1-5, YHWH seems to be utterly in control. Not only does he make accusations against the people and answer on their behalf (vv 1-2, 4-5), but he also then brings punishment upon this community for their crimes (v 3). Despite this depiction, however, some commentators seem to go to great lengths to minimise – or even repudiate – the divine role in the chastisement of the people. Terence Fretheim, for example, insists that divine judgment is not a penalty introduced by God in response to a sinful situation; rather, God has created the world in such a way that there is an intrinsic connection between an action and its ramifications.[65] YHWH's role in this movement from sin to consequence, argues Fretheim, is analogous to that of a midwife who facilitates the completion of an event which previous human action has already set in motion.[66] In this interpretive context, then, divine violence is downplayed as the mediation of the move from deed to ramification.[67] According to this line of argument, the divine hands are tied; YHWH can do little more than reluctantly carry out the consequences that have been predetermined by the structures governing the moral and cosmic orders.

For Fretheim, YHWH is passionately and pervasively present in the world, but in a way that neither controls nor micromanages the created order.[68] This perspective, he argues, allows for independence and openness in creation, leaving room for genuine creaturely decision-making and freedom of choice.[69] The divine commitment to share creative responsibility with the created community, however, results in YHWH's dependence upon these creatures, making

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[64] The connection between human (mis)behaviour, divine wrath and the Land's desolation is also seen in Jer 9:12-15; 14:1-10; 23:10; 44:22.

[65] Fretheim, "Character of God," 211-230. See also Fretheim, "Divine Judgment," 28; and *God and World*, 163.

[66] Fretheim, *God and World*, 164; "Character of God," 213. See also K. Koch, "Is There a Doctrine of Retribution in the Old Testament?" in *Theodicy in the Old Testament*, ed. James L. Crenshaw (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 61.

[67] Fretheim, "Divine Judgment," 27; *God and World*, 164.

[68] Fretheim, *God and World*, 23, 172.

[69] Fretheim, *God and World*, 163, 172; "Character of God," 219.

the deity vulnerable and at risk of exploitation. Fretheim's rhetoric thus constructs YHWH as a deeply sympathetic figure, compelled to dispense judgment in response to the sinful choices made by humanity. Such judgment, he insists, is administered with immense anguish, and should be understood as YHWH's unswerving faithfulness to the people, reflecting his desire for reconciliation.[70] In this way, Fretheim acknowledges the divine violence, but at the same time absolves YHWH of any wrongdoing.

With reference to Jeremiah generally and to Jer 3:1-5 specifically, Fretheim's explanation of YHWH's involvement in the judgment of Israel seems flawed, as it is the divine control of the moral and cosmic orders that makes the causality of action-reaction possible. Fretheim's image of a vulnerable and unwillingly violent God seems to be inconsistent with the portrayal of a deity who not only possesses the power to interrupt this causality, but also utilises that power by overriding this so-called external structure of governance, despite there being no textual evidence of a change in behaviour from the people (25:8-14). Thus, if YHWH – rather than humanity – has ultimate control of the created order, then the judgment described in this poem should be understood as divine reprisal for human betrayal. Far from being a dynamic interplay between the moral and cosmic realms, then, YHWH's dealing with humanity appears, once again, to be based upon a punishment/reward system, where 'good' behaviour yields blessing (manifest in the Land's fertility), and 'bad' behaviour incurs curse (manifest in the Land's aridity).

As demonstrated above, YHWH's act of withholding the fructifying waters in Jer 3:3 illustrates – on all levels – the divine jurisdiction over every aspect of life. With YHWH's power over the rain – and by extension his mastery over life and death – an image emerges which depicts the world as being controlled by God. Not only does such imagery have significant implications for the conceptualisation of God, it also informs the reader's understanding of the way in which this deity interacts with humanity and the Land. The perception of divine sovereignty imaged in this poem entails a unified vision of reality, whereby all creatures – human and other-than-human – are utterly dependent upon YHWH for their continuing life. To deviate from this vision and exist autonomously outside YHWH's authority – as attempted by the metaphorical woman in these verses – is to risk punitive suffering and even death. Despite Fretheim's claims of openness and freedom of choice, then, it seems the only choice YHWH permits here is what Slavoj Žižek refers to as

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[70] Fretheim, "Character of God," 212, 215, 218. Brueggemann, *Exile and Homecoming*, 43, describes YHWH as 'yearning' for reconciliation.

the paradoxical *choix forcé* or forced choice,[71] where the deity allows his subjects the freedom of choice, provided that they choose correctly. YHWH requires absolute, undivided and permanent loyalty, and to choose otherwise results in losing the freedom of choice through violent coercion.

Read through an ecological lens, then, the symbiotic relationality observed in Jer 3:1-5 can hardly be described as equal, mutual or intimate. Even in its idealised, 'properly functioning' form – with a sovereign deity, a faithful people, and a fertile Land – the tripartite interaction is based upon intimidation and coercion. Thus, the ideology of this so-called symbiosis appears to be that of a dominator hierarchy, a system of ranking established and maintained by force, or the implied threat of force.[72] This conceptual framework is characterised here by profound inequality, distorted communication, violent power-over relationships, and a logic of domination where control is achieved at the expense of the most vulnerable members of the partnership. Power-over encounters occur simultaneously on each of the different layers of this text, mutually reinforcing the subjugation of those positioned on the lower side of the conceptual hierarchy. In light of these interconnected networks of oppression and their potential to be reproduced by contemporary readers, this ecological analysis will address the various hierarchical relationships inscribed here, with particular reference to the role they play in the domination of the Land.

In her work on concepts of pollution, Mary Douglas has persuasively argued that defilement is never an isolated event and can only make sense in reference to a total structure of thought.[73] The 'pollution' described in Jer 3:1-2 should, therefore, be viewed in relation to the implied gender ideals that underlie the various metaphors at play in this poem. If, as noted, the idealised conception of feminine purity is directly related to a woman's sexual fidelity to one man (her husband/father), then her characterisation as a 'whore' makes a qualitative statement about her worth to that man. To describe a woman as a whore suggests that she has been defiled as a result of an illicit sexual encounter, meaning that her value and desirability has been reduced, and that her consequential worth to her husband/father is significantly diminished. Implicit in this poem, then, is a specific reading of gender which affirms a reality where a woman is understood as an object of male possession whose worth is defined and judged by her sexual subjugation to one man. Within this conceptual

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[71] S. Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 1989), 186.
[72] R. Eisler, *The Chalice and the Blade: Our History, Our Future* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1987), 205.
[73] M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), 41.

framework, a dichotomy is established whereby a woman is limited to a single mode of being: she is either idealised as a faithful wife/daughter and is therefore pure, or deemed a prostitute and ostracised as polluted/defiled.

A similar logic also pertains in relation to the Land. In the same way that women are defined and valued in relation to masculine concepts of purity and defilement, so the Land is defined and valued in relation to a divine ideal, articulated in identical terms. Far from being a description of its physical condition, the depiction of the Land as 'polluted' is instead a value judgment referring to the Land's worth from the perspective of its divine owner. This designation implies that the Land's position as a prized possession of YHWH has been tainted in some sense, thus decreasing its import to this deity. While the defining characteristics of a 'pure' Land are not specified in these verses, they are to be inferred through the critique of accusation as relating to YHWH's sole ownership of the soil as well as his mastery over its fertility. Like the woman in this poem, then, the Land is defined as an object of possession and perceived exclusively as either pure or polluted, diametrically opposing categories, which reflect its value – or lack thereof – to the divine master.

Although the discourse of Jer 3:1-5 is disguised as neutral, the rhetoric encoded in these metaphors once again presents as normal the domination of the Land/women by God/men. YHWH's power over the Land's fertility (v 3) affirms the ideal of divine dominance over the Land, reinforcing – and in turn being reinforced by – the husband's authority over his wife in the corresponding gender ideal. The fact that these underlying ideals are unspoken and assumed adds to their power as the reader is expected to agree with this presentation of reality as both natural and obvious. In this way, the text makes tacit claims upon its readers, for, as Carol Newsom insists, symbolic thinking is never simply symbolic, but has extensive implications for those employed in the symbolism.[74] The ideological subtext of this poem thus implicitly enacts the now familiar dualistic split that draws upon the bodies of women and Land to represent sin, and then sets these negative feminine figures against the positive masculine alternative of the long-suffering and ever-faithful husband who is also God. Once again, the figure of the degraded woman and that of the defiled Land embody the threatening antithesis to the idealised hierarchical order, representing the danger of existing beyond the boundaries of YHWH's dominion. This text affirms the masculine responsibility to exert the necessary pressure (violence) to bring the deviant feminine characters back within the

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[74] C. Newsom, "Women and the Discourse of Patriarchal Wisdom: A Study of Proverbs 1-9," in *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel*, ed. Peggy L. Day (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 155.

boundary of the divine order, thus maintaining the dualistic power-over relationships. For women, such an existence involves obedient adherence to the sexual confines demanded by patriarchy in order to protect male privilege. For the Land, on the other hand, it entails absolute subjugation to divine control and, by extension, the control of humanity which has traditionally assumed the role of earthly representatives of this master.

A less contentious – but equally problematic – hierarchical relationship found in Jer 3:1-5 is that of YHWH's dominance over neighbouring deities. Although the text does not reference these rival gods specifically, most – if not all – commentators detect an allusion to the worship of Canaanite deities in the language of the Land's pollution and in the image of the promiscuous woman's lovers.[75] By affirming that YHWH is the source of all existence (v 3), the text implicitly rejects alternative religious traditions, particularly those that venerate fertility gods that embody the power of life present in the Land.[76] While commentators like Habel interpret this rejection in an historical context as the rhetoric espoused by a 'YHWH-alone' party opposing a revival of Baalism,[77] the emotionally charged language of this passage does more than simply persuade the reader to accept its ideological position on exclusive fidelity to YHWH.

In a world of religious pluralism, Jer 3:1-5 is problematic in its affirmation of religious triumphalism at the expense of alternative religious traditions. By using violent means to secure the superiority of the Yahwistic tradition over all other faith traditions, the rhetoric of this poem seems to advocate an adversarial mode of engagement between differing theological perspectives. The text portrays alternative systems of belief as being inherently dangerous, derogatorily describing their gods – and by implication, adherents – as vile and debased 'others' who must be forced into submission. It is a model of relationality that not only prohibits interaction between faith traditions, it intentionally seeks to eliminate the presence of the religious Other. While this ideology of intolerance has problematic implications for interfaith encounters generally, it is particularly troublesome in relation to interaction with indigenous communities whose faith traditions are animistic or ecocentric. With no great interpretive leap these communities and their deities are equated with the

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[75] See Allen, *Jeremiah*, 54-55; Bauer-Levesque, *Gender*, 50; Carroll, *Jeremiah,*142-143; and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 302, 304. Explicit references to idolatry are not uncommon in Jeremiah. See 2:8; 7:9; 11:17; 16: 10-13; 19:5; 22:8-9; 23:27; 32:35.
[76] The rejection of alternative religious traditions is also found throughout Jer 7:17-20; 10:3-5; 16:18.
[77] Habel, *The Land Is Mine*, 75. See also Billingham, "The Earth Mourns," 65.

'horribly degenerate people of Canaan',[78] whose faith and actions are antithetical to and superseded by biblical religion. Thus, although Valerie Billingham finds a 'firm textual basis for conversations with indigenous theologians' in the Jeremianic imagery of symbiotic interconnectedness,[79] this claim should be tempered with the acknowledgment that such imagery also contains an exclusivist ideology that seeks to suppress – and ideally eliminate – the religious beliefs of such communities.

By setting YHWH against the gods of Israel's neighbours, the text also juxtaposes the realms out of which these deities are understood to operate. On the one hand, the text depicts YHWH as a transcendent being who controls the world and yet remains external to it, and whose will is intermittently revealed to humanity through historical events such as the withholding of rain (v 3). In radical opposition to this figure are the rival deities who are identified with objects in the material world and with the immanent powers of the Land. Like the gods with whom they are so closely associated, the Land and its other-than-human inhabitants not only function as a foil for the otherworldliness of YHWH, they also pose a direct threat to the biblical ideal of Yahwistic monotheism. Underlying this text, then, is the history/nature polarity so typical of dualistic reasoning. In the context of Jer 3:1-5 such thinking presumes a sharp dichotomy between the (positively perceived) Yahwistic faith, which has been understood traditionally as being uniquely historical in orientation and located in the intangible spiritual realm, and the (negatively perceived) non-Yahwistic religions of the rival deities, which are grounded in the repetitive fertility cycles of the Land. As a result of YHWH's interrupting these cycles and triumphing over the neighbouring deities, the realm of history is elevated as the domain of conscious, dynamic and purposeful interaction between humanity and God. The created order, meanwhile, is subordinated as a static system, lacking sentience and agency, and bound by the unchanging patterns of ceaselessly recurring events controlled by the historical domain.

In its preoccupation with the exclusive worship of one God, Jeremiah 3:1-5 establishes two contrasting, discontinuous realms: the realm of history, made sacred as the channel of divine revelation to humanity, and the realm of the Land, desacralised as lifeless and devoid of divine presence. The unavoidable consequence of this view is to set the relationship between these opposing worlds in the context of domination. By divesting the Land of character and thought, the text justifies the removal of ethical consideration in regard to this realm, making

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[78] Beisner, *Garden Meets Wilderness*, 57.
[79] Billingham, "The Earth Mourns," 273. See also Wurst, "Retrieving Earth's Voice," 178.

it possible to relate to Land without concern for its feelings or wellbeing. Rhetoric such as this provides the ideological prerequisite for the manipulation and exploitation of the other-than-human world. With no ethical imperative to care for and respect the Land in and of itself, this character – and its other-than-human inhabitants – is understood as being little more than the means to human ends.[80] The perception of Land as insentient thus naturalises its subordination to the realm of history and in turn confirms the God-like authority of humanity over the inert world.

Within the hierarchical account of reality affirmed in this poem, then, the Land is attributed an instrumental value only, functioning once again as the means by which YHWH expresses his displeasure at human infidelity. While most commentators unquestioningly accept the role of the Land as a tool of judgment, some acknowledge this position and seek to justify it by using religious language. Fretheim, for example, insists that as 'a medium in and through which God gets things done in the world',[81] the Land – and indeed all 'nonhuman' creation – has a 'God-given vocation', and takes the role of a 'servant' in regard to human life.[82] Indeed, he argues, this servant vocation may even include a call to suffering on the part of those furthering the divine purpose and, understood in these terms, 'victim' language used in relation to the Land 'insufficiently recognises [the] vocation' to which it is called.[83] Billingham and Wright, on the other hand, blithely affirm the Land's instrumental status as they describe this character as a kind of covenantal 'barometer', which functions as a gauge to measure Israel's relationship with God at any given moment.[84] In this description of the Land, these writers implicitly endorse the history/nature dichotomy that characterises this text, re-inscribing the poem's disinterest in the experience of the Land and perpetuating its preoccupation with the relationship between YHWH and the people. Disguised beneath the theological language of vocation and service, these interpretations uphold the Land's instrumental worth and sanction its exploitation for what is perceived to be the 'greater good'. Thus, both the rhetoric espoused in this poem and its history of interpretation set a dangerous precedent in affirming a reality where the suffering and oppression of those on the

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[80] W. Leiss, "The Domination of Nature," in *Ecology: Key Concepts in Critical Theory*, ed. Carolyn Merchant (New York: Humanity Books, 1999), 58, suggests that as a pre-condition for modern science, the desacralisation of creation was the unifying thread in the general program that became known as the enlightenment.
[81] Fretheim, *God and World*, 283. Hiebert, *Yahwist's Landscape*, 79, similarly describes the Land as 'functioning as the media of divine presence'. Wright, *Old Testament Ethics*, 112, on the other hand, insists that the created order serves God's purposes by 'functioning as the vehicle of God's judgment'.
[82] Fretheim, *God and World*, 270, 279.
[83] Fretheim, *God and World*, 161, 279-280.
[84] Billingham, "The Earth Mourns," 54; Wright, *Old Testament Ethics*, 77, 96.

'other' side of the hierarchical divide is justified in order to further the interests of the human community and their God.

To resist the overriding force of this poem's persuasive rhetoric and seek instead evidence of an alternative ecological perspective seems futile at first glance, as the voice of the Land is silenced in the face of YHWH's polemic against the people. Without the power of language, the Land is denied an opportunity to articulate its experience, and is thus unable to protest the injustice perpetrated against it in these verses. Indeed, the physical silencing of the Land through its devastation in Jer 3:3 suppresses any form of communication, thereby reducing the possibility that another party will identify with this character and advocate on its behalf.[85] And yet it is to this devastation that I return in an attempt to do just that. By entering into the Land's experience and perceiving the events of the poem from this perspective, I seek insights that operate imperceptibly below the 'surface of assumed evidence'.[86] It is an attempt to reconsider this character's subordinate position in the tripartite symbiosis and, in doing so, I hope to recover an alternative possibility for relationality within this model.

Obscured by the adverse interaction between YHWH and his people, the underlying dependence of both these characters upon the Land goes unnoticed by most commentators. Beneath YHWH's violent reprehension in Jer 3:3, however, lies the unspoken assumption that human life is dependent upon and sustained by the Land and its other-than-human inhabitants. Implicit in the divine punishment is the acknowledgement that without the Land and the fructifying waters that nourish its intricate ecosystems, humanity must perish. It is in this act of withholding the rain that YHWH's reliance upon the Land is also exposed, for without the Land as 'leverage', this deity is rendered powerless, isolated and unable to communicate effectively. Without the Land, YHWH is 'no god' – much like the rival deities rendered impotent as a result of their inability to exert influence over the Land's fertility. At the heart of this poem, then, lies an implicit affirmation of the ontological dependence of both YHWH and humanity upon the Land as the source of meaningful existence. Both the Land and relationship *with* the Land is fundamental to the identity of humanity and God.

With this acknowledgement of dependency comes the realisation that the Land's well-being is inseparably related to human well-being. For humanity to deny this connection and behave

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[85] N. Habel, "The Silence of the Lands: The Ecojustice Implications of Ezekiel's Judgment Oracles," in *Ezekiel's Hierarchical World: Wrestling With a Tiered Reality*, eds. Stephen L. Cook and Corrine L. Patton (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 137-138, observes a similar situation in Ezekiel.
[86] Code, *Ecological Thinking*, 176.

without reference to the sustaining Other is to risk death for all. While the motivation for reconsidering the relationship between humanity and the Land may at first appear anthropocentric, primary attention to the Land's situation works to destabilise the notion of human privilege and offers the possibility of alternative patterns of encounter between these characters. To recognise the Land as 'sustaining Other' requires the ecological reader to take this character seriously as a centre of intentionality and subjectivity whose ability to create and nurture innumerable interconnected forms of life is beyond human comprehension. Identified as a being in its own right, the Land finds expression here as a distinct and autonomous Other, within whose intricate ecological fabric humanity exists. If the thriving of the Land is understood as being intrinsic to human survival, it seems incumbent upon human beings to include a respect for and the flourishing of this Other among the primary goals of the human species.[87] Thus, to perceive the relationship between humanity and the Land in these terms not only challenges the anthropocentric presumption that the Land is 'ours' to master, but it also urges the reader to consider a theological anthropology that takes account of this interconnected reality.

If the goal of flourishing is broadened to include the Land and all its life forms, then alternative models of relationality are needed to replace the 'dominator' mode of interaction that prevails in Jer 3:1-5 specifically, and in Western thought more generally. In contrast to dominant perceptions of Land as a means to an end, this counter-reading suggests that human dependence upon the Land is comparable to human dependence upon one's own kin, without whom life is also impossible. Far from being ontologically divided from or 'over and above' the Land, this position of dependence locates humanity within a diverse and complex community of life, all of which relies upon the Land for its survival. To perceive humanity as members – not masters – of this community enables human individuals to engage with the Land and its other-than-human inhabitants as kin, with whom we might work to develop mutually sustaining relationships.[88] While Plumwood cautions that some notions of kinship risk assimilating the Land by failing to recognise the difference and independence of the Other,[89] this model of relationality need not abandon the boundaries that differentiate between human and other-than-human, and that prevent the Other from becoming a projection of the human self. Rather, to regard the Land as kin offers an alternative lens

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[87] Plumwood, *Feminism,* 154-155, 160.
[88] Habel, "Stewardship," 65-72, and P. Hefner, "Beyond Exploitation and Sentimentality: Challenges to a Theology of Nature," *Tro & Tanke* 5 (1995): 119-142, propose a 'kinship' model of relationality to underline the intimate relationships between humanity, the Land and the other-than-human communities.
[89] Plumwood, *Feminism*, 125.

through which to perceive this Other, which in turn makes it possible for humanity to encounter the Land as a valued subject in its own right and with its own limitations. It is against this background of kinship that relationality may be reconceived in a more integrated form.

Identifying the Land as a centre of subjectivity and a mutual member of the same community requires that moral concern be broadened to include this Other – and, by extension, the other-than-human forms of life it sustains. To this end, Plumwood insists that, although they are at odds with predominant instrumentalist modes of relationality, value-based concepts such as friendship, gratitude, compassion, and care must characterise human interaction with the Land in order for the goal of thriving to be achieved.[90] Interaction based on such concepts will also take seriously the relationship between human behaviour and its effect upon the Land, a connection underlined in Jer 3:1-5 by the word רָעָה, which is used to speak of both human transgression (wickedness, v 2) and the material consequences of such action (disaster, v 5).[91] This connection appears remarkably consistent with the insights of modern science, which demonstrate that humanity is inseparably related to the fragile webs of interconnected other-than-human life and has the capacity to affect adversely these ecosystems in pervasive and devastating ways.[92] To extend moral sensitivity to the Land and its ecological networks of dependencies thus turns human attention away from exclusively anthropocentric concerns and requires that the broader ecological context be considered when assessing the possible consequences of any human endeavour. Within this model, the needs of the Land limit anthropocentric enterprise.

Beneath Jer 3:1-5, then, lies a tension between the hierarchical ideologies that enable power-over relationships, and an integrated vision of relationality where humanity is understood as but one element of an interconnected and interdependent community. To listen to the Land's presence in this text is to be reminded of our inextricable connection to the Land, and the obligations of humanity towards the mutually sustaining ecosystems that are our kin. It is to perceive ourselves as 'beings-in-relation',[93] whose identity is grounded in the environment we inhabit.

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[90] Plumwood, *Feminism*, 154-155, 184.
[91] 'You have brought (lit. 'made') all the disaster you were able' (Jer 3:5).
[92] Case-Winters, *Reconstructing*, 110.
[93] Case-Winters, *Reconstructing*, 75.

In the same way that the Land reveals relationality to be intrinsic to human identity in this poem, so the Land also shows that such relationality is integral to the character of God. Like humanity, God is seen here as being dependent upon the Land, without whom the deity is silent and powerless. Without the Land, forestalling the rain becomes a meaningless threat, and YHWH has no power of negotiation, no means by which to exert influence over the people. However coerced into compliance, it is the Land that enables God's agency. While the Land is reliant upon God to provide rain in these verses, God is equally dependent upon the Land as a partner in the creative and communicative process. Like the metaphorical woman, however, the Land is denied this collaborative role and is instead little more than a symbol of YHWH's triumph. Because the text's strongly andro/theocentric bias precludes the overt identification of these characters in mutual terms, retrieval here thus requires redefining the Land in order to break the pattern of silencing.

The fundamental and indispensable position that the Land holds in relation to the deity in Jer 3:1-5 subverts the power dynamics at work in the immediate text, and necessitates the reconsideration of both these characters in light of this evidence. Together, God and Land possess the potential for creation and the power of destruction, as the elemental combination of soil and water provides the underlying prerequisite for human and other-than-human existence. Alongside YHWH, the Land is the source of life and death. The crux here is that God and Land function interdependently in this text, with each one enabling the agency of the other. Viewed from this perspective, it becomes apparent that, far from being an inert instrument of convenience, the Land is a co-equal partner with God by sharing in the creative process. More than a simple reassertion of the vital contribution made by the Land to the procreative process, the co-equal status of Land is an implicit challenge to the theo/anthropocentric ideologies that enable this subject to be treated as a commodity, defined and valued according to the master's agenda. As an equal, the Land rejects the dualistic framework that sets the spiritual over the material and the masculine over the feminine, and allows violence and coercion to be employed as a means by which to maintain this system of dominance and subjugation. Instead, the Land as partner demands gratitude, respect and even reverence, equal to that given to its divine counterpart.

To dispute the ideologies that deny the equal relational status of Land is, by extension, to critique the representation of a deity who embodies such thinking. As partner, the Land poses a direct challenge to the portrayal of YHWH as a domineering and possessive figure who employs forceful manipulation in order to maintain hierarchical superiority. Such a depiction

seems sharply at odds with an understanding of the divine being as relational and interdependent, and it is this latent contradiction that exposes an interruption within the text, providing an interstice from which to reconceptualise God in a way that is consistent with the type of relationality described above. Acknowledging God's reciprocal relationship with the Land immediately locates the divine figure within the web of interconnected beings that are mutually dependent upon each other for life and survival. In contrast to the image of a detached and transcendent deity who operates externally to the world through sporadic interventions, this interdependent God is internally related to the Land and all other members of the interrelated community of kin to such a degree that every movement of this web impacts upon the deity.[94] Within this model, divine power is not unilateral; rather God's interdependence means that such power is distributed among community members. Instead of playing off the spiritual against the material, these spheres overlap within a single reality, sharing power and responsibility. With Land and humanity, then, God functions as a partner – as opposed to a ruler – in sustaining the complex and diverse ecological community. Thus it seems that, as well as being the way of Land and its human and other-than-human inhabitants, connectedness, mutuality and partnership is also the way of God.

While there are clues within Jer 3:1-5 that point to the fundamental interconnectedness of God, Land and people, the reality of this text is that it does not support the mutuality of the tripartite coalition members. To listen to the Land in this poem is to hear its silent protest against a model of relationality that is envisioned as hierarchical, violent and repressive. It is to denounce both the ideologies that legitimise this interaction, and the metaphors that carry such thought. But it is also to identify moments of rupture and discontinuity, to draw out the dissenting perspectives which allow the reader to perceive an alternative reality, and to give voice to this counter-discourse. Although the opposing perspective is barely audible in this poem, that which was able to be retrieved will provide a foundation for further investigation into relationality between God, Land and people in Jeremiah. It is my hope to build upon this foundation as I turn to read with the Land in Jeremiah 31:35-37.

5.3 THE INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF ALL REALITY: JEREMIAH 31:35-37

Reading with the Land in Jer 3:1-5 makes it clear that although relationality characterises – and indeed constitutes – the interaction between God, Land and people in Jeremiah, this does not necessarily mean that such interaction is characterised by what an ecological reader might

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[94] This alternative model of God is just that – an alternative model of God. It does not reduce God to the world (pantheism), nor does it negate the notion of divine transcendence in itself, but rather seeks to qualify it.

consider to be just and life-giving relationships. Through the Land's presence in this interpretation, readers are reminded that interconnectedness can be violent and coercive, and are cautioned against the uncritical embrace of relationality as being automatically positive. While an abusive mode of interaction appears to dominate the book of Jeremiah,[95] this does not preclude the existence of alternative models of relationship, and it is in this vein that I turn to Jer 31:35-37 in an attempt to explore an image of relationality that cuts against the grain of the Jeremianic tradition.

For this close examination of Jer 31:35-37 I return to the Book of Restoration (Jeremiah 30-33), a collection of texts located at the periphery of the Jeremianic imagination in their emphasis on reassurance and hope. Like the Book of Restoration generally, these verses stand in sharp contrast to the surrounding Jeremianic material in their affirmation of the abiding wonders of the Land and its cosmic context, and of the faithfulness of YHWH to both Cosmos and people. With the text's emphasis on this broader ecological domain, my investigation thus expands to include the cosmic realm within which the Land exists. Relationality is conceived here in the broadest terms possible. Given the scope of this project, however, the Land will remain my interpretive priority and, as such, any exploration into the broader ecological context of Jer 31:35-37 will be made with reference to the Land specifically.

Form-critically, these verses consist of two brief oracles (vv 35-36 and v 37) denoted by a double messenger formula, which is indicative of a prophetic unit.[96] Although the confessional expressions of v 35 suggest vestiges of a hymnic poem, this form appears to have been subsumed within the first oracle, the core of which is found in v 36.[97] In addition to the presence of these messenger formulae which create an inclusio (vv 35, 37), the oracles are delineated by section markings, which delimit the unit with a *setumah* before v 35 and after v 37. The two oracles contained within these verses are then divided by another *setumah* following v 36. Further to this, the poetic style that characterises these three verses also demarcates the oracles from the prose passages of the surrounding literature.[98]

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[95] See for example Jer 2:15-17; 5:1-10; 6:19; 7:16-20; 9:6-13 [Eng 7-14]; 12:4-17; 23:10; 45:4; 51:36.
[96] Brueggemann, *Exile and Homecoming*, 295; Holladay, *Jeremiah 2,* 170; and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36,* 483.
[97] Holladay, *Jeremiah 2*, 170.
[98] The poetic nature of Jer 31:35-37 is not unanimously agreed upon. The NEB, for example, treats only v 36 as poetry, whereas the REB translates only v 35 in poetic form. The JSB on the other hand, has vv 35-36 as poetry and v 37 as prose, while the KJV and the ASV take both oracles as prose. Most modern versions, however, treat these three verses as poetry (ESV, NET, NIV, NRSV). I am inclined to identify these verses as poetic in style

Although Jer 31:35-37 contains two separate oracles, commentators are unanimous that they should be read together as indicated by the repetition of catchwords:

I   …fixed order (חֻקֹּת) …   v 35

      If (אִם) these fixed orders (הַחֻקִּים)…   v 36

            … from before me (מִלְּפָנַי)

      Then (גַּם lit. 'so also') the seed of Israel (זֶרַע יִשְׂרָאֵל) …

            … before me (לְפָנַי)

            all (כָּל) the days

II   If (אִם)…   v 37

      … then (גַּם) …

      … all (כָּל) the seed of Israel (זֶרַע יִשְׂרָאֵל)

      … all (כָּל)

An ecological focus further reiterates the unity of these three verses, revealing a chiastic structure of images which draws the reader's gaze back and forth between the celestial and sublunary realms:

v 35   YHWH   I

          Celestial realm (Sun, Moon, Stars)

          Sublunary realm (Sea)

                YHWH

v 36   If the fixed order were to cease

                                    then so also would the people cease

v 37   YHWH   II

          Celestial realm (Heavens)

          Sublunary realm (Land)

      YHWH

While the presence of the sublunary and celestial elements here clearly warrants a close ecological examination of these oracles, I begin this analysis with a brief overview of the dominant interpretations of this passage and the difficulties posed by such readings.

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due to their distinct lack of prose elements such as longer sentences, the presence of relative clauses, and the repeated use of conjunctions, direct object markers and pronouns.

Undoubtedly the most popular text in the Book of Restoration is the new covenant passage in Jer 31:31-34.[99] By comparison, the three verses immediately following this section have been neglected to the point of denigration by most commentators. Holladay, for example, notes that apart from the protasis-apodosis structure of 31:35-37, 'little more need be said on these verses'.[100] On the rare occasions that discussion of these oracles is offered, interpreters most commonly read these verses as the (negatively phrased) unqualified assurance of Israel's endurance under YHWH.[101] Within such interpretations the 'unchanging' regularity of the cosmic figures in this text becomes a metaphor for YHWH's new relationship with Israel.[102] As the 'orders of creation' are unceasing and eternal, so too is the guarantee of Israel's future security as the people of God.[103] In its scale and durability, the Cosmos is thus understood here as functioning to reinforce the scope and permanence of the aforementioned covenant.[104] In this way, the discourse then typically sidetracks to focus on textual similarities between Jer 31:35-37 and other covenantal assurances such as those made to Noah and Abraham.[105]

The other (equally) predominant reading of these oracles focuses on the ordered Cosmos as evidence of God's omnipotence.[106] Within this interpretation, the depiction of YHWH 'giving' the cosmic elements and regulating the rhythms of night and day (v 35) reveals a deity who is utterly in control of a carefully structured universe.[107] Likewise, YHWH's movement within the Sea (in the same verse) is taken as a depiction of a divine figure whose sovereignty extends to include even the nihilistic forces of chaos embodied by the Ocean. From this perspective, the presence of Land, Sea and Sky portrayed here in their

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[99] H. B. Huffmon, "The Impossible: God's Words of Assurance in Jer 31:35-37," in *On the Way to Nineveh: Studies in Honor of George M. Landes*, eds. Stephen L. Cook and Sara C. Winter (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 172, notes the considerable bibliography relating to these verses.

[100] Holladay, *Jeremiah 2*, 199.

[101] See Allen, *Jeremiah*, 358; Becking, *Between Fear*, 267; J. M. Bracke, "The Coherence and Theology of Jeremiah 30-31" (PhD diss., Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Virginia, 1983), 58, 61; W. Brueggemann, "On Land-Losing and Land-Receiving," *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 19 (1980): 168; Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 615-616; Holladay, *Jeremiah 2*, 171; and Huffmon, "The Impossible," 174-175, 179.

[102] Huffmon, "The Impossible," 172. See also Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 616.

[103] Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 615. See also Brueggemann, "On Land-Losing," 168; and Huffmon, "The Impossible," 174-175.

[104] Allen, *Jeremiah*, 359; Holladay, *Jeremiah 2*, 199; Huffmon, "The Impossible," 176; and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, 485.

[105] Gn 8:22; 9:8-17; 13:16; 15:5; 16:10; 22:17; 26:4; 28:14.

[106] Brueggemann, *Exile and Homecoming*, 296; and B. A. Bozak, *Life 'Anew': A Literary-Theological Study of Jer. 30-31* (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico 1991), 124-126.

[107] Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, 485.

unfathomable vastness, is understood as 'a window into YHWH's power'.[108] God governs both order and chaos.[109]

A number of difficulties arise, however, when these interpretations of Jer 31:35-37 are considered using an ecological hermeneutic. The first and thoroughly anthropocentric approach to this text is problematic in its exclusive focus on the privileged status of humanity (the people of Israel) and their unique relationship with God. Far from recognising the celestial and sublunary elements as characters in their own right, the Cosmos is reduced to functioning as a metaphor, a mere signpost pointing to a much greater reality: the divine-human connection. Further to the inferiorization of the Cosmos as a language device is the fact that the metaphor relies upon a depiction of Land, Sea and Sky as unchanging and eternal in order to provide the primary point of comparison with the deity's newfound fidelity. While the interpretive spotlight remains upon YHWH, the comparison implicitly endorses the subordination of the Cosmos as an inanimate and ceaselessly repetitive static system, which in turn perpetuates the now-familiar history/nature dualism.

The other dominant interpretation of these oracles is thoroughly theocentric in orientation, affirming the depiction of an intelligent and supremely powerful deity, at the expense of other characters in the text. Although this emphasis differs slightly from the anthropocentric approach, the Cosmos operates similarly in this reading as it is employed to reflect the importance of another – in this case, God. By providing the negative foil against which YHWH's greatness is magnified, the other-than-human/other-than-divine appears to be without subjectivity and devoid of inherent worth, functioning instead as an instrument to bolster the theocentric agenda. Reinforcing this dualistic divide between God (spiritual) and Cosmos (material) is the emphasis placed upon divine agency/control (seen in the verbs 'to give' and 'to stir', v 35), which is implicitly set against the passivity/powerlessness of the Cosmos as the recipient of YHWH's action.[110] Clearly, even the brief interpretive attention that has been given to these verses poses significant problems in their uncritical reinscription of the traditional dichotomies that detrimentally subordinate Land, Sea and Sky. Rather than expanding upon the critiques I have identified here, and which have appeared elsewhere in this thesis, my attention in this final reading will focus primarily on identification with and

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[108] Allen, *Jeremiah*, 359.
[109] Brueggemann, *Exile and Homecoming*, 296.
[110] See Bozak, *Life 'Anew',* 126.

retrieval of the experience of the Land and its broader cosmic context. With this in mind, I turn to read anew the relationship between God and Cosmos in Jer 31:35.

The interaction between God and Cosmos in 31:35 is initially evident at a structural level, as verbs of action and encounter characterise the parallelism which constitutes the core of the verse:

YHWH

enables (lit. 'gives', נָתַן)	the Sun	to light	by day
(and)	the Moon and Stars	to light	the night
stirs up (רָגַע)	the Sea	to roar	its waves

YHWH

Although the verbs 'to enable' and 'to stir' have been translated variously to support the anthropocentric and/or theocentric agenda/s, a close examination of each term from an ecological perspective yields new insights which confound conventional interpretations of a one-way relationship between God (Maker/Designer/Agent) and the material realm (made/designed/recipient). Translations of the verb נָתַן, for example, range from 'fixed'[111] and 'established',[112] to 'appoints'[113] and 'command[s]';[114] renderings which imply the authoritative action of one who is extrinsic to the creative process being described (YHWH). In this interpretation I have chosen to nuance the literal translation of נָתַן, (to give[115]), using instead the verb 'to enable'. This translation picks up on and makes explicit the suggestion – implicit in the verb 'to give' – of performative force that is non-hierarchical, and yet still facilitates action. Something of this nuanced meaning is also discernible in the Hebrew, where the participial form of this verb indicates that the divine activity here is both interactive and ongoing.[116] Rather than being reduced to a set of events in the distant past promulgated by an all-controlling deity, YHWH's creative activity – YHWH's enabling– is construed as continuous engagement with the cosmic order. Existence is made possible through the dynamic interrelationship between deity and materiality.

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[111] NET.
[112] JSB.
[113] NIV.
[114] CEV.
[115] See the ASV, ESV, KJV, and NRSV.
[116] Becking, *Between Fear*, 264; and G. L. Keown, P. J. Scalise, and T. G. Smothers, *Word Biblical Commentary: Jeremiah 26-52* (Dallas: Word Books, 1995), 136.

This creative agency is not restricted to the divine figure alone, however. YHWH's enabling results in the action of the celestial beings themselves, as the Sun, Moon, and Stars respond to the divine encounter by providing light (לְאוֹר) for the day and night respectively. Contrary to predominant interpretations of God's creative activity as asserting authority over the material world, the divine enabling here appears to be a continuous call into newness of being, to which the cosmic elements are invited to respond. This understanding marks a shift away from traditional portrayals of power, which contrast the passive and dependent Cosmos with a creative and independent deity. Instead, this reading implies an interdependent relationship between characters whose interactive agency makes them co-equal subjects in their own right. Just as the cosmic beings depend upon divine empowerment, so too does this deity depend upon the response of the Cosmos, for such empowerment is futile without corresponding action. In other words, just as the Sun is dependent upon YHWH's enabling activity, so too is YHWH dependent upon the Sun's response in providing light. Relationality, as it is understood from this ecological perspective, is thus an ongoing and dynamic encounter between God and Cosmos.

From the celestial realm, the reader is drawn to the more immediate sublunary realm or, more specifically, to the surging oceanic domain of Jer 31:35b. The evocative imagery of this line depicts YHWH 'stirring up' the Sea, so that its waves 'roar'. Once again, the participial form of the verb 'to stir up' (רָגַע) suggests that the divine interaction with the Ocean is a sustained encounter. Again also, the material subject (the Sea) actively answers God's stirring, in this case, through the roaring (הָמָה) of its waves. In his reading of these oracles, Bob Becking suggests that the interaction between deity and Ocean here should be read through the warrior traditions of neighbouring Ancient Near Eastern cultures, and thus understood as an allusion to the divine battle with the Sea.[117] Against this backdrop, the Ocean is seen as a pelagic wilderness; an inimical power that threatens the cosmic order. Standing in combative opposition to this unruly force, YHWH is presented as the heroic conqueror of chaos, whose engagement with the Ocean demonstrates the divine control over the powers present in the realm of this vast unknown. In seeking an alternative ecological interpretation of this text, I endeavour to re-read this so-called antagonistic relationship between YHWH and the Ocean, and attempt to challenge the rhetoric of mastery and subjugation which inevitably emanates from the prevailing interpretations.

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[117] Becking, *Between Fear*, 266, makes particular reference to Canaanite mythology. While Becking is alone in explicitly positing this background, it is alluded to by Bozak, *Life 'Anew'*, 124-125; Brueggemann, *Exile and Homecoming*, 296; and Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, 485.

Read against the background posited by Becking, YHWH's 'stirring' in Jer 31:35b appears menacing and provocative, while the 'roaring' of the Sea is seen as the hostile response to such goading. The intent behind these verbs changes dramatically, however, when they are read through the Bible's positive oceanic traditions,[118] in which the Sea's thunderous roar bespeaks pleasure and celebration. If, in line with these traditions, the Sea's utterance here is understood as an answering roar of spontaneous delight, then YHWH's instigative stirring – which elicits such a response – can be interpreted as a playful gesture of joy-filled fun. Far from being an angry altercation, this interaction is conceived as light-hearted and amiable. In playing with the Sea, God demonstrates delight in the Ocean, taking pleasure in its wild and tempestuous character. Through such enjoyment, YHWH implicitly acknowledges and respects the Sea's inherent subjectivity, for, as Joseph Sittler argues, 'To enjoy means to let a thing be itself and rejoice in it'.[119] YHWH's stirring touch and the Ocean's pleasured response also affirms the sensual delights of the material realm, creating a kind of ecological *jouissance*. Such interaction destabilises the dichotomised thinking that underlines traditional interpretations of the God-Sea relationship in that it depicts relationality beyond hierarchy. The playful reciprocity of this relationship seems to resist domination, circumscription and violent manipulation. Mutual enjoyment and its associated phenomena (pleasure, celebration, and delight), thus contribute to an alternative vision of relationality in their affirmation of non-hierarchical interconnectivity.

In Jer 31:35, then, YHWH's relationship to the Cosmos is not one that orders, controls, or directs, but is rather a continuous, moment-by-moment connection which (playfully) enlivens and empowers all matter. God's presence amid material existence is underlined structurally with the inclusio of the divine name bracketing this verse, and is further reinforced in the repetition of the phrase 'my presence' (לְפָנַי lit. 'before me') in v 36. Ruth Page's expression 'pansyntheism' (God-with-all) seems an appropriate description of this presence in that it uses the preposition 'with' to denote YHWH's relationship to the material realm.[120] It is a term that encapsulates the subjectivity and unencumbered agency of both God and Cosmos outlined above, while at the same time conveying the impossibility of existence without the Other. God's being *with* the Cosmos here, allows for individuality without relinquishing

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[118] See 1Chr 16:32; Pss 96:11; 98:7; Is 42:10.
[119] J. Sittler, "The Sittler Speeches," quoted in M. Manolopoulos, *If Creation Is a Gift* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2009), 134.
[120] Page, *God and Web*, 40-42.

interconnectivity.[121] If humanity relates to the Land as kin in Jer 3:1-5, God relates to the Cosmos as companion in Jer 31:35. As companion, God identifies with and shares in the experience of the material Other. The relationship is one of connection at the deepest possible level.

God's presence *with* all existence inherently challenges the rigid hierarchical binaries of traditional Cartesian dualisms, questioning their relevance and rhetorical force. The well-established designation of the material realm as passive, static or mechanistic, for example, is replaced here by the assertion that the Cosmos is active, dynamic and inherently relational. Contested here also is the strict dichotomy between order and chaos, where order (embodied by the Sun, Moon, and Stars) is perceived as a positive that stands in direct opposition to the negative of chaos (embodied by the Sea). The presence of YHWH (who epitomises the positive – ordered – side of the conceptual hierarchy) amid the turbulent forces of the Ocean contradicts the absolute separation between these two realms, and casts doubt over the negative assessment of the pelagic domain. In blurring these binaries, Jer 31:35 refutes the conventional distinction between spiritual and material, affirming instead an on-going and intimate relationality between these orders. Far from having a disjointed relationship of dominance and subjugation, God and matter are inextricably interconnected here; bound together as a meaningful whole.

If God's (perceived) absence from the material realm has denoted the de-sacralised and inferior status of this domain, then the divine presence *with*in every situation, for all matter – as demonstrated in this reading – conveys just the opposite. As the subject of YHWH's companioning, the Cosmos – including the Land and its other-than-human inhabitants – acquires positive significance beyond utility. God's presence with all is a re-sacralisation of the material realm. It affirms the uncontrollable, strange, and terrifying Other as both pervaded by and interacting with the divine presence. If this claim can be made of the oceanic wild, then so also does it pertain to the terrestrial equivalent: the non-arable wilderness. YHWH's intimate identification with 'wilderness' (as a description of both Land and Sea) thus challenges the designation of these areas as places of alienation, disorientation and punishment, which require taming and/or transformation. Instead, wilderness is understood here as being an interconnected Other, whose wild and chaotic character is cause for divine celebration and delight.

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[121] Page, *God and Web*, 42, likens pansyntheism to Heidegger's concept of *Mitsein*, or 'being-with'.

Reading Jer 31:35 from an ecological perspective offers an alternative vision of an interconnected reality, which confounds the predominantly hierarchical order presented in the texts encountered thus far. Reality, as it is presented here, is fundamentally, joyfully and non-hierarchically relational. Such relationality stands in contrast to the broader Jeremianic rhetoric, in that it is characterised by interdependence, mutual empowerment, and the sincere enjoyment of an/Other. It is an image of interaction that both respects and allows space for the creative agency of life in all its forms – alien and threatening as they may seem – without totalising or profiting from them. This imagery asserts that relationality is not fixed or static, but rather is a dynamic process that is continually constructed through negotiation in the form of ongoing invitation and response. Up to this point in the interpretation of these oracles, my discussion has focused exclusively upon the relationship between God and (other-than-human) matter. Bearing in mind the image of relationality outlined above, I turn now to consider the interaction between humanity and that which is Other(-than-human) in Jer 31:37.

The final verse of these oracles contains the second celestial/sublunary pair: the Heavens above and the Land beneath. Rhetorically, v 37 employs a protasis-apodosis sequence, in which an impossible or unthinkable scenario negatively expresses an assurance. Here, it is the impossibility of the Heavens and the Land being measured or explored that underlines the equally inconceivable rejection of Israel's descendants.[122] As I have noted, interpretive investigations into this verse tend to focus upon Israel's permanence as the people of God. In placing the Land at the centre of this alternative analysis, however, I focus my investigation on the (divine) assertion that the Land (אֶרֶץ) cannot be explored (חָקַר lit. 'to search'), and consider the ecological implications that might emerge from such a claim.

To the contemporary reader, the text's insistence in v 37 that the Land is unexplorable seems somewhat antiquated, reflective of an ancient worldview that is now obsolete.[123] Beneath the literal inaccuracy of the divine claim, however, lies an awareness of Land as being immeasurably vast and fundamentally unknowable. In its extraordinary complexity, Land is ultimately beyond human comprehension. YHWH's assertion in this verse thus acknowledges the Land as *mysterium tremendum*, whose elusive character is not limited to that which is not yet known; rather, unknowability is constitutive of the Land itself.[124]

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[122] Cf. Gn 13:16.
[123] Brueggemann, *Exile and Homecoming*, 298, for example, notes that in our modernity 'the heavens *can* be measured and the earth *can* be explored…' (my emphasis).
[124] I have drawn on the work of Manolopoulos, *Creation*, 113, to explore the notion of 'mystery' as it appears in relation to the Land in Jer 31:37.

Mystery, it seems, does not exclusively belong to God, but to the Land here also. Such identification is insufficient in isolation, however, and it is in this vein that I seek to examine the Land's mysterious/unknowable character in the broader context of relationality.

The image of Land as unknowable to humanity in Jer 31:37 is incongruous with the images of interaction between Land and people examined thus far, the majority of which have been defined by 'acts-of-knowing'.[125] Instead of the now-familiar interaction based upon conquest, domestication, and exploitation – all of which are forms of knowing – YHWH declares that for humanity to perceive the Land is both to know it and not to know it; comprehension, writes Mark Manolopoulos, cannot be comprehensive.[126] To encounter Land is thus to encounter mystery, and to be faced with the limits of human knowledge before such mystery. In the same way that the unknowability of YHWH shapes the human/divine relationship, so the Land's unknowability will have implications for the ways in which humanity relates to the Land. Beyond the brief recognition of this dynamic, however, the broader Jeremianic text fails to elucidate the relational implications of the Land's unknowability. What follows, then, is an attempt to explore the possible characteristics of a relationality that takes seriously both the Land's mysterious nature and the human incomprehension of that mystery.

Contemplating the vast and unknowable character of the Land as it is imaged here quells the reductionist compulsions of the mastering subject, engendering instead an overwhelming sense of wonder and awe. Like Job who is rendered speechless when confronted by the divine mystery,[127] so humanity responds with silence in Jer 31:37 when presented with the unfathomable mystery of the Land. Such silence, however, is neither fearful nor disinterested; rather, nuanced by the context of awe and wonder, it reflects an attitude of reverence and gentle receptivity towards the Land. It is in this silence that humanity is able to assimilate its own insignificance in the face of this immeasurable and inconceivably complex Other. Acknowledgement of this dynamic results in an attitude of humility and self-restraint that recognises and respects the Land in itself, for itself. At the heart of the mode of relationality imagined in v 37, then, lies the broad and interconnected categories of mystery, awe, silence, and humility.

YHWH's claim and its underlying sentiments thus affirm a reality where human comportment towards Land is defined by deference which leads, in turn, to gentleness.

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[125] Manolopoulos, *Creation*, 114.
[126] Manolopoulos, *Creation*, 115.
[127] Jb 40:3-5.

Gentleness, argues Matthew Fox, connotes non-violence and selflessness,[128] disrupting the knowing subject's compulsion for explanation and mastery. It designates the attitude of one who no longer perceives the Land in relation to its utility, but rather respects its presence as a valued and autonomous Other. In other words, it is an orientation that resists totalization, excessive instrumentalism and commodification, instead promoting and protecting the Land's autonomy and integrity. Within the symbolic world created by this image, then, the Land is entitled to its own self-seclusion and freedom from invasive, human acts-of-knowing. The Land is free to be itself, irrespective of human desires or demands, and any interaction between humanity and Land must proceed on these terms.

Like its succeeding verse, Jer 31:36 employs a protasis-apodosis motif, and is also commonly interpreted as a divine guarantee of Israel's permanence.[129] The rhetorical assurance contained here relies primarily upon the absolute dependability of the 'fixed order', an allusion to the Sun, Moon, and Stars of v 35. Such dependability, argues Brueggemann, shifts the protasis from being a statement of conditionality to one of confident negation: as the cosmic order will never cease, so also shall Israel never cease to be a nation before YHWH.[130] Bearing in mind the ecological emphasis of my analysis, however, I have chosen to nuance this dependability by taking the protasis-apodosis sequence at face value, as a statement of cause and effect: if the Cosmos were to cease from existing, then so too would (the 'seed' of) Israel come to an end. In this reading I follow Lundbom, who suggests that the reference to 'seed' (זֶרַע) in this verse be understood in the broader sense as pertaining to the seed of every living entity on Earth.[131] From this ecological perspective, then, YHWH's claim here is nothing short of an unqualified affirmation of the interconnected and interdependent relationality that exists between God, Cosmos, and life on Earth. The divinely enabled Cosmos (v 35) makes possible the existence of Land and *all* its inhabitants.

In its cosmic perspective, Jer 31:36 images reality as a unified, integrated and meaningful whole which is characterised by the diversity of its member parts. The image assumes an infinite multiplicity of relationships, which form a complex web of dynamic and continuous connection-events. Everything that exists is interrelated. Relationality here is thus not incidental or additional to any given entity, but rather constitutes the very essence of all that

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[128] M. Fox, *Breakthrough: Meister Eckhart's Creation Spirituality in New Translation* (New York: Doubleday, 1980), 224.

[129] See Holladay, *Jeremiah 2*, 171.

[130] Brueggemann, *Exile and Homecoming*, 297.

[131] Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, 486. See also Jer 31:27 where the 'seed of humans' appears in conjunction with the 'seed of animals'.

is. With the recognition of this capacity for relationship – for action and connection – comes the acknowledgement that all modes of being are subjects, and agents of influence in their own right, who are themselves vulnerable to the influence of Others. In the image of reality depicted in this verse, human beings are not distinguished or separated from this cosmic ecosystem, but exist instead on the same ontological level as individuals who are related intrinsically and inescapably to all Others in this interconnected community. Within this text, humanity finds a place, not as a spirit among bodies but, as Sallie McFague suggests, as a spirited body among the innumerable spirited bodies of the Cosmos.[132] Here, the Land also finds a place as spirited body.

Underlying the interconnectedness observed in Jer 31:36 is the notion of interdependence, where all individual entities rely upon each Other for their existence.[133] As the Sun, Moon, and Stars depend upon the divine lure calling them into being,[134] so the 'seed' – that is, every living entity – is seen here as dependent upon the presence of this fixed order for its existence. Such dependence is not exclusive, however, for reliance upon this fixed order is, by extension, reliance upon the divine lure. Like the multiple nature of relationality, interdependence also is multilayered and infinitely diverse. Directly or indirectly, all entities depend simultaneously upon both the divine empowerment and the myriad of other entities that have responded to that empowerment in the past. To exist within this cosmic reality is thus to be utterly dependent upon Others, although this dependence is not unilateral. In the same way that the interdependent relationship between YHWH and the cosmic elements took the form of an invitation and reply (v 35), so the dependence depicted in v 36 also requires a response. If the 'fixed order' enables the seed (living entities) of Israel 'to be' (הָיָה [a nation]), then the response is ongoing existence. The combination of this fixed order and the lure of YHWH thus enables these entities to become themselves, and to participate in the interdependent whole as beings who continue to depend upon Others, and upon whom Others depend.

While this image of an interdependent reality has consequences for understanding the broader dimensions of the Cosmos, it has equally important implications for the more immediate sublunary context and, in particular, for perceiving the relationship between the Land and its

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[132] McFague, *Body of God*, 19.
[133] C. Keller, *Face of the Deep: A Theology of Becoming* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), refers to this notion as 'interindebtedness'.
[134] The 'divine lure' is a phrase used by McDaniel, *Earth,* 98. I use it interchangeably with the notion of 'divine enabling/empowerment' outlined above.

human inhabitants. At the most basic level, this interdependent consciousness underlines once again that human existence is indebted to and inseparable from the Land. Life independent of Land is impossible. This relational dynamic is nuanced, however, by the inference that human dependence upon Land should be complemented by a recognition of the Land's dependence upon the human species. That is, as well as being dependent upon the more distant celestial beings, the Land depends for its well-being upon human individuals, all of whom participate as interconnected Others within the cosmic whole. The relationship between Land and humanity here is thus a reciprocal one, which oscillates between gratitude (arising from the acknowledgment of one's own dependence) and responsibility (resulting from a recognition of the dependent Other). Such relationality engenders an acute awareness of and attentiveness to the needs of the Other in a context where each entity is invited 'to be' itself. Interdependence, as it appears in these oracles, seems to tie the fate of One to the Other, requiring an ongoing dialogue of responsiveness between the interests of the Land and those of humanity.

Although this perspective on relationality is lamentably fleeting, its interruption of the dominant discourse provides a significant glimpse into an alternative symbolic order, providing a counter-reality through which to read those inherently problematic images of Land found elsewhere throughout the book of Jeremiah. If those problematic images have the potential to contribute to the construction and perpetuation of contemporary ecological devastation, then as a counter-text, Jer 31:35-37 has the capacity to contribute positively to the formation and sustenance of a contemporary ecological sensibility. The task of identifying and articulating a suitable model for the relationship between God, Land and people is not an easy one, and Jer 31:35-37 is by no means comprehensive in its description of the tripartite relationality.[135] In concluding this textual analysis, however, I seek to draw together the various strands that characterise relationality in these verses, in the hope that this imagery might contribute meaningfully to the emerging ecological imaginary.

Central to the depiction of relationality in Jer 31:35-37 is the image of multiple and non-hierarchical interdependent relationships among beings that exist individually as part of a vast and complex whole. In its non-hierarchical nature, this image of relationality rejects traditional dualistic stereotypes which set order against chaos and privilege the masculinised

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[135] N. Darragh, *At Home in the Earth: Seeking an Earth-Centred Spirituality* (Auckland: Accent Publications, 2000), 60-64, provides an overview of a wide range of models, although none of those examined correspond in their entirety with the imagery of Jer 31:35-37.

spiritual over the feminised material. Indeed, the enabling presence of the divine within all bodies – from the Sun and the Sea, to the Land and its inhabitants – is a direct negation of such binary thought, affirming instead the radical integration of all. As well as emphasising the unity of each entity with all Others, however, the text simultaneously affirms the distinction of each entity from all Others; each individual being has its own independent value and integrity within this interdependent reality. This recognition, in turn, necessitates the acknowledgement of all beings as subjects in their own right. Within this relational context, the interaction between the vast diversity of differing subjects resembles an infinite multiplicity of I-Thou encounters, where engagement is based upon a common understanding of the autonomy, agency and inherent worth of the Other.[136]

While the brevity of these oracles limits the amount of detail concerning the relational obligations within this mode of existence, the ramifications of the reality imaged in Jer 31:35-37 reverberate beyond the world of the text. More than an exercise in observation, recognition of the cosmic interdependence depicted here carries with it a strong ethical dimension.[137] To perceive the self as one who depends upon Others and upon whom Others depend, requires broadening one's gaze beyond anthropocentric affairs to include the consideration of all living entities. It is to celebrate and enjoy the presence of otherness, while working to ensure that this otherness is protected. The concept of one's rights, argues John May, should be balanced by the concept of one's responsibility for the welfare of all Other members of the interconnected Cosmos.[138] To live appropriately within this whole is thus a continuous negotiation, as individual interests are subordinated to the pragmatic imperative of interdependence and the flourishing of all.

In its cosmic perspective, the image of relationality drawn from Jer 31:35-37 does not pretend to provide solutions to the intricate and complex issues specific to the relationship between Land, God, and people. Rather, the text offers an image of a new sensibility within an alternative reality, from which such issues might be addressed. Translated from the macro to the micro, this cosmic imagery offers an ecologically sensitive model for relationship with the Land, which cuts against the dominant images of relationality found throughout Jeremiah.

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[136] M. Buber, *Between Man and Man* (London: Routledge, 2002), 1-45, suggests that this relational ontology allows for encounter that is non-appropriative yet responsive.

[137] Darragh, *At Home,* 62-63, notes that most relational models are more concerned with finding a place for humanity within the Cosmos, rather than finding a role or purpose for the human species within this context.

[138] J. D. May, "Whose Universality? Which Interdependence? Human Rights, Social Responsibility and Ecological Integrity," in *Postcolonial Europe in the Crucible of Cultures: Reckoning with God in a World of Conflicts* eds. Jacques Haers, Norbert Hintersteiner and Georges De Schrijver (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 203.

Beyond the symbolic world of the text, this rhetorical vision provides a foundation for re-conceiving the relationship between humanity and the Land. In emphasising interdependence and the subjectivity of all, this imagery implicitly challenges the anthropocentric focus of traditional economic, political, and educational models relating to Land, as well as disputing the narrow scope of justice and morality. Indeed, this vision of reality counters the systems and institutions of the master imaginary which enable the Land's domination and exploitation. Set alongside the ever-increasing scientific discoveries that corroborate this interdependent vision, then, these oracles have the potential to act as a powerful resource in the ongoing endeavour to alleviate environmental degradation.

Having outlined an alternative vision of relationality in the book of Jeremiah, the final task of this analysis is to return to the contemporary context of Aotearoa New Zealand and listen for echoes of this interconnected imagery in the country's collective imaginary. In doing this, I turn once more to the New Zealand literary tradition in order to explore the presence of such imagery in this nation's poetry.

5.4 MAKING (INTER)CONNECTIONS

Moving beyond the immediate boundaries of the biblical text, my analysis shifts once more to the multidimensional web of intertextual relationships, in order to explore the possible points of connection between the images of Land in the book of Jeremiah and the images of Land found in New Zealand poetry. In doing this, I turn to the poetic literature from the first half of the twentieth-century, which documents a transition from the settler perception of the Land as 'belonging to us' to a growing awareness of the self as 'belonging to the Land'.[139] Throughout the nineteenth-century, the majority of pioneer poetry depicted the Land as isolated and hostile, and people's relationship to it as alienated and exploitative.[140] By the 1930s, however, Pākehā writers of the second or third generation were reflecting upon the

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[139] M. King, "Being Pakeha," in *Pakeha: The Quest for Identity in New Zealand*, ed. Michael King (Auckland: Penguin Books, 1991), 21. This is not to say that a fully developed understanding of what it means to 'belong to the Land' emerged at this time, despite the reflections of various Pākehā poets. For most Pākehā New Zealanders, the notion of 'belonging to the Land' translated to mean 'being at home in the Land'. For Māori, however, the notion of belonging to the Land has always been central to one's identity. Indeed, the designation of Māori as 'tangata whenau' (lit. 'people of the Land') underlines the self-understanding of Māori as belonging to the Land and not the other way around. Regrettably, this perspective is absent from the literature of the first half of the twentieth-century, as Māori authors did not appear in publication until the late 1960s.
[140] In the introduction to his 1966 anthology of New Zealand verse, Curnow describes the nineteenth-century colonists as 'interlopers', who achieved their migration bodily, but not in spirit. A. Curnow, "Introduction," in *The Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse*, ed. Allen Curnow (Auckland: Blackwood & Janet Paul, 1966), 20, 51. His poem, 'House and Land' (1941) describes colonial New Zealand as being characterized by a 'spirit of exile'; it is '… a land of settlers / With never a soul at home'. A. Curnow, "House and Land," in *The Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse,* eds. Ian Wedde and Harvey McQueen (Auckland: Penguin Books, 1985), 197-198.

inherent qualities of their surroundings, and were beginning to develop a sense of being at home in the Land.[141] Poets such as A.R.D. Fairburn, Ron A.K. Mason, Robin Hyde, Charles Brasch, Allen Curnow, and Denis Glover, began to give shape to a more integrated and intimate relationship with the Land, which stood against the colonial attitudes of the generations that had preceded them.[142] It is this literary landscape that provides the immediate context for Ruth Dallas' 1947 poem, 'Deep in the Hills'.[143]

Like many of Dallas' poems, 'Deep in the Hills' explores the complex entwining of people and place, and underlines the impossibility of human existence independent of Land.[144] The poetic narrative details the protagonist's inner journey from an anthropocentric perception of reality to an ecocentric understanding of one's place in the world. This transition is signalled by the use of the word 'Once' at the beginning of the first stanza, indicating that this sense of self-importance is a thing of the past. Reflecting upon this former self, the protagonist describes her relationship to the Land in highly anthropocentric terms, depicting the Land as a 'curled' and servile being, who exists 'in my inmost self' (lines 2 and 6). Despite the protagonist's obvious affection for her surroundings (line 1), both Land and Sea are perceived as possessions, objects that may be 'unlocked' or 'unfolded' at the discretion of human agents (lines 3 and 4). From these initial musings, the second stanza marks a shift in perception, denoted by the opening phrase, 'But now…' (line 7). As the lines of this verse progress, the image of the Land, locked within the protagonist's inmost self, is reversed, as she comes to realize that 'it is I who exist in the land' (line 7). In contrast to the exaggerated sense of self-worth displayed in the first stanza, the protagonist seems overwhelmed by her own insignificance in the face of the Land's immensity, comparing herself to 'a grain of sand' (line 8). It is now she who is held by the Land. The poem's final couplet completes the

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[141] This shift in viewpoint is expressed in Glover's 1936 poem, 'Home Thoughts': 'I do not dream of… quaint old England's / quaint old towns - / I think of what may yet be seen / in Johnsonville or Geraldine.' D. Glover, "Home Thoughts," in *The Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse,* eds. Ian Wedde and Harvey McQueen (Auckland: Penguin Books, 1985), 211.

[142] These writers would become known as 'settler nationalists'. King, *History of New Zealand*, 380. This sense of connection to the Land is evident in Mason's poem, 'Old Memories of Earth', where the protagonist acknowledges 'I … am for ever bondaged fast / to earth…' R. A. K. Mason, "Old Memories of Earth," in *The Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse,* eds. Ian Wedde and Harvey McQueen (Auckland: Penguin Books, 1985), 155. In 'Word by Night', on the other hand, Brasch reminds readers that 'you are water and earth, / Creatures of the shore…' C. Brasch, "Word by Night," in *The Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse,* eds. Ian Wedde and Harvey McQueen (Auckland: Penguin Books, 1985), 177-178.

[143] R. Dallas, *Country Road and Other Poems, 1947-52* (Christchurch: Caxton Press, 1953), 29. Copyright laws prevent the inclusion of this poem in its entirety, although it can be viewed online. See R. Dallas, "Deep in the Hills," accessed Oct 1, 2014, http://donnellday.wordpress.com/2011/11/23/deep-in-the-hills/.

[144] J. Roberson, "'Poetry Will Be Made by All Not by One': Poetry and Poetics in Five New Zealand Women Poets" (PhD diss., University of Auckland, 2005), 183, 186, 196, notes the consistency of these themes throughout Dallas' work.

inner journey, with the protagonist discovering a deep, spirited connection with the Land, as she finds herself 'folded deep in the hills' (line 14).

At first glance, the progression observed in 'Deep in the Hills' seems to mirror on an individual level the transition occurring for Pākehā collectively.[145] On closer inspection, however, a number of thematic markers – or signposts – suggest broader literary connections, and give rise to the possibility of an intertextual relationship between Dallas' poem, the book of Jeremiah generally and Jer 31:35-37 specifically. The overwhelming sense of insignificance experienced by the poem's human protagonist, for example, recalls the feeling of inconsequentiality associated with the vastness of the unexplorable Land in Jer 31:37. Similarly, the protagonist's realization that her existence is contingent upon the Land echoes the interdependence affirmed in Jer 31:36, where relationality is an intrinsic and inescapable condition of survival. Although the lack of explicit biblical allusions in Dallas' poem once more confounds the notion of a linear connection to the book of Jeremiah, the sense of interconnectedness evoked in 'Deep in the Hills' acts as a signpost pointing to Jer 31:35-37 as a potential literary 'other', whose imagery contributes to the substrata of Dallas' work.

Like Reeves and Tuwhare, Ruth Dallas (1919-2008) grew up in an era when '[most] New Zealanders were in some senses adherents of the Christian faith'.[146] Dallas' education in Southland – a Presbyterian stronghold – included a grounding in biblical literature[147] which would come to inform the content and imagery of her poetry throughout her long career.[148] Even though Dallas herself did not (publicly) profess to any strong religious convictions, her later poems in particular display a deep interest in the writings and philosophy of Christianity and Buddhism.[149] While Dallas' accessibility to and demonstrable knowledge of the Bible strengthens the case for an intertextual connection, the dearth of overt biblical references in 'Deep in the Hills' means that, once again, it is only possible to claim Jer 31:35-37 as *an*

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[145] In her autobiography, Dallas, who was a second-generation New Zealander, writes that the 'stories of the early days of settlement… were still on the lips of the old people when I was young, [and] added depth to my perception of the landscape and the people around me'. In contrast to the 'European thought' of these settlers, however, Dallas expresses a sense of affinity with Chinese poets who, she asserts, '[see] themselves as occupying only one facet of the myriad-faceted natural world, not as central figures…' R. Dallas, *Curved Horizon: An Autobiography* (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1991), 111, 121.

[146] King, *History of New Zealand*, 384. In the 1936 census, over 85% of the total New Zealand population (numbering around 1.5 million at that time) was affiliated with a Christian denomination.

[147] In her autobiography, Dallas recalls being given a Bible by her grandmother at the age of eleven. Although she found it difficult to read, she describes its content as 'unforgettable'. Dallas, *Curved Horizon*, 39.

[148] Dallas' poem 'Ananda', for example, makes explicit reference to Gen 1:2 and Ps. 119:105: 'And the earth was without form and void; / And darkness was upon the face of the deep. / O Ananda, be ye lamps unto yourselves. / Look not for refuge to anyone besides yourselves…' R. Dallas, *Collected Poems* (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2000), 47-48.

[149] See, for example, Dallas' 'Letter to a Chinese Poet' in *Collected Poems*, 37-50.

intertext among many possible intertexts. Delving into the vast and anonymous realm of prior utterances, then, this intertextual investigation proceeds on the basis of the initial ideological connection made between these texts, both of which seem to affirm an understanding of reality as being relational and interdependent. Thus, I return to Dallas' text, attentive to the possible presence of further Jeremianic resonances and additional intertextual patterns.

'Deep in the Hills' takes the form of a fourteen-line sonnet in iambic pentameter, which consists of two corresponding sestets and a concluding couplet. With effortless control, the poet makes each word count in sound and sense, using repeated imagery to balance the two sestets and to underline the protagonist's shift in perspective:

Line	1	land	7	land
	2	inmost self	8	inmost self
	3	sea	9	beach
	4	forest	10	mountain
		tree		tree
	5	beach	11	sea
		stone		stone
	6	exist in me	12	exist outside of me

The repeated use of the word 'Land' in the opening line of each sestet (lines 1 and 7) signals, at a structural level, the significance of Land as a central character in the poem. As it was in Jer 31:35-37, the Land is without voice throughout this text, although its powerful presence challenges protagonist and reader alike to reflect upon their relationship with the Land and their sense of place within it. Reading Dallas' work with the Jeremianic text in mind, one does not have to look far to find a variety of additional intertextual echoes and allusions.

Dominating the poem's opening sestet is a profusion of verbs that denote human acts-of-knowing; those acts derived from the human impulse to comprehend, order and control. On one level, the description of the Land as 'known' (line 1) epitomizes the reductionist desire of humanity and calls to mind those acts-of-knowing throughout the book of Jeremiah which resulted in the conquest and exploitation of the Land. On another, more sinister level, the Land as 'known' recalls the euphemistic use of the verb 'to know' (יָדַע), which, in Hebrew, refers to sexual intercourse.[150] Although this verb does not necessarily signify an act of

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[150] Cf. Gn 4:1, 17, 25; 1Sm 1:19.

violence, the sexual connotations evoked through its use in relation to the Land, instantly recall the image of the Land as a sexually violated woman, in Jer 6:1-8 and 51:25-33. Within the poem's opening line, then, the dynamics of power are firmly established through the invocation of traditional dualisms: spiritual over material, humanity over the environment, and masculine over feminine.[151]

Such dynamics are immediately reinforced by further acts-of-knowing in the depiction of the protagonist recounting how she 'unfolded the folded sea, / unlocked the forest and the lonely tree…' (lines 3 and 4). Again, the verbs here reflect a power-over relationship where the human figure is cast as an agent of order and control, whereas the Land/Sea is the passive recipient of such mastery. The imagery likens both sea and forest to small curio; treasured possessions to be taken off a shelf and carefully examined – without consent – before being replaced once more. Not only do these images create the illusion of environmental containment, they also negate the vast and terrifying nature of the wilderness and disregard the chaotic unknown that it embodies.[152] The sentiments of these images echo the depictions of God/humanity conquering and containing the wildernesses – both pelagic and terrestrial – throughout Jeremiah and its subsequent interpretation.[153] As with the (majority of) Jeremianic images depicting Land and Sea, then, the poem's first sestet perceives the environment as something to be domesticated and brought within the safe and familiar realm of human understanding and administration.

It is not until the final line of this sestet, however, that the protagonist's anthropocentric orientation becomes explicit. The Land, claims the protagonist, its hills, mountains, valleys, beaches, and stones 'are here and exist in me' (lines 5 and 6). In this claim, the human voice of the poem reveals her belief that she is – in a very literal sense – the centre of her world.[154] The Land, as depicted here, is entirely dependent upon the presence of the protagonist. As part of the human self, the Land is denied its distinct identity and independent value. It exists only as an extension of the human ego, enabling this ego to continue operating on what

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[151] The master identity is not necessarily associated with maleness, but rather with what Plumwood calls the 'elite masculinism' of the masters (male and female). Plumwood, *Feminism*, 25. Thus, the term 'master' may be used of the poem's (presumably) female speaker.
[152] As a large area of Land covered chiefly by trees, forests are no longer primary places of human habitation. Thus, I have chosen to read 'forest' – like 'sea' – as a type of wilderness.
[153] Jer 5:22; 51:36. Cf. Jb 9:8; 26:12; 38:8; Pss 74:13; 78:13; 89:9; 107:29; Prv 8:29; Is 50:2; Na 1:4.
[154] This claim recalls the account of Cecily Cox who was writing in New Zealand from 1940 to 1942. When faced with the 'wild glory of an ancient virgin land' near Putaruru, she is lead to conclude that 'we [humanity] are the only things that matter on this earth'. C. Cox, *Latitude Thirty Seven South: Short Stories* (Cheltenham, Gloucestershire: Amadines Press, 1997), 82.

Plumwood describes as the 'fuel of self-interest'.[155] The image epitomises the long-held notion that the Land and its other-than-human inhabitants exist solely to serve the needs of the human community. Although it is difficult to identify a direct connection between these lines and the biblical text, the sentiments expressed by the protagonist resonate with the desire – found throughout Jeremiah – for the Land to exist within the bounds of human control. Such desire is particularly evident in the repeated Jeremianic preference for garden over wilderness on the basis of its proximity to human civilization and its utility to human endeavour. The poem's protagonist thus echoes on an individual level, the collective desire seen in Jeremiah. As in Jeremiah, however, the anthropocentric mode of engagement depicted in the opening stanza of 'Deep in the Hills' is not the only image of relationality contained within this text. In the same way that Jer 31:35-37 stands in contrast to the anthropocentrism of the surrounding Jeremianic material, so the poem's second stanza marks a significant change in the protagonist's understanding of her relationship with the Land.

The poem's shift in perspective is jarringly abrupt, with the protagonist's realisation that it is, in fact, 'I who exist in the land' (line 7). From the confident assertion that the Land is contained within 'my inmost self' (line 2), the protagonist now describes this 'self' as being 'blown like a grain of sand / Along the windy beach…' (lines 8 and 9). The simile, which likens the protagonist to a grain of sand, creates a contrast between the smallness of the human individual, and the inestimable vastness of the surrounding environment.[156] An appreciation of humanity's utter insignificance is evoked by this comparison, lambasting the notion of the Land's dependence upon humanity. Far from the exaggerated sense of self-importance displayed in the first sestet, the protagonist seems to accept her identity as but one small member of a large and diverse ecological community.

Accompanying this shift in perspective is a sense of surrender, a relinquishing of the power and authority that initially characterised the protagonist's relationship with the Land. Like the grain of sand propelled at random by the wind, the protagonist finds herself without control and at the mercy of the elements. The image of this figure being arbitrarily hurled about depicts visually the internal upheaval experienced by the protagonist as she comes to terms with her new identity. It is only by yielding to the unpredictability of this overwhelming

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[155] Plumwood, "Nature, Self, and Gender," 14.
[156] Human smallness in the face of overwhelming landscapes is a theme that appears with remarkable consistency throughout twentieth-century New Zealand literature. From Satchell's *The Toll of the Bush* (1905) and Mansfield's 'At the Bay' (1921), to Shadbolt's *The Lovelock Version* (1980), New Zealand authors emphasise, time and again, the insignificance of humanity.

landscape, however, that the protagonist discovers she is 'free' (line 9). Her embrace of the Land as an uncontrollable and unknown Other is reminiscent of YHWH's affirmation of the Sea's wild and chaotic character in Jer 31:35.[157] It is an embrace that resists the human compulsion for order and control, instead acknowledging and accepting the Land in and of itself. Like the Jeremianic text, then, Dallas' poem disregards the binaries that set order against chaos, and affirms the unknown as a place of inherent value and meaning.

Comparing human individuals to grains of sand is not uncommon throughout the Bible generally,[158] and Jeremiah specifically.[159] The sense of human frailty that accompanies this comparison in 'Deep in the Hills', however, is particularly reminiscent of humanity's apparent insignificance in the face of the Land's inconceivably vast expanse in Jer 31:37. Although the respective imagery differs – Dallas emphasises the smallness of humanity, whereas the Jeremianic text affirms the immensity of the Land – the resultant relational dynamic between Land and humanity is the same. Where humanity was once perceived as a masterful presence within the Land, these texts depict this Land as immeasurable, thus implying the diminished place of humanity within it. Just as YHWH asserts that there are limits to human knowledge of and authority over the environment (both celestial and terrestrial), so the poem's protagonist must learn to accept her relegated position within her surroundings. As in Jer 31:37, Dallas' work implicitly challenges the notion of human superiority over the Land and its other-than-human inhabitants, pointing instead to a more integrated model of relationality. For the poet's protagonist, this shift in perspective is met with a sense of awe and wonder, similar to that which was identified in the Jeremianic text.

The protagonist's response to this new mode of relationality is captured in the image of her repeatedly turning 'a sea-worn stone in the hand' (line 11). It is a moment of silent contemplation in which she seems to be marvelling at the ancient mystery contained within the stone and, by extension, within the Land. Her prolonged gaze suggests that she is beholding her surroundings anew, perhaps experiencing a sense of dawning affinity with all that is around her.[160] As in Jer 31:37, then, the protagonist's response to the Land's overwhelming immensity seems to denote a sense of respect and reverence for this

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[157] In identifying this intertextual connection, I do not seek to make a comparison between YHWH and the protagonist, but rather between their attitude toward that which typically represents the fear-inducing Other.
[158] Gn 22:17; 32:12; Josh 11:4; 1Sm 13:5; 2Sm 17:11; 1Kgs 4:20; Is 10:22; 48:19; Hos 1:10.
[159] Jer 15:8; 33:22.
[160] While a human affinity with Land and Sea is only hinted at in 'Deep in the Hills', the connection is stated explicitly in Brasch's 'Word by Night': 'You are of those risen from the sea / And for ever bound to the sea, / Which is but the land's other and older face…' Brasch, "Word by Night," 177.

formidable Other. Whereas the Land's mystery reduces humanity to an awed silence in the Jeremianic text, this same feeling of wonder results in a moment of realisation for Dallas' protagonist: the Land 'exist[s] outside of me' (line 12). It is only because of the Land's independent identity that the protagonist is 'free / To wander among the mountains, [and] enter the tree…' (lines 9 and 10). With this acknowledgment, the protagonist seems to recognise the Land as a valued and sovereign Other. As in Jer 31:37, this poem thus affirms a symbolic reality in which Land and humanity encounter each Other as distinct entities, each with their own autonomy and integrity.

Dallas' poem finds resolution in the final couplet, where the protagonist's physical connection to the Land becomes a spiritual one: 'my spirit fills / The familiar valleys, is folded deep in the hills' (line 14). The couplet begins with the phrase 'O far from…' (line 13), signalling both the completion of the protagonist's transformation, and the (metaphorical) distance she has travelled to reach this level of relationship with the Land. Where once the Land and all its other-than-human elements were 'folded' and held within the protagonist (line 3), it is now she who is embraced by the Land, her spirit 'folded' within its hills (line 14). A feeling of deep content is evoked in this image, as Land and human spirit find peace in each other's presence. This sense of content is mirrored structurally in the poet's use of enjambment, where the incomplete syntax of the poem's penultimate line results in the continuation of meaning from this line to the next without pause. The delay in meaning brought about by this rhetorical device creates a tension that is released as the reader encounters the poem's final line, thereby completing the syntactical unit. This rhetorical satisfaction thus reflects, at a linguistic level, the sense of contentment experienced by the protagonist in her newfound intimacy with the Land. For reader and protagonist alike, this final couplet is, in every sense, a homecoming.

By entwining the Land's materiality with the human spirit, 'Deep in the Hills' echoes Jer 31:35-37 by confounding conventional binaries that hierarchically separate the spiritual from the material. Like the Jeremianic text, Dallas' poem images the integration of Land and humanity as a union that is both physical and spiritual.[161] In the same way that the divine (spiritual) is depicted as being in relationship *with* the Cosmos (material) in Jer 31:35, so a

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[161] A similar critique of the binary that sets the spiritual realm against the material realm is found in 'Word by Night': 'For too long now too many have been deceived, / Renouncing the bare nursery of the race, / Trying to shed the limiting names / That link them to their kind; // Have sought sufficiency / In the contingent and derivative, / Wishing to rise from doubtful earth / And move secure among the abstract stars…' Brasch, "Word by Night," 177.

sense of 'being-*with*' seems to characterise the relationship between Land and human spirit in this final couplet.[162] Far from being a relationship of domination or assimilation, the connection between Land and protagonist – like that of God and Cosmos – is one of mutual respect and companionship. As well as retaining their distinct identities as individual entities, both Land and protagonist are simultaneously interconnected in their companionship. As in Jer 31:35, the final image of relationality between Land and humanity in 'Deep in the Hills', is one of profound connection.

While the spiritual realm is represented in the final couplet of Dallas' poem, the presence of a deity remains an open question. In contrast to Jer 31:35-37, 'Deep in the Hills' omits an explicit reference to a divine figure when depicting the relationship between Land and human protagonist. What this poem does affirm, however, is that the spiritual realm – of which God is a part – is inextricably connected to the material realm. It is through this association with the spiritual domain, then, that the subtle, anonymous presence of God partakes of the relational communion of Land and humanity. Although the divine character remains unknown, there is a sense in which – as in Jer 31:35-37 – the divine spirit is present in and through the Land.

Although the resonances are subtle, the ideological similarities between Dallas' writing and the book of Jeremiah are indicative of an intertextual relationship. Like Jer 31:35-37, 'Deep in the Hills' images an interconnected mode of relationality that counters the prevailing models of interaction which are based upon dominance and exploitation. Read alongside the Jeremianic text, then, Dallas' poem has the potential to contribute meaningfully to a contemporary ecological sensibility that is distinctive to Aotearoa New Zealand. In taking the interconnected perspective of these texts seriously, the criteria for appropriate human behaviour can no longer be guided by anthropocentric interests, but rather, such criteria must take into consideration what is best for the Land and *all* its inhabitants. If language is the means by which humanity perceives reality, then it is only through exposure to symbols and images like those found here that anthropocentrism is undermined and eventually dislodged. It is thus the world-creating power of texts such as Jer 31:35-37 and 'Deep in the Hills' that enable a shift towards ecological justice and healing for the Land.

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[162] Again, I do not seek to liken humanity to God; rather, I wish to emphasise the relational qualities displayed in the connection between Land and protagonist, which are similar to those qualities found in the connection between God and Cosmos.

6 – CONCLUSION

Now I am listening very carefully
to these new dialects of earth and air.[1]

As outlined in the introduction, the primary purpose of this thesis was to carry out a sustained ecological analysis of the book of Jeremiah, focusing in particular on the ways in which Land is represented. Secondary to this was the task of critically assessing the role of this text in the discursive formation of individuals and society in Aotearoa New Zealand. Like all ecological biblical interpretation, the results of my analysis give rise to both problems and possibilities.

It is impossible to discern a single, consistent representation of Land within the book of Jeremiah; rather, a multiplicity of images is variously encountered. Despite the diversity of representations, however, a number of commonalities emerge when these images are viewed side by side. Almost without exception, for example, the Land is portrayed as belonging to the lower side of the conceptual hierarchies that underlie the symbolic world of Jeremiah. The Land's persistent representation as the secondary term of these binaries occurs in a variety of ways but again, there seems to be some consistency when these individual images are perceived within the broader Jeremianic context. Although it is not possible to capture the nuances of each text selected for analysis here, it is helpful to identify those characteristics that repeatedly appear in the imaging of Land.

In particular, the image of Land as a pawn in the human/divine drama seems to appear with remarkable frequency. As the stage upon which the human/divine narrative is developed, for example, the Land appears as the foil for Israelite faithfulness in Jer 2:2 and as the setting for Israel's restoration in 31:10-14. Such representation firmly establishes the Land as the inanimate background against which the dynamic interaction between God and humanity is carried out. Closely related to this backgrounding is the repeated depiction of Land as the scene of divine punishment or – less frequently – reward (17:7-8; 31:12). From the portrayal of the desolate wilderness as a punishment for breaking YHWH's law (3:3; 17:5-6) to the images of the cities decimated for the sins of their inhabitants (6:1-8; 51:25-33), the Land is consistently presented as the body upon which divine vengeance is wrought. Repeatedly associated with sin and disobedience, the terrestrial realm is negatively conceived and set in dualistic opposition to the spiritual realm of agency and authority.

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[1] C. McQueen, "Vegetable Garden Poem IV," in *Anthology of New Zealand Literature*, eds. Jane Stafford and Mark Williams (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2012), 825.

As a vehicle for reward and retribution, the Land frequently appears as an instrument of communication between God and humanity (Jer 6:1-8; 3:1-5; 31:10-14; 51:25-33). In this role it functions as little more than the means by which to measure the state of relationship between YHWH and YHWH's people. Time after time, these texts depict the Land in terms of its relation to the divine/human Other, and define the Land's value on the basis of its usefulness to the anthropocentric/theocentric agenda. As the subordinate term of the subject/object binary, the Land is consistently imaged as being without subjectivity and at no point are the Land's needs, goals or intrinsic worth taken into account. Consistently portrayed as being beyond the bounds of ethical consideration, the Land is vulnerable to manipulation and exploitation, and experiences abuse at the hands of human and divine agents. In addition to being (sexually) attacked (6:4; 51:27), the Land experiences relentless cultivation (31:12), drought (3:3), pollution (3:2), fire (51:32), desolation (6:8; 51:26) and destruction (51:25). Deemed unimportant, the Land's interests are perpetually subordinated to those of the master (human and divine), as the Land becomes the means to this master's ends.

Further reinforcing the Land's subordinate position within the conceptual hierarchy is the way in which the Land is repeatedly identified with women – who are themselves portrayed as the second term of the male/female binary. Variously depicted as a young bride (Jer 2:2), a daughter (6:2; 51:33) and an unfaithful wife (3:2), the Land is conceived as the antithesis to God, who is characterised as a father (3:4), a husband (2:2-3; 3:1) and a patriarch (6:6; 51:33). In the same way that, within the patriarchal household, women are given value in relation to their purity and reproductive ability, so the Land's worth is frequently based on its capacity to produce abundantly at YHWH's command (2:7; 31:12). Representations of Land that deviate from this anthropocentric ideal – such as wilderness – are repeatedly condemned through their association with hostility and death (2:6; 3:2-3; 6:8; 17:6). Like women, who appear as the property of men throughout Jeremiah (6:12; 8:10), the Land is conceived as an object of possession and must conform to the ideals prescribed for it by the divine owner. As property that is owned and controlled by YHWH (2:7), the Land is imaged as a vassal over which this deity holds absolute power. This relational dynamic is repeatedly affirmed as YHWH is portrayed as violently reasserting authority over his property, the Land (3:3; 6:1-8).

With the exception of Jer 31:35-37, then, the Jeremianic representations of Land selected for analysis were highly problematic when read from an ecological perspective.[2] The rhetoric employed in the construction of these representations consistently upholds dualistic patterns of thought that negatively conceive the Land – and the material realm generally – in relation to both God and humanity. Time and again these texts affirm an anthropocentric/theocentric view of reality where the Land is imaged as being subservient to the desires of the human/divine master, whose needs are unquestioningly placed above the well-being of the other-than-human realm. At every turn, it seems, these representations of Land violate the ecojustice principles which affirm the inherent worth of the Land and uphold the mutual dependence of all – human and other-than-human.[3] In a world characterised by ecological strain, the Jeremianic images of Land reinforce human domination of the environment. Without an obvious alternative perspective within the text, such images run the risk of fostering – or indeed exacerbating – ecological violence.

In the ecological task of retrieval, however, a number of dissenting perspectives emerge which challenge this anthropocentric vision of Land. Like the images of Land themselves, these dissenting perspectives are each unique to the literary context in which they appear. Viewed together, however, various commonalities emerge once more, giving rise to an alternative understanding of Land and its representation in the book of Jeremiah.

In the attempt to redefine the Land on its own terms, a shift in perspective occurs and, rather than functioning as a tool which aids the relationship between God and humanity, the Land is shown to be an independent and autonomous agent, an inherently valuable being in its own right. The most explicit examples of the Land's agency are seen in Jer 6:4b and 51:29 where this character shakes, writhes and shouts out in a demonstrable display of resistance against the injustice of abuse. Inherent in the Land's actions is a level of intentionality, which reflects signs of sentience and patterns of self-determination. As a subject with boundaries and limits, the Land repeatedly protests its instrumental status and actively resists the violent and oppressive treatment that it receives at the hands of God and humanity. These instances of explicit resistance do not accompany all anthropocentric/theocentric images of Land, but even where the Land's voice is suppressed, its agency and inherent worth is nonetheless

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[2] In addition to the representations of Land examined in this thesis, there are a number of ecologically-based images which still require eco-critical analysis. These include – but are not limited to – the proliferation of animals that appear throughout Jeremiah (2:15; 5:6; 8:7; 50:11, 17, 44), the notion of 'people of the Land' (1:18; 34:19; 37:2; 44:21), the imagery associated with trees and vines (2:20, 21, 27; 5:10; 6:9; 11:16), and the depiction of Land as divine gift (3:18, 19; 25:5).
[3] Habel, "Introducing Ecological Hermeneutics," 2.

apparent. From the wilderness as a home of other-than-human communities (17:6) to the garden which nourishes humanity (3:3; 31:12), the Land appears as an authoritative and autonomous Other, capable of creating and sustaining a rich diversity of life. As one who shares intimately in the creative process (3:3; 6:8; 31:12, 35-37), the Land is imaged as an agent who, alongside God, makes existence possible. Time and again, these counter readings revealed the Land to be a central subject in the text's drama, an indispensably valuable character in the foreground of the Jeremianic narrative.

By placing the Land at the centre of analysis and listening to its presence there, the ecological reader is also struck by the references to the Land's interconnectivity, which is repeatedly implied in its representation. From the intermingled identity of Land, people and woman in Jer 6:1-8, to the centrality of Land in the construction of Israel's restored identity in 31:10-14, the Land is at the heart of what it means to be human in the book of Jeremiah. Not only do these texts depict the Land as being intrinsic to the human sense of self, but they also persistently operate on the unspoken assumption that human existence is dependent upon the Land's sustenance. Underlying YHWH's constant threats of drought and destruction in 3:3; 6:1-8; and 51:25-33 is the tacit understanding that human well-being is contingent upon the Land's well-being. Even YHWH's assurance of the permanence of the cosmic elements (31:36) is based upon the assumption that humanity is inextricably connected to their environment.

It is not only humanity who is dependent on the Land, however. This ecological analysis also highlights the repeated depiction of God as being reliant upon the Land, although again, this connection is only ever implied. It is only through the Land's blessing (Jer 2:7a; 31:12), its destruction (3:3 6:1-8; 51:25-33) or its celebration (31:37) that the divine will is made known. Although this mode of communication is problematic in its instrumental use of the Land, the fact remains that without the Land, God is powerless, isolated and unable to communicate. The interconnectedness that underlies the interaction among God, Land and people reconfigures the subordinate representation of Land, making it a co-equal subject in its own right. Far from a disjointed relationship of domination and subjugation, these counter-readings repeatedly show God, Land and people as being inseparably bound together as a meaningful whole.

If 'every text displays possibilities for inhabiting [the] world',[4] the Jeremianic text seems paradoxical in its contrasting visions of human inhabitation of the Land. On the one hand, the book of Jeremiah repeatedly affirms an anthropocentric/theocentric symbolic reality in which human interaction with the Land is characterised by domination, instrumentalism and violent manipulation. Taken at face value, the Jeremianic representations of Land that were selected for analysis in this thesis seem to reflect the anthropocentrism that White claims is at the heart of the contemporary ecological crisis.[5] On the other hand, an eco-critical reading of Jeremiah suggests that, as well as these highly problematic images of Land, this book also contains within it an alternative vision of a symbolic reality that is non-hierarchical and interconnected. This reality compounds anthropocentric notions of unfettered access to the Land, urging instead a relationship between humanity and Land that is based upon gratitude, gentleness, care and constraint. From this perspective, these Jeremianic representations of Land have the potential to contribute to a broader eco-sensibility where ecological thinking becomes habitual, which in turn enables the ecological inhabitation of the Land.

Moving beyond the boundaries of the Jeremianic text, questions remain as to the extent to which these representations contribute to the ongoing formation of human perceptions of Land. In almost every aspect, the ecological world of Aotearoa New Zealand is utterly discontinuous with that of ancient Israel. Indeed, it would be difficult to identify two landscapes further removed from one another. And yet there seem to be a remarkable number of similarities between these two contexts with regard to the ways in which Land is conceived. From Reeves' depiction of the dichotomous garden and wilderness, to Tuwhare's portrayal of the Land as a sexually abused woman, to Dallas' image of the Land as profoundly interconnected, the symbolic representation of Land in New Zealand poetry resonates with those representations of Land in the book of Jeremiah. Although at no point was a direct, linear connection identified between these disparate linguistic worlds, it appears that the Jeremianic images of Land function as part of the broad intertextual matrix of the New Zealand social imaginary. Despite the secular nature of Aotearoa New Zealand, it seems that these biblical representations continue to shape our perceptions of Land and, by extension, our behaviour towards it. From an ecological perspective, then, White's critique appears to be justified. If the Bible plays a part in determining the human experience of and

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[4] Ricœur, "World of the Text," 492.
[5] White Jr., "The Historical Roots," 1205.

interaction with the environment, then this book is, at the very least, complicit in the contemporary ecological crisis.

While an uncritical acceptance of the anthropocentric images of Land in the book of Jeremiah has the potential to compound the already devastating effects of climate change, there exists within these texts an alternative ecological vision of Land, which has the capacity to contribute to the transformation of human comportment towards our environment. Rather than offering specific solutions to the complex problem of ecological degradation, this alternative vision depicts an ecologically sensitive orientation, which functions to shape the values and goals that determine how we perceive ourselves in relation to our surroundings and how we live appropriately on Earth. It is thus a symbolic vision that operates initially on a theological/ideological level, but is subsequently translated into ecologically apposite behaviour. The task of creating and sustaining an ecological sensibility is a multi-disciplined one that must be addressed in various ways by a diversity of people. In carrying out an ecological analysis of selected texts from the book of Jeremiah, this work is a small contribution to such a task. It is my hope that, as well as highlighting the problems inherent in the Jeremianic representations of Land, the alternative ecological vision(s) contained within this text might play a role in the broader movement towards ecological justice and restorative action in the Land.

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