

What of the Old Testament? Addressing the Unity of Scripture with Bakhtin

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This paper is a preliminary exploration into the integration of Bakhtinian thought with the growing field of theological biblical interpretation. More specifically, this paper addresses how Bakhtin's concept of the other contributes to what I identify as the prosaic unity of the Christian scriptural canon. Through an examination of recent disagreements over the nature and function of the Christian canon, I distinguish prosaic unity from narrative unity.

Several sessions at last year's SBL conference generated my interest in this area. An entire session of the "Theological Hermeneutics of Christian Scripture" group was devoted to the promise and/or problem of the theological unity of the canon.¹ Coincidentally, Robert Kraft dedicated a portion of his presidential address to what he identified as the "tyranny of canonical assumptions."² The spectrum represented by two positions in the Theological Hermeneutics group provides useful means to establish a framework to address this matter with Bakhtin.³

The (Not-So-Complete) Idiot's Guide to Theological Biblical Interpretation⁴

The diversity of judgment on the value (or lack thereof) of a unity to the Christian leads to a brief overview of the general principles of theological biblical interpretation.

First, it differentiates itself from the earlier biblical theology movement and the cleavage between biblical studies and systematic theology that resulted from J. P. Gabler's emphasis on the historical study of biblical texts as the necessary foundation for biblical theology.⁵ Rather, theological interpretation seeks to restore a dialogue among biblical scholars and systematic theologians.⁶

Theological interpretation also rejects what Max Turner and Joel Green call the hegemony of the historical critical method.⁷ It does not deny or seek to diminish the value of historical research for biblical interpretation. However, it displaces historical study as the *end* of biblical research. Traditional historical criticism has demonstrated the proclivity to reduce a text's meaning to an historical author's intention to the exclusion of other possible readings, including a text's *wirkungsgeschichte*: its history of reception by readers. Consequently, the end to which historical criticism has traditionally directed its energy has been the reconstruction of the sources and the *sitz im leben* that lay behind the final form of the canonical texts.⁸ Within theological interpretation, historical research provides one means to a specific end: the responsibility of theology to the life and formation of the Christian community. Richard Hays states, "No reading of Scripture can be legitimate, then, if it fails to shape the readers into a community that embodies the love of God as shown forth in Christ."⁹

Theological interpretation does not profess a singular method for biblical interpretation, but rather the necessary critical encounter with the biblical texts so as to hear their continuing capacity to challenge and shape Christian life. In this regard, the biblical texts are not only sources of theological information, but they also exhibit forms of theological thinking. Theological interpretation places an emphasis on how the

biblical books, individually and jointly, “model the instantiation of the good news in particular locales and with respect to historical particularities.”¹⁰ In order to examine these models of instantiation, it necessarily draws upon historical research as well as insights from other disciplines.

In addition to drawing upon modern exegetical work, theological interpretation seeks to recover the critical wisdom of a biblical text’s *wirkungsgeschichte*. It professes that so-called “pre-critical” exegesis has much to offer contemporary scholarship, especially in the manner that it demonstrates that the words “faithful” and “critical” need not be mutually exclusive in modern biblical studies.¹¹ Accordingly, scholars within this field have drawn upon the patristics,¹² Augustine,¹³ Aquinas,¹⁴ and Luther,¹⁵ as well as the early Christian *regula fidei*¹⁶ and the Nicene Creed,¹⁷ for critical and methodological insights. Furthermore, theological interpretation promotes the value of embodied biblical interpretation by figures, both saints and sinners, throughout Christian history.¹⁸

This emphasis on the *wirkungsgeschichte* of biblical texts emphasizes theological interpretation’s rejection of the hermeneutic of suspicion for a hermeneutic of faith. This hermeneutic does not require that critical questions about biblical texts be cast aside but addresses them within the fundamental Christian affirmation of the Bible as the revealed Word of God. Furthermore, it attempts to avoid personalized eisegesis by encouraging the critical reading of biblical texts within communities of faith.¹⁹

Finally, theological interpretation attends to the final forms of the biblical texts because Christian tradition did not canonize J or Q, but the Book of Genesis and the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.²⁰ It focuses on the distinctive theological voices of the individual biblical texts, but also sets them within a larger theological narrative to which

each of these texts contribute. That is, while each biblical text possesses its own theological tone, the canon possesses a larger theological unity focused on the story of God, Israel, and the world. As N. T. Wright notes, “Most of [the Bible’s] constituent parts, and all of it when put together (whether in the Jewish canonical form or the Christian one), can best be described as *story*.”²¹ An attention to this larger unity impacts both our understanding of individual biblical texts as well as how we think about the authority of the Bible in Christian life.

From this brief survey of theological interpretation several features emerge that are attractive to Bakhtinian thought. First, theological interpretation’s eschewing of a singular method is compatible with Bakhtin’s aversion to systematic thinking. Like Bakhtin, theological interpretation moves “on the borders, at the junctures and points of intersection of academic disciplines as traditionally defined and institutionally regulated.”²² In fact, it is the asystematic dimension of theological interpretation that makes it a valuable dialogue partner with systematic theology.²³

Both theological exegesis and Bakhtin also recognize a value for the historical dimensions of texts without mistaking these dimensions for *the* meaning of these texts. Rather, both agree that history is one component that contributes to the manner with which texts shape their readers. That is, meaning is not only inherent within texts but encountered in the exchange between texts and readers. In this capacity, theological interpretation’s hermeneutic of faith coheres with Bakhtin’s earlier hermeneutic of love, later to evolve into his concept of dialogism.

Finally, theological exegesis and Bakhtin allow for a text’s *wirkungsgeschichte* to contribute to how a reader encounters, what Bakhtin calls, a text’s “creative

understanding.”²⁴ They both argue that a text’s meaning is not solely the product of an author’s intention, but also the potential meaning that is discovered through successive encounters with the text over time.

The potential for Bakhtinian categories to inform theological interpretation is the subject for a larger study. For the purposes of this paper, theological interpretation’s focus on the *wirkungsgeschichte* of a text and Bakhtin’s analysis of the role of other, particularly as it contributes to creative understanding, will serve as the basis for my examination of the different opinions expressed at last year’s conference on the matter of the Christian canon. For representative examples I appraise Richard Bauckham’s argument that the totality of scripture can be understood as a coherent story and Christine Helmer’s attention to the unity of scripture through a focus on its canonical multivalence rather than its canonical unity as metanarrative. Both the strengths and weaknesses of each approach will serve as the basis of my own argument for the prosaic unity of the canon.

The Canon as Coherent Story and Multivalence

Richard Bauckham proposes that the final form of the canon presents a coherent story of God’s purpose for the world. Bauckham’s position represents that of a growing number of theological biblical scholars that the Bible “is rightly understood in light of the church’s rule of faith as a coherent dramatic narrative.”²⁵ Bauckham attempts to address this unity in light of the identifiable historical, literary, and theological diversity of the biblical books.

Bauckham begins his analysis by addressing arguments against his proposal for unity. The first argument is that the claim for unity is contrary to the nature of the Bible in its final form. To address this concern he acknowledges that not every scriptural text is a narrative (e.g., Psalms, Proverbs, etc.). However, he notes that these non-narrative texts constantly refer to, summarize, and retell parts of the larger biblical story. He argues, “The biblical narrative of God, his people, and the world structures their theology and is presupposed in the way they address the present and the future.”²⁶

Bauckham also recognizes that the Bible does not tell its story in the same manner as a novel or a modern work of historiography. Even though Christians affirm God as the ultimate author of their scriptures, they need not ascribe to God the same understanding of unity that they might associate with a human author. Rather, Bauckham appeals to Bakhtin’s concept of polyphony to explain the relationship of the diversity of the Bible to its larger story.²⁷ Unfortunately, Bauckham leaves this tantalizing analogy unexplored.

Bauckham then provides a helpful survey of the manner in which the Biblical texts themselves bear witness to this coherent story. Examples include the manner in which Genesis – 2 Kings, even taking into account their diversity of sources, can be understood to tell a story that spans from creation to exile and the manner in which the New Testament documents present the story of Jesus as the continuation of the story of Israel (e.g., Matt 1:1-17). Furthermore, Bauckham cites several texts that provide summaries that evince a sense of unity of the biblical story.²⁸ Finally, he argues that the Book of Revelation provides an overview of this story from the vantage point of its end. Nevertheless, this end is situated within the context of a story that it presumes is ongoing. Bauckham concludes, “In these and other ways, we can see that it is not alien to the

biblical texts themselves, read as a cumulative whole, to seek a unitary story that encompasses the whole.”²⁹

Bauckham also allows that the biblical texts bear witness to diverse interpretations of this story. For example, the prophets, as well as 1-2 Chronicles, offer rereadings of the story while texts like Esther correct certain assumptions and Job challenges these assumptions altogether. In this regard, he likens this relationship between diversity and unity to Gérard Genette’s distinction between story and narrative.³⁰

Another objection that Bauckham addresses is the postmodern aversion to metanarratives, particularly their propensity to suppress difference. He agrees that this predilection can lead to and support authoritarian and oppressive social structures. However, he argues that the biblical story functions as a premodern metanarrative that challenges the assumptions of modern metanarratives about reason, history, the moral order, and power relations.³¹

The value of Bauckham’s work is that it recognizes that many biblical texts presume that their unique stories possess relationships to a larger story beyond the boundaries of their own narratives. He makes a strong case that a sense of this larger story is inherent to the canon, not foreign to it. Furthermore, he recognizes that the current form of the Christian canon has been and is integral to Christian life. Finally, his explanation of the canon as a premodern narrative participates in the contemporary examination of the interrelations of biblical texts with the theopolitical claims of empires past and present.³²

Unfortunately, Bauckham does not address an important challenge to the emphasis on unity. This challenge highlights that, rather than contest the properties of

modern metanarratives, Christian readings of their scriptures have often participated in and perpetuated these properties. At last year's session of the Theological Hermeneutics of Christian Scripture a question was posed to those who argued for an understanding of scriptural unity similar to Bauckham: What of the Old Testament? The question was not a dispute with certain texts' own assumption of a larger story, but rather it was directed to draw attention to biblical texts that are deeply problematic in their depictions of God. For example, how does this understanding of unity account for a God that commands violence?

The illustration given at the session was YHWH's command to exterminate the Canaanites as the Israelites prepare to take the land in Joshua 1-12. This is one of several texts that reflect the theological problem of the Old Testament for those who propose the biblical canon as a coherent story.³³ If one does read Genesis – 2 Kings as a coherent story, then this story prepares the reader in Deut 20:16-18 for the task that YHWH sets before the Israelites as they get ready to enter the Promised Land:

But as for the towns of these peoples that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, you must not let anything that breathes remain alive. You shall annihilate (*Haram*) them-- the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites-- just as the LORD your God has commanded, so that they may not teach you to do all the abhorrent things that they do for their gods, and you thus sin against the LORD your God.

Thus, the Book of Joshua begins with the entry into the land leading to the eventual confirmation of God's promise to exterminate the indigenous inhabitants of the land. The first city to be defeated and subjected to the practice of *Herem* is Jericho where "they devoted to destruction (*Haram*) by the edge of the sword all in the city, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and donkeys" (Josh 6:21).³⁴

It is not difficult to be troubled by these passages or others where God commands what reads in the post-Holocaust era as genocide.³⁵ There have been attempts to mitigate this command's severity through nuanced and critical biblical interpretation. Two theological biblical scholars have offered their own insights into the conquest of Jericho and the practice of holy war.

Ellen Davis examines the conquest of Jericho within the context of what she calls critical traditioning. She defines this approach as considering "how the biblical writers themselves dealt with difficult texts, that is, how they handled elements of the tradition that they could no longer accept as ethical and edifying."³⁶ One of these difficult texts is Joshua 6. Davis argues that the Deuteronomic assessment of the Canaanites' wickedness is undermined as the conquest narrative unfolds. She notes that not all Canaanites are faceless; there are those like Rahab who support the Israelites. She also argues that the narrative in Joshua 6 allows the reader to question the courage of the Israelites and encounter Canaanites who celebrate the power of the Israelite god. Indeed, Rahab's own courage re-evaluates the iniquity of the Canaanites. Davis concludes that "in the whole conquest account, the only recorded sins in the promised land are those committed by Israelites."³⁷

In the first volume of his massive three-volume *Old Testament Theology*, John Goldingay addresses holy war within the context of God's giving the land to Israel. He examines the nature of war within the biblical texts and the forms that it takes: liberative, passive; defensive-punitive, aggressive-punitive; pacifist.³⁸ Like Davis, he argues that the Old Testament story subverts the practice of *Herem* in several ways. For example, the practice that God commands against the Canaanites in Deuteronomy and Joshua,

becomes directed by Israelites against one another by the end of Judges. According to Goldingay, “The practice of *Herem* recoils on those who practice it.”³⁹

Both Davis and Goldingay demonstrate how theological interpretation can produce insightful readings of biblical texts when they are set within the larger story of Genesis – 2 Kings. Furthermore, they grapple with these difficult texts in a manner that attempts to affirm them as sacred scripture rather than reject them as no longer pertinent to contemporary concerns. This affirmation is reflected in recent textbooks that employ the premise of the Christian canon’s narrative unity as a frame of reference to understand the conquest narratives.⁴⁰ Unfortunately, neither Davis, Goldingay, nor any of these textbooks address the tragic embodied *wirkungsgeschichte* of God’s command of conquest and *Herem*.

Identifying a relationship between the conquest narratives and historical attempts at land seizure and cultural *Herem* is regrettably uncomplicated. European and American histories contain several examples of embodied interpretations of the conquest narratives. In his attempts to subjugate Irish Catholics, Oliver Cromwell viewed them as akin to Canaanites. In a manner that evokes the biblical description of the wickedness of the Canaanites as justification for Israel’s capture of the land (Gen 15:16), Cromwell declared, “I am persuaded that this is a righteous judgment of God upon these barborous wretches, who have imbrued their hands with so much innocent blood.”⁴¹ Indeed, British persecution included both the appropriation of land and the attempt to extinguish Irish culture by outlawing the Gaelic language and banning Celtic musical instruments. The long simmering tensions and violence between the British and the Irish over the status of

Northern Ireland testifies to the long-lasting effects of this particular biblical *wirkungsgeschichte*.

Closer to the American experience is the plight of the Native Americans. The British colonists who settled in New England appropriated the biblical conquest of Canaan to identify the Native Americans as “Amalek annoying this Israel in the wilderness.”⁴² Roland Bainton argues that this form of theological interpretation continued into the eighteenth century as a justification for the extermination of the indigenous populaces.⁴³ The colonists were the New Israel whose holy charge it was to annihilate the New Canaanites. In 1704 English colonist Herbert Gibbs would invoke “the mercies of God in extirpating the enemies of Israel in Canaan” and end his sermon by quoting Jdg 5:23: “Curse ye Meroz.”⁴⁴

The careful and faithful readings of Davis and Goldingay demonstrate the manner with which figures like Cromwell and Gibbs appropriated these biblical texts for the sinful gain of their people. However, the lasting impacts of these embodied interpretations temper an unintentional and subliminal tenor of Davis’ and Goldingay’s work: that we have somehow solved the problem of sinful theological interpretation. This temptation is emboldened by the contemporary circumstances of many Americans that may feel distant from the plights of the Irish or the Native Americans.⁴⁵ However, particularly in the case of Native Americans, the consequences of these readings remain all too present in Montana where poverty among Native Americans is more than double the state rate, the median household income is more than thirty percent less than Anglos,⁴⁶ and high school graduation rates are only fifty percent compared to eighty percent for the general population.⁴⁷ This present experience of the native populations

within my own state manifests a tension between the aspirations of the form of theological interpretation that views the Bible as a coherent story and those individual texts that threaten to disfigure this coherence.

It is the tension that emerges between the multivalences of the biblical texts and canon's unity that Christine Helmer addresses. She attempts to reconcile this tension by arguing for an anticipation of unity that must not be constrained by the narrative form imposed by scholars like Bauckham, Davis, and Goldingay. Early in her study Helmer acknowledges the manner in which a Christian belief in the the narrative unity of the Bible can lead to the kinds of interpretations exemplified by Cromwell and Gibbs. As a result she asks, "Is the Other not lost in the narcissistic abyss of the Absolute I?"⁴⁸ To counter this problematic view of unity she proposes a theological interpretation of the canon's unity in view of the canon's observable multivalence. She argues, "If the canon's unity is to represent conceptually a theological proposal concerning the unifying elements in the Bible, then it must be constructed in honest view of the different forms and content making up the Bible."⁴⁹

Helmer's focus is on multivalence as an attribute that characterizes the Christian Bible. For example, the bipartite division of Old Testament and New Testament structurally embodies this multivalence. Furthermore, Helmer argues that patristic and rabbinic readings of the Old Testament/Tanak, as well theological diversity embedded in the New Testament documents, further the case for multivalence. She concludes that the Bible "is characterized more by difference in virtue of literary, historical, and religious material, than by sameness."⁵⁰ In order to adequately understand this multivalence in relation to unity, she contends that we must attend to responsible historical-critical

conclusions about the formation of the Bible and the diversity of ways that God and humanity interact with one another in the biblical texts.

While Helmer's focus is historical and theological, she rejects the position that views the unity of the Bible as a coherent narrative. She argues that this viewpoint suppresses difference, particularly anything from the outside that might challenge this view of unity. Moreover, this form of unity is not inherent to the biblical canon; it has been imposed from without as a theological abstraction. Thus, proponents of narrative unity "make epistemically totalizing claims of the Bible's absorptive capacity without taking into account that their claims require verification by historical, empirical, or metaphysical criteria."⁵¹ The only coherent explanation of unity is one that takes into account the diversity among and within the biblical documents, an understanding of the canon's formation, and attention to contemporary theological and cultural concerns.

Helmer next formulates her own argument for the canon as what she calls "anticipated unity." She begins by acknowledging that Christian tradition has viewed its Bible as a unity and that this belief has formed the basis of theological judgments. Consequently, the biblical canon "enters into the theological judgment-making process as a preliminary unity."⁵² For Helmer, this understanding of unity informs responsible theological engagement with the scriptures.

The next step for the theologian is to submit her theological judgments to a larger community dynamic. Only by doing so can one's responsible subjective renderings be held accountable to the intersubjective scrutiny of the body that possesses an array of interests and is tasked with preserving tradition. Helmer maintains, "By making public subjective construals of the canon's unity as they inform individual theologians'

judgment-making processes, the proposals for unity are brought into the intersubjective realm and are opened for discussion.”⁵³ In this manner theological assessments are tested within a community’s decision-making process and may be subject to negotiation and modification. This process begins with the anticipation of unity within the Christian tradition but fashions a space for the manner in which the Bible’s observable multivalence may shape others who enter into the community dialogue about the truthfulness of any one individual’s theological judgments.

Helmer’s position helpfully allocates a space for historical-critical conclusions about the formation of the canon, but she does not reduce these conclusions to the meaning of the canon itself. Like Bauckham, she finds a place for the testimony of Christian tradition about the unity of the canon but sets it in balance with the multivalence which she believes historical critical work has confirmed. Helmer also identifies a significant lacuna in the work of those who argue for narrative unity; the failure to adequately address outside voices that either seek to subject the belief in biblical unity to their own desire for power or that have been subjugated by those desires. In my own critique of Bauckham I identify the persecutions of Native Americans by the New England colonists as examples of both of those voices.

Unfortunately, these strengths do not render Helmer’s arguments as any more satisfactory than those of Bauckham. For example, she argues, “Reading the canon as a unity in view of supportive sources for this theological claim thus entails restricting some aspects of the Bible while upholding others.”⁵⁴ She supports this argument by referring only to two scholars who represent this position. However, the field of scholarship on the topic of narrative unity by theological biblical scholars is wider than she avers. For

example, Bauckham allows for the very multivalence that she identifies and, like her, permits it to exist as a possible tension in relation to his own claims for unity.⁵⁵ Furthermore, while acknowledging that Christian tradition has viewed its Bible as a unity, she argues that scholars who hold to a position of narrative unity impose this belief upon the Bible because it cannot be found within it. While one may accept that the *regula fidei* imposes a unity on the biblical corpus, Bauckham supplies abundant evidence to support the argument that many of the very documents that represent the Bible's multivalence also view their own stories as part of a larger narrative. Furthermore, Bauckham demonstrates that the diversity of identifiable sources in Genesis – 2 Kings does not preclude their ability to be read as a coherent narrative due to their canonical arrangement.⁵⁶ Thus, one may conclude that the givenness of biblical multivalence need not call into question “the solitude of any canonical unity articulated by theological interpretation.”⁵⁷ Finally, while Helmer does make a case for the voice of “the Other” in relation to unity, her emphasis on the community of faith suggests that it satisfies this role. She does not address how those outside one's own community of faith may also denote the other.

Each of the previous positions presents helpful insights on the matter of the canon, yet none of them are ultimately adequate. From them we may collectively propose several propositions about the unity of the Christian canon. First, historical criticism has demonstrated that a diversity of sources lay behind the formation of the biblical books and the canon. Second, Christian tradition has acclaimed a unity for its Bible that testifies to the will of God in the life of the world. This affirmation of unity is constitutive of the Christian belief in the capacity of the Bible to shape and challenge the

church. The *wirkungsgeschichte* of biblical texts can contribute to our understanding of this capacity throughout Christian history. Third, the observable multivalence of the biblical documents and the canon exists in a dialogical relationship with the canonical shape of Genesis – 2 Kings and certain pericopes that testify to a larger narrative about God, Israel, and the world. The New Testament, in all its diversity, presents the story of Jesus within the context of this larger narrative. Finally, embodied interpretations of biblical texts like Joshua 6 are part of the *wirkungsgeschichte* of biblical texts and must be accounted for in any understanding of the canon's unity. The failure to do so endangers the integrity of theological interpretation. I propose that Bakhtin's analysis of the other and her relationship to texts establishes the *wirkungsgeschichte* of the conquest narratives as necessary for the prosaic unity of the Christian canon.

The Prosaic Unity of the Christian Canon

Viewing the unity of the Christian canon with Bakhtin introduces a shift of emphasis from “narrative” to “prosaic” unity. The narrative unity proposed by Bauckham and others approaches the text as something that affects the reader in the exchange. In this manner it reflects dimensions of narrative biblical criticism and its understanding of the implied reader as someone who is acted upon by the claims of the text.

Bakhtin would agree that texts possess the capacity to shape and challenge readers, but he does not understand this transaction as unidirectional from active source to passive recipient. Rather, it is a dialogic exchange between mutually active parties:

author and reader. Both parties possess an outsidership in relation to one another that sees the other in a way that it cannot. Because this process differs from that formulated by biblical narrative interpreters, I choose the Bakhtinian term “prosaic” to reflect this difference. It is expressive of Bakhtin’s emphasis on narrative as well as the interactive relationship between author and reader.⁵⁸ An understanding of this process provides a heuristic frame within which to view the role of the *wirkungsgeschichte* of the conquest narratives in relation to the Christian affirmation of the unity of its scriptures.

Bakhtin argued for an active and participatory reader in relationship with the author. For Bakhtin, it is the reader who completes the aesthetic potential of a text. In his earlier writings he viewed the reader as subordinate to the author’s authority. He wrote that “the author is authoritative and indispensable for the reader, whose relationship to the author is not a relationship to him as an individual . . . but rather a relationship to him as a *principle* that needs to be followed . . . in a determinate, existent human being, who can be contemplated.”⁵⁹ As he turned his attention to more literary concerns, his position shifted so that by the end of his life the reader was someone who reproduced the text resulting in a “new unrepeatable event in the life of the text, a new link in the historical chain of speech communication.”⁶⁰ In the reading process there is an encounter of two texts, what Bakhtin calls the “ready-made” text and the “reactive text” which is created through the act of reading. Consequently, Bakhtin describes this act as an encounter between two authors.⁶¹

The reader is one who is active and responsive to the dialogues in the text as well as his own dialogic relationship with the author and the text. The goal is still to understand the text as the author understands it, but the reader’s outsidership to the text

provides the vantage point that exhumes unconscious and polysemic meaning not present to the author at the time of the text's composition. The author's intention is never finalized; successive generations of readers continue to encounter its latent promise through their own socio-cultural points of view. Thus, it is more appropriate to assert that readers "complete" a text's potential over time.

Because the relationship is dialogic neither the world of author, the world of text, nor the world of the reader overpowers one another. Rather, their outsideness to one another works to complete what cannot be seen within the boundaries of each one's point of view. Carol Newsom fittingly summarizes the reader's task as "consequently not so much to analyze plot and characters but to become a kind of participant in the dialogue itself, like a bystander, who has become involved in a quarrel."⁶²

David Shepherd notes the ethical character of this exchange. Because the reader participates in the ongoing historical chain of a text's performance, the dialogic relationship between author, reader, and text has a past as well as a present. According to Shepherd this form of reading is "disruptive of the seemingly fixed position of text and reader; these positions cannot come through the dialogic encounter unchanged because they do not pre-exist it."⁶³ The result is that the Bakhtinian reader cannot evade questions of politics and ideology as part of his relationship with the text and author. This awareness reorients the reader's understanding of his own position within the world and his relationships with others.

For Bakhtin, the reader's outsideness in relation to the text provides the context by which she may disclose latent potential. However, because this reader participates in an ongoing historical and cultural chain of reading, he cannot fulfill this potential as

every epoch provides new opportunities to explore it. This process is also reciprocal as author and text also function as the other in relation to the reader to divulge insights into his relation to his world. Ultimately, this process is an ethical one.

Bakhtin's stress on otherness derives from his notion of finalizability. Earlier in his career, he advocated a teleologically-centered approach to the relationship between a work of art and its beholder.⁶⁴ That is, Bakhtin believed that one's aesthetic experience of a work of art depended on the otherness of the work to complete the person. As he continued to develop his thinking, Bakhtin remained committed to finalizability but more as a process than as an end. Throughout his career, it expressed the aesthetic and ethical goals of relationships between persons with one another and with works of art.

Bakhtin critiqued two forms of aesthetics as not sufficient to describe the relationship between the person and the work of art. He identified the first form as "expressive aesthetics." According to Bakhtin, expressive aesthetics desires to understand the work of art from its own point of view. He writes: "In cases of this kind, the *author* is invoked for help; we gain possession of the *whole* of a work by coexperiencing it with its author."⁶⁵ However, Bakhtin argues that this approach is an "impoverishing theory" because it does not account for the whole of the work of art; it focuses on how the author's point of view coincides with the point of view of the hero.⁶⁶ Bakhtin would find that historical criticism's emphasis on the intentions of the biblical authors fits this category.

Bakhtin describes the other approach as "impressive aesthetics." This method focuses on the productive self-activity of the artist. This is an approach that focuses on the author at the expense of the hero. Bakhtin assigned this position to Formalism. He

rejected this method because “the artist’s act of creation is conceived as a one-sided act confronted not by another *subjectum*, but only by an object, only by material to be worked.”⁶⁷ What was missing from both of these approaches was the role of the other which Bakhtin argued was necessary not only for art but for our sense of self as well.

For Bakhtin, the other is the “organizing power in all aesthetic forms.”⁶⁸ He argued that each of us needs the consciousness of another person to complete ourselves. Each person possesses an excess of seeing in relation to others that is unique to his place in the world. That is, each person observes the world in a manner that another cannot because that other can only see the world from within the boundaries of her own body. Aesthetic action is the process that we undergo as a result of our excess of seeing in relation to another person. This action involves more than empathizing with the person who is the object of our observations; it also involves what Bakhtin called “sympathetic understanding.” He described the process in the following way: “I must empathize or project myself into this other human being, see his world axiologically from within him as *he* sees the world; I must put myself in his place and then, after returning to my own place, ‘fill in’ his horizon through that excess of seeing which opens out from this, my own, place outside him.”⁶⁹ The result is one’s outside existence takes on new meaning in relation to the surrounding world due to the excess of seeing which is the privilege of the other.

According to Bakhtin, the excess of seeing that is my position as the other in relation to another person also extends to my relationship with works of art. The process of art involves the spectator as a position outside of the object who contemplates the object “from the standpoint of the whole event of a life” represented by the object.⁷⁰ Just

as with relationships, we first set ourselves to view the world from the point of view of the work of art. However, this act is not enough. We must then return to our singular place outside of the work in order to give meaning to our experience. Finally, through the surplus of our own position in relation to the work, we enframe the work within a new understanding that is subject neither entirely to its own nor our own point of view. The process of aesthetic contemplation creates the work of art as a new whole.

Bakhtin argues that the goal of this process is not for the participants to merge with one another. Rather, it results in the “intensification of one’s own *outsideness* with respect to others, one’s own *distinctness* from others; it consists in fully exploiting the privilege of one’s own unique place outside other human beings.”⁷¹ This process alerts us to the boundaries that prevent us from seeing our own position in the world around us. However, these same boundaries provide us the opportunity to act as the other who fills in the liminal perspective of another person or work of art. They also open us to the necessity of the outsideness of others to provide the same role. According to Bakhtin, the result is not the elimination of boundaries but, rather, their intersection.⁷² Later in his life, Bakhtin also described our understanding and acceptance of the boundaries as a movement toward “real freedom.”⁷³

The key notion that describes the aesthetic relationship between object and beholder is privilege. That is, the aesthetic process confers upon the participants a position of privilege in relation to one another. It is a privilege because it bestows value upon the person or the work that is the object of our contemplation. For Bakhtin, this value is a love that is shared between the work of art and its beholder. In Bakhtin’s earliest writings this love attains salvific qualities. He argues that within ourselves we

can only know ourselves as spirit. It is the outsideness of the other that grants us our souls. He describes the process in the following manner: “The soul descends upon me—like grace upon a sinner, like a gift that is unmerited and unexpected. In the spirit I can and must do nothing but lose my own soul; the soul may be saved and preserved, but *not through my own powers*.”⁷⁴ While Bakhtin’s theological language became more implicit in his later writings, the value that derived from the relationship between the work and its beholder remained a topic of continued reflection throughout his life.

Because value exists in the relationship between the person and the work of art, what derives from aesthetic contemplation is not only an analytical practice but also an ethical stance. According to Bakhtin, the self “has an absolute need for the other, for the other’s seeing, remembering, gathering, and unifying self-activity.”⁷⁵ The other’s acknowledgement of this need bears with it a responsibility to active participation in the aesthetic relationship. The other can neither subsume himself to the work nor impose himself over it. He must traverse his own boundaries and the margins of her object of contemplation in order to fulfill her role. In his later writings Bakhtin characterized the ethical quality of the relationship between the self and other in terms of expectations. We engage the other with the expectation of his active response and vice versa.⁷⁶ Active participation is necessary from all parties in order to disclose the potential for meaning that resides at the boundaries between the work of art and its beholder. Consequently, the participants in this relationship are answerable to the expectations that each person brings to the relationship.

The concept of dialogism derived as a literary outgrowth from Bakhtin’s earlier ruminations in aesthetics and ethics. Bakhtin maintained that outsideness was an

important component of dialogism. He wrote, “To be means to be for another, and through the other, for oneself.”⁷⁷ It is the otherness of the reader, within his own social context, that provides an opportunity for inert voices within the text to arise as undisclosed potential. In turn, it is the otherness of the text which discloses potential within the reader that he cannot see from his bounded point of view. Thus, according to Bakhtin, dialogism does not just occur within the text between characters and author, but also between reader and text as an exchange of outsideness in relation to one another.

It is this exchange of outsideness that forms the basis of Bakhtin’s understanding of unity. In his earlier writings he argues that “the very word *unity* be discarded as overtly theorized.”⁷⁸ He contended that Formalism had imposed order on texts rendering them monological. Furthermore, he believed that an idea of unity that conforms to an underlying structure of an overarching scheme conflicted with true creativity. This understanding of unity “presupposes on the one hand a unity of language (in the sense of general normative forms) and on the other hand the unity of an individual person realizing himself in language.”⁷⁹ Similar to the critiques of the historical critical method by theological biblical exegetes, Bakhtin opposed the reduction of meaning to a preexisting state within the text that awaited excavation by the reader.

Bakhtin did acknowledge some sense of unity as part of the prosaic personality. However, for him unity was a life-long task and he tried to reconceive unity to allow for the possibility of the creativity that he believed had been lost in the Formalism. He argued that unity is accretive and temporary; it requires response. As Caryl Emerson notes, “The whole of something can only be seen from a position that is outside of it in space and after it in time. But since a whole can be variously realized from an infinite

number of angles (and each of these realizations will be fully recognized as such only by its own 'finalizer'), a sense of wholeness is always 'bestowed,' not merely decreed or revealed."⁸⁰

For Bakhtin it is the receiver who is the bestower of form on a work and because this receiver brings his own outsideness to the work, he can sometimes serve as a destabilizing force that challenges the author's efforts. He summarizes:

We might put it as follows: before us are two events—the event that is narrated in the work and the event of narration itself (we ourselves participate in the latter, as listeners or readers); these events take place in different times ... and in different places, but at the same time these two events are indissolubly united in a single but complex event that we might call the work in the totality of all its events, including the external material givenness of the work, and its text, and the world represented in the text, and the author-creator and the listener or reader; thus we perceive the fullness of the work in all its wholeness and indivisibility, but at the same time we understand the diversity of the elements that constitute it.⁸¹

Thus, Bakhtin was not opposed to idea of unity as long as it was not beholden to a system to constrict it.

On the basis of this understanding, viewing the unity of the Christian canon with Bakhtin questions some of the assumptions proposed by theological biblical interpretation. There are similarities between Bakhtin's understanding of unity and Helmer's argument for the anticipation of unity. However, unlike Helmer, we need not dismiss the narrative potential in the canonical arrangement of Genesis – 2 Kings, certain texts' understanding of a larger coherent story, or the New Testament's presentation of Jesus in relation to this story. However, they exist as voices toward unity, not the unity itself. The potential for unity remains for the interface between the distinct voices of each of the biblical texts in relation to the canonical whole. It also relies on the participation of the reader's outsideness in dialogic exchange with the texts and the canon.

Theological interpretation's definition of *wirkungsgeschichte* embraces the roles of readers to unearth new meanings of texts within given times and places. This perception resonates with Bakhtin's discussion of creative understanding. Helmer's emphasis on the interaction between interpreters and communities also fits within this spectrum. Creative understanding is the capacity for potential meaning to emerge from the dialogic exchange of outsideness between a text and its readers over time. Changing cultural circumstances allow for each generation of readers to encounter new meaning that was not accessible in the past. According to Bakhtin, "*Creative understanding* does not renounce itself, its own place in time, its own culture; and it forgets nothing. In order to understand, it is immensely important for the person who understands to be *located outside* the object of his or her creative understanding—in time, in space, in culture."⁸² Bauckham and Helmer appear to agree with this proposition. However, Bakhtin's emphasis on the ability of creative understanding to forget *nothing* permits a *wirkungsgeschichte* that destabilizes our attempts to constrain a text's potential meaning.

Both Bauckham and Helmer introduce some form of constraint upon theological interpretation. For Bauckham it is the larger coherent narrative inherent in Genesis – 2 Kings and affirmed by summaries contained in texts like Joshua 24 and the early Christian *regula fidei*. For Helmer, the constraint is the interpreter's relationship to the community, particularly the community's consensus about its own interpretative tradition.⁸³ Presumably, these constraints could identify the malevolent potential in the kinds of readings of Joshua 1-12 represented by Cromwell and Mather.⁸⁴ Unfortunately, neither Bauckham nor Helmer proposes how to address what happens when such

readings become embodied with tangible consequences that continue to resonate into the present.

Bakhtin's earlier descriptions of the self-other relationship did not explore its darker possibilities. For him it was a relatively benign process. However, his later explorations in dialogism allow for creative understanding's ability to forget nothing to divulge a text's sinister potential. He argues that one's dialogic relationship with a work participates in an ongoing exchange between the work and its readers throughout history. The plight of the Native Americans—past and present—reminds us that this history may unearth potential with menacing consequences.

If the Christian canon tells a coherent story about God and the world, then it starts the last act of this story by focusing on a figure who explicitly rejects violence as a constituent of God's inbreaking kingdom (e.g., Matt 5:38-48; 26:52) and whose death is understood as revealing glory in what the Greco-Roman world, in all its emphasis on military might, would have perceived as weakness (1 Cor 1:23-25). However, Joshua 1-12 presents a god who commands violence not only for military conquest but also as an act of worship.⁸⁵ In this context it stands within the canon as an outside voice that dialogically engages with the claims of the one who theological interpretation affirms as the principal author of this story: God. Furthermore, the embodied *wirkungsgeschichte* of Joshua 1-12 calls forth the history and ongoing experience of Native Americans as the voice of the other whose position in relation to this story commands a privilege necessary for authentic sympathetic understanding.

The challenge of Bakhtin's aesthetic ethics is that it requires a work to be answerable to its history of reading but it also requires that the beholder be answerable to

the work whose outsideness divulges his own potential for malevolence. Theological exegesis—in the forms proposed by Bauckham and Helmer—underscores the importance of interpretation within the context of communities of faith. However, addressing the prosaic unity of Christian scripture with Bakhtin challenges Christians also to read our story with and be answerable to those communities who bear the destructive inheritance of otherness inscribed by past Christian interpretations of the biblical story. Until we do, Bakhtin would argue that we cannot know real freedom.

¹ Richard B. Hays, “Can Narrative Criticism Revoer the Unity of Scripture?”; Michael Pasquarello, III, “The Problem of the Unity of Scripture: Reading the Bible for the Love of God”; Christine Helmer, “Trust and Spirit: Anticipating Scripture’s Unity.” I am grateful to each of these scholars for sending me copies of their papers for reference purposes. Helmer’s paper has subsequently been published in the inaugural edition of the *Journal of Theological Interpretation* (Spring 2007): 61-77. At this year’s conference an entire session of this group is devoted to the theme “Theological Interpretation and the Canon of Scripture.”

² Robert Kraft, “Para-Mania: Beside, Before, and Beyond Bible Studies,” n.p. [cited 9 October 2007]. Online: http://www.sas.upenn.edu/religious_studies/rak/publics/new2/sblpres2006-all.html. Accessed on October 8, 2007.

³ On the matter of reading “with” or “like” Bakhtin, see Barbara Green, *Mikhail Bakhtin and Biblical Scholarship: An Introduction* (ed. Danna Nolan Fewell; SemeiaSt 38; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000): 70.

⁴ A more “complete” explanation of theological exegesis can be found in Richard B. Hays, “Reading the Bible with Eyes of Faith: The Practice of Theological Exegesis,” *Journal of Theological Interpretation* (Spring 2007): 5-21.

⁵ J. P. Gabler, “About the Current Distinction of Biblical and Dogmatic Theology and the Right Definition of their Goals” (inaugural address, University of Altdorf, March 30, 1787). Published in *Opuscula Academica* 1 (1831): 179-94. Krister Stendahl identifies this as the distinction between “what it meant” and “what it means” (“Biblical Theology, Contemporary,” *IDB*, 1:419-20). For a brief contemporary survey of the history of biblical theology see Dennis T. Olson, “Biblical Theology,” *NIDB*, 1:11-17.

⁶ See Max Turner & Joel B. Green, “New Testament Commentary and Systematic Theology: Strangers or Friends?” in *Between Two Horizons: Spanning New Testament Studies and Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000): 1-22. The book is an introduction to the new Two Horizons commentary series.

⁷ Turner & Green, “New Testament Commentary and Systematic Theology,” 6-8.

⁸ Theological interpretation is, of course, not alone in its criticism of this dimension of historical critical studies but fits within the spectrum of other similar criticisms expressed by feminist, ideological, and narrative biblical scholars (to identify a few).

⁹ Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993): 191.

¹⁰ Joel B. Green, “Scripture and Theology: Uniting the Two So Long Divided” in *Between Two Horizons*, 41.

¹¹ See David C. Steinmetz, “The Superiority of Pre-Critical Exegesis,” in *The Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Class and Contemporary Readings* (ed. Stephen E. Fowl; Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1997): 26-38.

¹² Brian Daley, “Is Patristic Exegesis Still Usable? Some Reflections on Early Christian Interpretation of the Psalms,” in *The Art of Reading Scripture* (ed. Ellen F. Davis & Richard B. Hays; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003): 69-88.

¹³ Michael Dauphinais & Matthew Levering, *Holy People, Holy Land: A Theological Introduction to the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2005).

¹⁴ Stephen E. Fowl, “The Importance of a Multivoiced Literal Sense of Scripture: The Example of Thomas Aquinas,” in *Reading the Scripture with the Church: Toward a Hermeneutic for Theological Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006): 35-50.

¹⁵ Helmer, “The Problem of the Unity of Scripture.”

¹⁶ Robert W. Wall, “Reading the Bible from within Our Traditions: The “Rule of Faith” in Theological Hermeneutics,” in *Between Two Horizons*, 88-107.

¹⁷ William S. Kurz, “Beyond Historical Criticism: Reading John’s Prologue as Catholics,” in *The Future of Catholic Biblical Scholarship: A Constructive Conversation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002): 159-81.

¹⁸ See James C. Howell, “Christ was Like St. Francis,” in *Art of Reading of Scripture*, 89-108.

¹⁹ For representative works see Luke Timothy Johnson, *Scripture and Discernment: Decision Making in the Church* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996); William Stacy Johnson, “Reading the Scriptures Faithfully in a Postmodern Age,” in *Art of Reading Scripture*, 109-124; .

²⁰ This does not mean that theological interpretation ignores questions related to discrepancies among manuscripts when a final form may be in doubt nor does it necessarily mean that insights from source criticism may not be useful when interpreting the final forms of the texts.

²¹ N. T. Wright, *The Last Word: Beyond the Bible Wars to a New Understanding of the Authority of Scripture* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005): 26. See also, John Goldingay, “Biblical Narrative and Systematic Theology,” in *Between Two Horizons*, 123-42; Steve Motyer, “Two Testaments, One Biblical Theology,” in *Between Two Horizons*, 143-64; Trevor Hart, “Tradition, Authority, and a Christian Approach to the Bible as Scripture,” in *Between Two Horizons*, 197-201; Robert W. Jenson, “Scripture’s Authority in the Church,” in *Art of Reading Scripture*, 27-37.

²² Robert Stam, *Subversive Pleasures: Bakhtin, Cultural Criticism and Film*, Parallax Re-Visions of Culture and Society (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989): 17.

²³ John Goldingay, “Biblical Narrative,” 132.

²⁴ Mikhail Bakhtin, "Response to a Question from the *Novyi Mir* Editorial Staff," in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* (ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist; University of Texas Press Slavic Series, vol. 8; Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986): 7.

²⁵ The Scripture Project, "Nine Theses on the Interpretation of Scripture," in *Art of reading Scripture*, 1. This is a position reflected in articles throughout this collection.

²⁶ Richard Bauckham, "Reading Scripture as a Coherent Story," in *Art of the Reading Scripture*, 39. Cf., Goldingay, "Biblical Narrative," 134.

²⁷ Bauckham, "Reading Scripture," 40.

²⁸ Deut 6:20-24; 26:5-9; Josh 24:2-13; Neh 9:6-37; Pss 78; 105; 106; 135:8-12; 136; Acts 7:2-50. Bauckham, "Reading Scripture," 41. To these one could also add Luke 1:54-55; 1:68-79.

²⁹ Bauckham, "Reading Scripture," 42.

³⁰ Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (trans. Jane E. Lewin; Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980). One could also refer to Seymour Chatman's distinction between story and discourse in *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978): 23.

³¹ Bauckham, "Reading Scripture," 48-52.

³² Representative examples of this work include Walter Brueggemann, *The Word that Redescribes the World: The Bible and Discipleship*, ed. Patrick D. Miller (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006); Warren Carter, *The Roman Empire And the New Testament: An Essential Guide* (Abingdon, 2006); John Dominic Crossan & Jonathan L. Reed, *In Search of Paul: How Jesus' Apostle Opposed Rome's Empire with God's Kingdom* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2004); Richard A. Horsley, ed., *Jesus and Empire: The Kingdom of God and the New World Disorder* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003).

³³ Another text might be Gen 22:1-19. For a theological reading of this text, see R. W. L. Moberly, "Living Dangerously: Genesis 22 and the Quest for Good Interpretation," in *Art of reading Scripture*, 181-97.

³⁴ For an overview of the practice of *Herem* see Philip D. Stern, *The Biblical Herem: A Window on Israel's Religious Experience* (BJS 211; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991).

³⁵ For example, 1 Sam 15:3.

³⁶ Ellen F. Davis, "Critical Traditioning: Seeking an Inner Biblical Hermeneutic," in *Art of Reading Scripture*, 166.

³⁷ Davis, "Critical Traditioning," 172.

³⁸ John Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology: Israel's Gospel* (Vol. 1; Downers Grove, IVP Academic, 2003): 474-81.

³⁹ Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology*, 482.

⁴⁰ Craig G. Bartholomew & Michael W. Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004): 84-85; C. Marvin Pate et. al., *The Story of Israel: A Biblical Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004): 55-56; Dauphinais & Levering, *Holy People, Holy Land*, 86-87.

⁴¹ Quoted in Roland H. Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace: A Historical Survey and Critical Re-evaluation* (New York: Abingdon, 1960): 151.

⁴² Cotton Mather quoted in Bainton, *Christian Attitudes*, 168.

⁴³ Bainton, *Christian Attitudes*, 168-70.

⁴⁴ Quoted in Bainton, *Christian Attitudes*, 168.

⁴⁵ This distance was recently reflected in my students who, when presented with this *wirkungsgeschichte*, declared it to be an "incorrect" reading as if the problem had now been resolved.

⁴⁶ "Income and Poverty in the State of Montana," n.p. [cited 11 October 2007]. Online: <http://www.ecanned.com/MT/2007/01/income-and-poverty-in-state-of-montana.html>.

⁴⁷ IR Staff, "Improving Indian Schools," *Helena Independent Record* (10 October 2007). Cited 11 October 2007. Online: http://www.helenair.com/articles/2007/10/10/opinions_top/a041010_01.txt.

⁴⁸ Helmer, "Trust and Spirit," 62.

⁴⁹ Helmer, "Trust and Spirit," 62.

⁵⁰ Helmer, "Trust and Spirit," 67.

⁵¹ Helmer, "Trust and Spirit," 68.

⁵² Helmer, "Trust and Spirit," 73.

⁵³ Helmer, "Trust and Spirit," 75.

⁵⁴ Helmer, "Trust and Spirit," 72.

⁵⁵ See also Max Turner, "Historical Criticism and Theological Hermeneutics of the New Testament," in *Between Two Horizons*, 44-70.

⁵⁶ James A. Sanders also makes this argument in "Canon," *ABD* 1:840.

⁵⁷ Helmer, "Trust and Spirit," 69.

⁵⁸ For a more thorough examination of the prosaic in Bakhtin's thought, see Gary Saul Morson & Caryl Emerson, *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990): 16-35.

⁵⁹ Mikhail Bakhtin, "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity" in *Art and Answerability* (trans. Vadim Liapunov; ed. Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov; University of Texas Press Slavic Series, vol. 9; Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990): 206-07. The emphasis is his.

⁶⁰ Mikhail Bakhtin, "The Problem of the Text in Linguistics, Philology, and the Human Sciences: An Experiment in Philosophical Analysis," in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, 106.

⁶¹ Bakhtin, "PT," 107.

⁶² Carol A. Newsom, "Bakhtin," in *Handbook of Postmodern Biblical Interpretation*, ed. A. K. M. Adam (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000): 25.

⁶³ David Shepherd, "Bakhtin and the Reader," in *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory*, ed. Ken Hirschkop and David Shepherd, 2d (Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 2001): 145.

⁶⁴ See Mikhail Bakhtin, "The Problem of Content, Material and Form," in *Art and Answerability*, 267-68.

⁶⁵ Bakhtin, "AHAA," 65.

⁶⁶ Bakhtin, "AHAA," 87.

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- ⁶⁷ Bakhtin, "AHAA," 92.
- ⁶⁸ Bakhtin, "AHAA," 189.
- ⁶⁹ Bakhtin, "AHAA," 25. See, also, Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* (trans. Vadim Liapunov; ed. Vadim Liapunov and Michael Holquist; Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993): 16.
- ⁷⁰ Bakhtin, "AHAA," 75.
- ⁷¹ Bakhtin, "AHAA," 88.
- ⁷² Bakhtin, "AHAA," 101.
- ⁷³ Bakhtin, "From Notes Made in 1970-71," in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, 139.
- ⁷⁴ Bakhtin, "AHAA," 101.
- ⁷⁵ Bakhtin "AHAA," 35-36.
- ⁷⁶ Mikhail Bakhtin, "The Problem of Speech Genres" in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, 69.
- ⁷⁷ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (ed. & trans. Caryl Emerson; Theory and History of Literature, vol. 8; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984): 287.
- ⁷⁸ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* (trans. Vadim Liapunov; ed. Vadim Liapunov and Michael Holquist; Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993): 37.
- ⁷⁹ Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," in *The Dialogical Imagination* (trans. Caryl Emerson & Michael Holquist; Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981): 264.
- ⁸⁰ Caryl Emerson, *The First Hundred Years of Mikhail Bakhtin* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997): 221.
- ⁸¹ Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes Toward a Historical Poetics" in *The Dialogical Imagination*, 255.
- ⁸² Bakhtin, "RQ," 7. The emphasis is his.
- ⁸³ In this instance, she refers to the Lutheran tradition contained in Luther's writings and affirmed by the Ausburg Confession (Helmer, "Trust and Spirit," 75-76).

⁸⁴ Hart suggests that constraints serve this very purpose in “Tradition, Authority, and a Christian Approach to the Bible as Scripture,” 186-88.

⁸⁵ For an analysis of *Herem* as an act of sacrifice see Susan Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible: A Study in the Ethics of Violence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993): 28-55.